

Paying Close Attention to Women Inside Military

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The woman soldier. This used to be an oxymoron. Even if there were tales of women acting heroically in warfare (think of Joan of Arc, think of the Amazons), they were deemed anomalous or just fanciful. In the mid-twentieth century, women as armed combatants in insurgent forces – in China, Vietnam, Algeria, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Eritrea, and the Philippines – became more visible.

By the early years of the twenty-first century, the woman soldier seemed to have become a globalized icon of the “modern woman”. She was breaking feminized taboos, entering a traditionally masculinized domain, being deployed far from home, displaying her physical strength, handling high-tech weaponry. She was defying the strictures of conventional, patriarchal femininity by proving that she could be the protector, not simply the protected – she, like a manly man, could “die for her country”. To some, the woman soldier was thereby showing that a woman could be a “first-class citizen” in her own country and a militarized “peacekeeper” around the world.

During the post-2011 devastating wars in Syria and Iraq, most of the armed fighting forces on the ground, regardless of their competing political goals, reverted to virtually all-male organizations. The Iraqi Shiite militias, the Islamic State (ISIS) forces, the rival Islamic-identified foreign fighters’ insurgent militias, and the more secular Syrian antigovernment forces – the leaders of each made masculinization their core organizing principle. The exceptions were the Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish insurgent forces, both of whose male leaders incorporated a significant number of women as fighters. In this Syrian/Iraqi conflict, however, women were valued and recruited in order to play support roles, chiefly as male fighters’ loyal wives (Callimachi 2015; Jaffer 2015).

By contrast, at the same time, on the global landscape of state militaries the woman soldier was appearing everywhere. She was smiling out from a Japanese Self-Defense Forces recruiting advertisement; she was looking boldly at you from the Swedish military’s website; she was marching in Vietnam’s patriotic veterans’ parades; she was fighting in Syria with her Kurdish militia comrades; she was donning the UN’s blue helmet on an international peacekeeping mission; she was on patrol in Afghanistan with NATO forces; she was singing the national anthem at an American sporting event; as a wounded veteran, she was showing off the agility of her prosthetic arm (Eager 2014; Enloe 2010; Kronsell 2012; Mackenzie 2012; 2015; Sato 2012; Turner 1998).

There seemed to be a halo of modernity glowing around this woman soldier. The pursuit of modernity is one of the incentives that governments and individuals find appealing for joining the process of globalization. For some people today, no military can claim to be a genuinely “modern military” unless it allows at least some women to join its ranks. In the late 1990s, Italy was the last of all the NATO countries to permit women to enlist. The all-male military seemed to be going the way of the all-male college. Today there are women soldiers in the militaries ranging from those of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, India, South Africa, and North Korea, to those of Norway, South Korea, Colombia, Nepal, Fiji, and China. Modernity, that pot of gold at the end of the globalized rainbow, has demanded that at least some women be permitted access to soldiering.

This iconic image of the woman soldier was reminiscent of an earlier globalized image of the modern woman. She was popularly called – and often proudly called herself – the “New Woman”. During the 1910s and 1920s, she too popped up all over the world. In cities such as Istanbul,

Cairo, Seoul, Shanghai, Tokyo, Paris, Chicago, Toronto, and London, she was the young woman who left her small town and migrated to the city. As a New Woman, she thrived on the lively bustle and seeming freedom of the big city. She wanted to experience independence, earning her own wages in an office job and living with women friends in a boarding house or rented apartment, away from the confines of family supervision. The New Woman dressed in newly relaxed fashions and read books and slick magazines written for her and about her. She resisted marriage until it could be on her own terms. In many places she was exercising her newly won right to vote; in some places she was joining with other women to create public campaigns to open up new opportunities for women (Ito 2006; Ito and Morimoto 2004; Kwon 2000).

Some of these New Women were, just as some of the contemporary women soldiers are, feminists; that is, they deliberately analyzed, critiqued, and collectively challenged the power systems that operated daily to keep women socially confined, physically constrained, economically dependent, and politically sidelined. Many other women who earlier aspired to become New Women or who today enlist in the military, however, eschew feminism. These women, though adventurous, have been afraid that if they are seen by their colleagues or the general public as “feminists”, they will have a harder time achieving their own unconventional personal goals.

The contemporary woman soldier and the earlier New Woman each was the object of popular hope and admiration. But, not surprisingly, each was – and still is – the target of intense debate and even scorn, since both the woman soldier and the New Woman – even if they did or do not embrace the label “feminist” – undermined assumptions about biology, respectability, and femininity. These women thereby raised new discomfiting questions about the roles, skills, and privileges of men.

The New Woman was a globalizing phenomenon. Women in Seoul traveled to Tokyo to meet and study with those Japanese women writers and artists whose liberated lives they admired. Women in China and Japan translated and put on productions of Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen’s controversial play “A Doll’s House,” which portrays one woman’s rebellion against her claustrophobic middle-class marriage (Weinbaum et al. 2008).

So too today women in militaries often – not always – develop a global awareness and create their own international networks. They are keen to find out what is going on in the lives of women soldiers in other countries. They meet and compare notes when they are deployed on joint peacekeeping operations, when they travel abroad for special training courses, or when they gather for conferences sponsored by various advocacy groups to discuss the continuing barriers women soldiers face when seeking promotions or simply respect: “Are you allowed to serve in combat roles?” “Do your superiors ignore women’s complaints of sexual harassment?” “How have you managed to get your veterans’ hospitals to offer services that address women’s reproductive health issues?” (Manning 2006).

For all their intriguing similarities, however, the globalized New Woman of the 1910s and 1920s and today’s globalized woman soldier are marked by a major difference. The New Woman was typically the object of contempt and even fear (she was tearing apart the nation, she was a traitor to the nationalist cause, she was upsetting the “social order”). By stark contrast, women in today’s state militaries – if they stay in the roles their commanders assign them – are there because government strategists think they will enhance, not subvert, “national security”:

(a) they will make up for the loss of middle-class men caused by the repeal of male conscription laws (“the draft”),

- (b) they will compensate for a decline in the country's birthrate (because many women are having fewer babies than they did a generation ago),
- (c) they will allow the government not to recruit "too many" men from those ethnic and racial groups the government's elite doesn't respect or trust,
- (d) they will bring with them higher levels of formal education than many of the country's young men achieve,
- (e) they can be assigned to search local women in Afghanistan without upsetting conservative mores,
- (f) they will help make the government's military look "modern" in the eyes of many of its own citizens and observers abroad.

As was true of the earlier New Women, these women inside today's militaries provoke mixed responses, both admiration and anxiety. Each group of women can benefit their countries, many observers seem to imply, only if their energies and talents can be controlled in ways that direct them to fulfilling the government's goals.

The "only if" matters. Such conditions can be tough to sustain when women in any military start making alliances with supportive civilian legislators or civil society advocates, or when the military is stretched thin and needs to open up loopholes to make maximum use of all personnel – male and female; young and old; gay, transgender, and straight; racially privileged and racially marginalized. Thus, during the 2001-2016 U.S.-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, observers have noted that, despite denials by senior officials that American women were in "combat" – the hallowed role reserved for generations solely for "manly" men – in practice, women soldiers deployed to both Iraq and Afghanistan were routinely assigned by field commanders to combat operations (Eager 2014; Enloe 2010; Mackenzie 2015; Solaro 2006).

What can we investigate, then, by taking seriously women soldiers in any military?

First, we can determine whether many women are joining military forces because they believe it is the route to "first-class citizenship". If we find out that they are, then paying attention to women soldiers becomes a strategy for analyzing the militarization of citizenship. Second, we can discover whether, in the civilian public's eyes, women serving as soldiers are becoming symbols of the country's "modernity". If they are, then taking women in the military seriously will enable us to chart the militarization of globalized modernity. Third, we can determine whether the growing numbers of women soldiers in the military's ranks are persuading more and more civilians that their own country's military is no longer sexist. If we find that that is so, then our conducting a gender analysis of militaries' recruitment of women will help us understand how ongoing patriarchy can be camouflaged.

Paying attention to women soldiers takes stamina. It entails watching the recruitment strategies and rationales of a government over several decades. It simultaneously requires listening to women soldiers themselves, women from diverse ethnic and racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. For instance, during the 1990s and early 2000s, African American women constituted a surprisingly high percentage of all active-duty women enlisted in the U.S. Army – that is, four times the percentage of African American women among all women in the general U.S. population (Manning 2005). Since 2000, however, the percentage of African American women among enlisted-rank military women has been dropping – from a high of 48 percent in the early 1990s, to 38 percent in 2005, to 31 percent in 2011. This, of course, still is almost three times their proportion of all women in the United States. Furthermore, it is a significantly higher percentage than African American men (16 percent) are of all U.S. military men (Patten 2011).

In other words, paying attention to wo-

men soldiers does not mean homogenizing them. Instead, it entails taking seriously the unequal tendencies of young women in different racial and ethnic groups within the same society to join their country's military. Is an Afro-Colombian young woman as likely to be attracted by the Colombian recruiter's appeal as a mestizo Colombian young woman? Is a Bangladeshi British young woman as likely to sign up for the British Army as a white British young woman?

Moreover, once diverse women join any military, they may have quite different experiences as soldiers. Training opportunities and promotions may not be equally distributed across women of all backgrounds. All women may not be equally subjected to sexual harassment from male sergeants and officers. Reactions to serving on peacekeeping missions, for instance, in the Congo, South Sudan, or the Sinai, may not be identical for women soldiers of all social backgrounds within the same country's contingent. As always, being a gender analyst requires being constantly curious about the inter-workings of gender with those of class, race, and ethnicity.

"Paying attention" as a curious gender analyst also requires listening to silences. When women inside any military (or any military academy) do not report sexual abuse perpetrated by their male colleagues and superiors – because they decide the military justice system cannot be trusted, because they fear being ostracized as "turncoats" by their peers, or because they have seen how other women's careers have been harmed after they have spoken up – that is significant. It takes courage in any patriarchal institution to raise public objections to masculinized abuse. Thus, for instance, one might pay close attention to the more than one hundred young women in the United States who spoke up during 2005 alone, charging that male military recruiters – from all services – sexually harassed them while in the process of trying to enlist them. At the U.S. Army military academy

West Point in 2014, of all the women cadets, 55 percent said that they had experienced sexual harassment at the academy (U.S. Department of Defense 2015). Perhaps it was somehow easier for these young women to break the silence because they were still civilians and not yet officially in the military. Or perhaps they were able to speak out because most of them still lived at home and had older adults, their parents, to give them support when they reported their experiences.

Women already serving in the British military, for instance, have expressed little confidence that, if they speak out about their experiences of sexual harassment or assault, they will be supported by their superiors or treated justly. They believe that the military's institutional culture tilts toward privileging masculinity in ways that will discredit their charges (Basham 2013; Buchanan 2015). In one case that came to the British courts, Corporal Leah Mates, a thirty-year-old soldier with extensive professional military experience, reported being subjected to repeated sexual bullying. When her supervisors treated her reports of the behavior dismissively, Corporal Mates testified, "I now began to understand that the Army is a male preserve, and a woman who tries to establish herself does so at the peril of her health and happiness" (Maley 2006).

In the United States in recent years, women's advocacy groups outside the military, such as the U.S.-based Service Women's Action Network (SWAN), have organized to provide women inside the military support and validation when they dare to speak out about sexual violence and abuse in the ranks. When the Defense Department's officials still have not listened, these activists have pushed members of Congress to take their words seriously (www.servicewomen.org).

"Paying attention", furthermore, calls for listening to civilians – boyfriends, girlfriends, husbands, mothers, fathers, teachers,

TABLE 5.1 PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN THE ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY, SELECTED COUNTRIES, 2010–2015

Country	% Women	Country	% Women
Australia	12.5	Israel	30.0
Britain	10.0	Japan	5.4
Canada	14.5	Latvia	17.4
China	7.5	New Zealand	16.5
Eritrea	30.0	Russia	10.0
France	15.0	South Africa	26.0
Germany	8.5	United States	14.0

journalists, elected officials, movie directors, civilian women and men in those countries to which women soldiers are deployed. Each group of observers weighs the rightness and consequences of the women in their lives serving in militaries. For instance, a father who is a military veteran may see his daughter's enlistment as carrying on "the family tradition" – especially if his son does not want to join the military. On the other hand, a civilian boyfriend might start worrying that if he and his soldier-girlfriend get married and she stays in the military, he will end up like a military wife, acting as a single parent for months while she is deployed overseas.

The percentage of women in the military in various countries in 2010–2015 is shown in table 5.1.

We need to treat these percentages with caution. Even the relatively high percentages might not be evidence of contemporary "post-sexist" enlightenment. The percentage of women in any country's military may wax and wane over time. For instance, during World War II, the U.S. government deliberately recruited thousands of women – white, African American, Chinese, Japanese, Latina, Native American – to join the Navy's WAVES, the Army's WAC, and the Coast Guard's SPARS, which were bran-

ches of the military created by the wartime government especially for women. After the war ended, male officials in the White House, the War Department (then in charge of the Army), the then-Department of the Navy, and male-dominated Congress together chose to demobilize women military personnel to the point that they were scarcely visible in the postwar ranks. To make crystal clear their patriarchal point – that a "normal" peacetime military should be a thoroughly masculinized institution – policymakers crafted rules limiting women to a mere 2 percent of the total active-duty force. This was the American military norm throughout the Cold War. The 2 percent limit was kept in place during the Korean and Vietnam wars of the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s.

The male leaders of the U.S. Congress, along with their colleagues in the White House and the Defense Department (formerly the War Department and now in charge of all the armed forces, including the newly organized Air Force), did not decide they needed to lift this gendered ceiling until the early 1970s. What changed? Faced with the increasingly unpopular Vietnam War, American policymakers ended male conscription – what Americans call "the draft" – without changing their vision of

the U.S. role in the world, which called for a globally deployed military. That is, they ended the male draft, but held on tightly to their presumed need for thousands of new military recruits every year. This obviously posed a dilemma. Their solution: recruit more women. Still, how to do it in a way that would not surrender the military's long-standing attraction as the place where "boys become men"? How to maintain the military's role in sustaining the country's patriarchal social system? It would become a tricky ideological operation.

The Soviet Union's military planners did much the same. They used thousands of women to help wage their fierce World War II battles against the invading German forces. But at the end of the war, they implemented policies allowing the Soviet military to revert to its "natural" masculinized institutional self, dependent on male conscription. Then, in the 1990s, after the breakup of the Soviet Union, the remaining Russian government launched a draining war against rebel forces in the southern province of Chechnya. Service in the Russian military lost its patriotic appeal. Many Russian mothers even began urging their sons to avoid the draft after these women had uncovered the brutal hazing rituals that drove some young conscripts to commit suicide (Sperling 2003).

In the wake of the failed 1980s war in Afghanistan and as the war in Chechnya dragged on, disillusionment with military service deepened further still. No longer did soldiering seem a rewarding route to authentic manliness. More young male soldiers saw their friends sent home from Afghanistan in sealed zinc coffins or heard from older brothers what awaited them in Chechnya and went absent without leave (AWOL) instead (Alexievich 1992; Eichler 2012). It was at this point that Russian military planners began to look favorably on women as recruits (Mathers 2006). In the late 1990s and early 2000s, the government began recruitment campaigns to per-

suade women to join the military at the same time as many young Russian women were finding it very difficult to get decent jobs in the uncertain Russian civilian employment market (Cohn 2013).

In neither the United States nor Russia have the male military planners and their legislative colleagues talked about "patriarchy". Those officials and legislators who, after years of deliberately "remasculinizing" their post-World War II militaries, decided to enlist more women volunteers were not motivated chiefly by a desire to liberate women or to lessen masculinized privilege in their country's public life. Instead, both Russian and U.S. officials were motivated primarily by their desire to continue their wide-ranging military operations at a time when they were losing easy access to young male recruits.

South Africa's story is rather different, at least in its most current chapter. The South African government's efforts to enlist women volunteers began in earnest under the country's racist apartheid regime. As the small white ruling minority began to face stronger resistance from the country's combined black, mixed-race, and Asian majority, the country's political leaders, imbued with patriarchal beliefs derived from a strict brand of Calvinist theology, struggled to sustain a large enough military force to match the new challenge to its authoritarian rule: there weren't enough young white male conscripts to fill the ranks. The apartheid regime thus tried to craft a delicate balancing act. They recruited more black South African male volunteers and at the same time – despite the white male elite's very conservative views about respectable femininity – opened new military roles to women volunteers from all communities, though especially white women.

Then in 1994, when the apartheid regime fell and a new constitutional system was created to ensure nonracist democracy, intense discussions began among South Africans about the appropriate composition of

the state's newly reconstructed military. There was agreement that this new post-apartheid military should consist wholly of volunteers, not conscripts, and that it should have many more black senior officers. But should it revert to its pre-1980s mostly male composition? South African women's advocates argued that although the just-deposed apartheid elites had recruited large numbers of women into the ranks for the sake of upholding their own racist system, a new democratic military should not simply dismiss women soldiers (Cock 1995). Thus, the fact that today's South African military has one of the world's highest proportions of women in uniform is not the result of a continuation of a recent masculinist and racist political calculation. Rather, it is the product of thoughtful feminist-informed analysis to determine the sorts of relationships between women, the military, and a nascent nonracist political system that would be most likely to ensure a less patriarchal democracy.

Today in dozens of countries an unresolved analytical debate continues over the magnitude – and direction – of military and societal transformation produced by enlisting more women in the military. In 2014, claiming to be acting in the name of gender equality, the Norwegian parliament – much to the surprise and even dismay of many Norwegian feminist peace activists – passed a new law that expanded formerly male only compulsory military service to women.

Israel is another country in which women's role in the military has become central to debates about not just security, but citizenship. While acknowledging that Israel is one of the very few countries in which both women and men are subject to military conscription, Israeli gender scholars note that women are drafted for shorter terms than men, that most women soldiers are channeled into traditionally feminized military jobs – for instance, secretaries, instructors, nurses, and other administrative positions – and that women are ex-

empted from military service whenever their family responsibilities conflict. In Israeli society, as in most societies, women are seen first and foremost as mothers and daughters, not as architects of the nation's security or as the country's protectors. Most important, it is the male combat soldier who remains the ideal of the true Israeli citizen (Sasson-Levy 2003). Thus, the impressive statistic that 30 percent of the Israeli military are women must be the start, not the end, of a feminist investigation of masculinity, national security, and militarism in Israel – just as such numbers must be the starting points for feminist investigations in other countries.

With that in mind, Israeli feminist investigators have paid close attention to how the Israeli woman soldier is portrayed by the popular Israeli media and by the military establishment itself. Most often, women soldiers are portrayed as conventionally feminine, sexual, and appealing in the eyes of their male colleagues, as if the woman soldier's physical attractiveness played a role in bolstering the morale of male soldiers, who, the images imply, are the ones actually taking the risks and confronting the real dangers in the service of national security (Brownfield-Stein 2006). In any military it is worth monitoring how women soldiers are portrayed in order to chart the ways both the government and ordinary citizens try to balance the competing goals of, on the one hand, enlisting women in the country's protective force and, on the other hand, still maintaining many of their own core patriarchal values and beliefs.

An Israeli feminist scholar who explored the same politics of “having their cake and eating it too” listened closely to those women, a minority of a minority, who have been allowed to hold “nontraditional” – that is, presumably masculinized – jobs in the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). What she found is that these women have done their best to fit into the IDF's dominant masculinized culture. They have often adopted

more masculinized humor, more masculinized modes of walking, and lower voice registers. Most of these women in traditionally masculinized jobs have also tried to deny any experiences of sexual harassment by their male colleagues. For instance, one woman soldier, whom the author calls “Rutti,” told of noncommissioned officers in her combat-engineering platoon taunting her with “Rutti is a whore”. She never thought of reporting incidents like this. Instead, Rutti tried to shrug it off, saying, “Obviously, it wasn’t fun. It’s annoying, but you can’t take it too hard. It’s a trivial song, nobody notices it, nobody pays attention to it” (Sasson-Levy 2003). While such a personal interpretation may work as a private survival strategy for a woman isolated in a masculinized institution, letting such misogynistic and harassing practices go unchallenged leaves the existing masculinized military culture firmly in place, perhaps even reaffirmed (Sasson-Levy 2003).

A current international debate is over this question: Would UN peacekeeping missions be more effective in war zones if the contributing states’ military contingents (the “blue helmets”) had higher proportions of women soldiers?

The responsibility for contributing troops to UN global peacekeeping missions is not shared equally. A majority of these blue-helmeted soldiers come from poor countries. Among the top contributors today are Nepal, Uruguay, Benin, Cameroon, Senegal, Rwanda, Niger, Burundi, and Indonesia.

In 2015, a mere 3 percent of military personnel deployed on UN peacekeeping operations around the world were women. Men constituted 97 percent of those soldiers contributed by member states to UN peacekeeping missions. At the same time, men made up 90 percent of all the police personnel contributed to UN peacekeeping missions to conflict areas; only 10 percent were women (www.un.org/en/peacekeeping).

The proponents of increasing the presence of women soldiers and police officers in globalized peace operations argue that women do not spark local antagonisms as much as male soldiers do. One male officer responsible for training Indian army officers for peacekeeping assignments said that women officers were valuable for “their ability to pick up local languages . . . [and for] their knack for integrating their own culture with new ones” (Hindustan Times 2006). They also, this line of reasoning continues, are more able to create meaningful relationships with local women, crucial players in reweaving social fabrics after war. Some proponents of increasing the proportions of women soldiers in international peacekeeping deployments draw on essentialist understandings of gender, arguing that women are by nature better at peacebuilding than are men.

Yet some feminist peace activists, for instance those in New Zealand, have voiced concern that some government officials will imagine that simply adding more women soldiers to their own UN peacekeeping contingents will be a sufficient action to roll back patriarchal approaches to international peacebuilding. These analysts insist that meaningful peacebuilding will require a lot deeper gendered transformation (Peace Movement Aotearoa 2015).

When government officials – legislators, defense experts, military planners – consider a wide range of questions when they devise military recruitment strategies, typically they deny asking some of these:

- Who is trustworthy enough to be given a gun?
- Whose exclusion from the new security forces will undermine the fragile peace?
- Whose exclusion won’t matter?
- Whose inclusion in the ranks will make the new military trusted by the general citizenry?
- Whose skills are needed?
- Whose immediate needs are best satisfied?

via the pay and other rewards and benefits that soldiering brings?

Typically, these discussions feature debates about ethnic, regional, racial, class, and political party loyalties – not gender. The unspoken presumption shared by the participants around the policymaking table – that is, the local leaders and overseas donors, advisors, and diplomats – frequently is that they are talking about men. Why? Because it is widely believed that it is men’s rivalries and unmet needs that will upset the tenuous calm. It is the threats that men pose that must be urgently addressed. And only occasionally is the exclusion of women from the ranks and officer corps of the new military deemed a threat to the fragile postwar peace. Women? Their issues can wait until later. But “later” can be a long time away.

Sometimes, however, the topic of women’s inclusion does get on the table, especially if some of the people around the table have broader, less-militarized notions of “national security”. These people (some perhaps with personal experience in women’s grassroots groups) will likely be thinking of dismantling the masculinist culture of the former military, perhaps seeing masculinist military culture – and not simply past ethnic or partisan loyalties – as at least partly to blame for outbreaks of violence and as sowing the seeds of civilian distrust and alienation. Still, underneath the surface of the discussion will lurk the nagging question: does adding more women to a military have any significant impact at all?

Since the 1980s, some Japanese defense policymakers have adopted a similar mode of thinking. On the one hand, Japan has a constitution that pledges the country both to never again adopt military force as a means of resolving problems and to refrain from creating a military with which to wield such force. On the other hand, today Japan (thanks in part to the strong urging of the U.S. government) actually has a for-

midable military equipped with the most up-to-date technology. In practice, the Japanese military, whose formal name is the Japan Self-Defense Forces (SDF), deploys its soldiers only on humanitarian missions, and the soldiers never fire their guns.

Yet there is a profound awkwardness that the Japanese must cope with: the fact that the constitutional antimilitary principle exists side by side with an institutional reality. One way male policymakers have devised for smoothing out the contradictions that are creating this sense of this political unease is to bring more Japanese women into the SDF. Women constitute only 5 percent of total SDF personnel today, and their roles do not give them much influence in military decisionmaking. But male policymakers hope that putting the nonthreatening smiling faces of young SDF women on the military’s recruitment ads and other public relations materials will reassure Japanese supporters of the country’s post-World War II nonaggression principles that the SDF is a friendly, nonviolent institution. For some of the young women soldiers themselves who enlisted with hopes of avoiding the tokenism they routinely encounter in Japanese civilian companies, this superficial public relations ploy generates not pride, but disappointment and frustration (Fruhstuck 2006).

This Japanese debate over military recruitment has taken on new salience with the governing party, the Liberal Democratic Party, being led by a prime minister determined to remilitarize Japan. Shinzo Abe sees Japan’s current “peace constitution” as a drag on Japan’s global influence. His argument is that Japan will only be treated by other international elites as a “mature” player in the global community (for instance, gaining a seat as a permanent member of the UN Security Council) if it expands its military’s role in international affairs. Many Japanese disagree. Among the most outspoken opponents of this vision are Japanese feminists.

Optimistic commentators on military affairs predict that increasing the proportion of women (thus decreasing the proportion of men) in a military will make that military less patriarchal: the higher the percentage of women in a military, they believe, the less the traditional privileging of masculinity will be able to survive. Patriarchal beliefs and ways of relating simply will prove untenable.

If they are dedicated optimists, they might go further and even predict that this military will become less militarized. Yes, a less-militarized military. What would that look like? Sandra Whitworth, a Canadian feminist and international politics expert, has been critical of how militarized the Canadian UN peacekeeping operations have become. Still, she starts off her thoughtful book about militarized peacekeeping with a tribute to a seemingly less-militarized military: she candidly recalls how glad she was to see Canadian soldiers arrive at her farmhouse in the midst of a brutal ice storm. They were soldiers, but they were also friendly, helpful, nonviolent rescuers (Whitworth 2004).

During the years 2006–2015, under the leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative government, the Canadian military became more militarized as it followed the US-led NATO operations into Afghanistan. After Justin Trudeau and his Liberal Party won a new majority in the 2015 Canadian parliamentary elections, however, the process was reversed. One of his first acts as the new prime minister was to end the Canadian military's combat role in Afghanistan, a step that might have signaled a more general demilitarization of the country's foreign policy. It will take a gender analyst, though, to investigate whether this change alters the relationships of masculinities and femininities inside the Canadian military.

A less-militarized military would be one less focused on a combat role and less imbued with an institutional culture of mas-

culinized violence. It would be a military less committed to a hierarchical, threat-filled worldview; having an "enemy" wouldn't be so central to the military's *raison d'être*. It would also be a military whose soldiers and their senior officers would take at least as much (or more?) satisfaction in rescuing civilians from the ravages of ice storms, hurricanes, and earthquakes as in rolling into a combat zone in their intimidating armored vehicles. It would be a military in which officers who serve in successful humanitarian operations, not those with combat experience, would have the best chance of being promoted to general or admiral.

According to this optimistic analysis, if, for instance, the proportion of women soldiers rises from just 1 percent of the state's military to 15 percent, masculinization and patriarchy – as well as militarization – will likely be stalled and perhaps even rolled back.

Of course, there is a second, less rosy forecast: increasing the percentage of women serving inside the state's military could cause those women to become more militarized. Simultaneously, pessimists predict, the general public's acceptance of women as soldiers will send the roots of militarizing culture down even deeper into the ecology of the entire society. A military with at least 10 percent women in its ranks will no longer look "out of step" with the rest of society. That is, with at least a smattering of women (and featuring those women in recruiting ads, as well as encouraging media coverage of their activities) a military won't look like a bastion of bygone maleness. The military thereby will be harder than ever to distinguish from civilian society. That could make it harder to scrutinize the military's persistent masculinized institutional culture and to raise questions about the military's exemptions from many of the rules and procedures that the civilian public must live by. This more pessimistic analytical forecast is based on the assess-

ment that masculinization, militarization, and patriarchy don't just roll over in the face of change. Each operates within the military as a socializing pressure: the "outsiders" (women) entering the military's realm are likely to adopt as their own the already established – and rewarding – patriarchal beliefs and values.

There is yet a third possibility. Sustaining and challenging patriarchy – these opposing forces might coexist in the same society, or in the same institution. Thus, so too might militarizing and demilitarizing processes. The result would be a surprising mix of pressures and tendencies. An important characteristic of militarized patriarchal states and patriarchal militaries: their policymakers can be confused, contradictory, and ambivalent.

Those men and women who have a stake in perpetuating a patriarchal culture and structure – who see it as good for themselves, good for their families, good for their own society, and even good for the world – are not immune to confusion. For instance, they may want to preserve the dominant masculine culture of their state's military and, at the same time, conclude that it is necessary to enlist more women because birthrates are dropping (and so the pool of young men is shrinking), because more male conscripts are going AWOL, or because nervous legislators are responding to the public's disillusionment by voting to end male conscription. Trying to achieve both of these goals can produce confusion and contradictory actions.

The temptation among patriarchal policymakers, however, is to deny confusion – to hide it, to camouflage it under a paint job of convoluted justification. Usually this compels those confused policymakers to spend a lot of energy trying to manipulate definitions of "femininity". In doing this, they will probably look like the South Korean regime of Chung Hee Park, which in the 1960s and 1970s mobilized young women to leave home in order to serve as

"cheap labor" in sneaker and electronics factories, while it simultaneously tried to convince these young women and their parents that "dutiful daughter" was their chief feminine identity.

Any patriarchy survives and thrives only if its leaders and members can perpetuate a widely accepted standard of "proper" femininity. A dominant notion of "proper" femininity is especially potent when it becomes the basis by which women (and girls) judge, or "police", each other. Such daily judging – of girls and women by girls and women – creates divisive hierarchies among women, making it more likely that they will see other girls or women as sources of competition or even as

threats to their own sense of well-being. This sort of preoccupation makes it less likely that girls and women will notice how the larger pattern of relationships, rules, and presumptions of patriarchy shapes their own lives, much less that they will join together as women to challenge masculinized privilege. That is, when racism, class prejudice, nationalism, patriotism, militarism, and competition for boyfriends and husbands divide women and girls and divert their attention, patriarchy becomes more secure.

Second, if the promoters of a patriarchal system are skillful, they will manage to make "femininity" appear natural – not the product of human decisions. This feat makes their own uses of power harder to see. If they can achieve this, then the entire patriarchal order is likely to take on the status of "natural" and thus not open to fundamental challenge.

Yet as we can see when we pay close attention to women in the military, there are many times when promoters of patriarchy find it difficult to sustain the naturalness of the dichotomy between "masculinity" and "femininity" and the propriety (positive value) of a certain mode of feminine behavior. These times of patriarchal discomfort and confusion are especially useful to ex-

plore. That exploration is likely to bear the most fruit if one conducts it with an explicit feminist curiosity, because a feminist curiosity will keep one alert to how even confused ideas about masculinity and femininity can determine who has power and who is marginalized.

Patriarchal confusion often occurs during wartime or when a government is most eager to prepare for war. At first glance, this may seem unlikely. After all, it is during wartime that the masculinity of the protector is most entrenched in its privilege, while the dependent femininity of the grateful protected is most celebrated. But let's look again. And listen. Researchers who have been digging into the complex realities of the American Civil War, World War II, the Vietnam War, and the current wars in Africa and the Middle East are showing us that policymakers who believe in the naturalness and rightness of a patriarchal social order nonetheless will violate conventional tenets of masculine and feminine difference so that they can use women in new, "nontraditional" ways for the sake of bolstering their war-waging efforts.

It is not that these wartime patriarchal officials have shed their patriarchal beliefs and values. Instead, feminist historians have revealed, these officials convince themselves that they can violate their own (and most civilians') gender rules just for the war years and then, in peacetime, reestablish the alleged "natural order". In practice, this turns out to be politically risky because it can produce confusion.

As intriguing as it is to explore this militarized patriarchal confusion, some feminist investigators have been wary of devoting intellectual energy to the study of women who become soldiers. These investigators worry that simply by taking seriously the condition of women in the military and such women's experiences and ideas, they unintentionally might help legitimize both the military as a public institution and soldiering as an occupation. The worries of

these feminists are rooted in a smart, if pessimistic, analysis that recognizes how seductive militarization can be. It is true that a researcher or journalist (feminist or non-feminist) can start out neutrally studying a military and can then gradually – unconsciously – start absorbing not only the discourse but the deeper assumptions of that military and of its civilian strategists (Cohn 1987).

However, the militarization of a researcher (or journalist) is not inevitable (Basham, Belkin, and Gifkins 2015; Enloe 2015). To do feminist research of any patriarchal institution and of women living their lives inside that patriarchal institution (e.g., women in corporations, women in legislatures, women in civil service, women in law firms) one does need to acknowledge the risks and thus to cultivate a heightened consciousness of how one's own compassion and imagination, one's own sense of the "good story", one's own sense of "seriousness" each can become militarized in the process of investigating women inside militaries. The telltale sign that one's investigation of women inside militaries is becoming militarized may be that one stops asking about militarism. One begins to be interested solely in equality and inequality. However, the risks and the effort it takes to avoid those risks are worth taking, for we will never fully understand patriarchy's adaptive qualities and its limits if we avoid studying those women who are trying to pursue their own goals inside such patriarchal institutions.

The importance of this gendered assignment strategy means that one should always keep a sharp eye on any military's changing definitions of combat. For instance, even within NATO, whose leaders put so much emphasis on the standardization of weaponry and doctrine, there have been definitional differences in what constitutes a "combat" job and thus where women can or cannot serve alongside men. Moreover, some NATO members have gone further:

since the late 1980s, some have eliminated the male-only combat rule altogether. The Dutch led the way, followed closely by the Norwegians and the Canadians.

The Americans and British were among the most reluctant to give up the male-only combat rule. Thus, it is they who continued to invest the most political energy in defining and redefining exactly what constitutes “combat”. In the 1980s, for instance, the U.S. Army broadened the definition of “combat” to include even the jobs done by electricians and carpenters because, allegedly, carpenters and electricians sometimes were called upon to perform their work near the line of fire. This meant that women soldiers could be excluded from jobs as electricians and carpenters in the name of protecting them from the dangers of combat. One of the facts that made the male-only combat rule seem irrational was that all thirteen of the U.S. military women who were killed in the Gulf War of 1990-1991 were women in what were bureaucratically then defined as “noncombat” positions (Enloe 1993; 2000).

During the next decade, under pressure from the Women’s Caucus in Congress – and facing the need to have more flexibility in assignments – the army narrowed its definition of “combat”. Only in 2013 did the U.S. government, under President Barack Obama, with Congressional support, drop its ban on women in combat. On the other hand, actual implementation proved far more murky, with each branch of the armed services crafting their own measures to position women in combat – or to keep them out (Mackenzie 2015).

In most of today’s modernized militaries, it is the submarine corps, armored divisions, fighter plane squadrons, paratroops,

infantry regiments, and irregular elite forces, such as the U.S. Army’s Special Forces, that remain the inner sanctums of masculinity. Perhaps not surprisingly, these are also the groups within most militaries that are the principal recruiting grounds for future generals and admirals. This is how patriarchy operates in an era of women’s rights and globalized modernization.

Under pressure from citizens, many governments have ended male conscription. These are the governments that have been the most determined to enlist more women as volunteers without sacrificing their military’s useful masculinized culture. These governments’ military strategists have become especially interested in recruiting those young women with high school or even college educations because modern militaries rely on higher literacy and mathematical skills, and in many countries today a higher proportion of young women than young men are completing high school and college.

On the other hand, officials do not want women’s presence in their military to dilute what they see to be the essence of the institution: its deep affiliation with manliness. So, at the same time as they recruit women to acquire their needed skills, these officials worry that if the military’s core masculinized culture is significantly diluted, two dire things will happen. First, a weakened masculinized *esprit de corps* will produce a military that is a less-effective instrument of coercive force. Second, if the popular image of soldiering loses its masculine aura, a lot of young men (potential enlistees) will decide to walk right past the recruiter’s office: “Who wants to join an organization that’s gone the way of bank telling?” It is with these two patriarchal anxieties (about

military effectiveness and about male psychology) in their minds that most military planners and their civilian colleagues go about trying to craft their strategies for recruiting and deploying women to compensate for the men they have lost with the end of male conscription. It has turned out to be a “patriarchal challenge”. The resulting practices, not surprisingly, have been confusing, contradictory, and often harmful to the women recruits.

Military policymakers have become more reliant on women recruits, yet still seek to reassure the public (and male soldiers) that men in the military will not surrender their “masculinity” when serving with women and that even women who join the military will stay “feminine”. Such an insistent reassurance might imply to some listeners that one can masculinize or demasculinize any activity. Yes, a soldier in khaki sitting in an office at a typewriter pecking out the commander’s memos might have been secure in his masculinity back in the 1940s, but in the 2000s that is a military job that should be done by a khaki-clad woman. The implication: the differences between women and men are not so intrinsically natural after all. Instead, the differences between what men do and what women do are largely the product of human imagination and decision-making. At this point, the patriarchal alarm bells might begin to ring.

Dear Worried Patriarchal Public,
We are bringing women into this military institution, where you and we know they do not naturally belong, for the sake of national security. National security must take priority over our beliefs about what is natural and what is proper. But don't worry. We know this is a temporary aberration. We, like you, know this is not natural; it is not what we are all fighting for. So we guarantee you that we will rely on this aberration for only a brief time, until we win this war. Then, dear public, having won the war, we will return women to their domestic spheres where they really belong and so the

military back to its natural masculinized order and thus the whole social order back to normal. Trust us.

This is an imagined letter to confused citizens from military planners struggling to cope with personnel shortages. The patriarchal message is: once the war is over, once the threat to national security has receded, then the natural and proper gendered social order will be reassuringly restored. This implicit message – sent out in various forms by governments as diverse as the Soviet government, the American government, and the South African government – makes the postwar years a time to watch carefully. For the reassuring implication is that in the postwar era, women will return – or be returned – to their natural and proper feminine places and roles. Even in revolutionary Algeria, China, Guatemala, Vietnam, El Salvador, and Eritrea, these patterns have indeed been repeated: once the imminent threat to national security has receded, women’s public space shrinks. Most obvious is the demobilization of women from the ranks of the military. But this demobilization often goes hand in hand with the re-masculinization of other spheres of public life such as political parties, factory work, and farm management (Krosch 2005; Turner 1998).

Therefore, as investigators, we need to turn our feminist curiosity to the weeks, months, and even years immediately following the formal end of any inter-state or civil war. Those will be the times when – blatantly or subtly – policymakers (and their allies in the media, academia, and business) will try to take steps to terminate the wartime “aberration” and return the military (and thus society) to its patriarchal “normality”.

That is, to make sense of the gendered dynamics of homegrown and globalized militarization, the postwar years are as interesting to investigate as the war years.

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