

**Warriors of Choice: The (Re)articulation of Militarized Masculinities
in Private and Public Special Forces**

by

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Abstract

My thesis is an examination of militarized masculinity in Canada's JTF2 Special Forces and the Private Security Firm Blackwater. I employ a gender analysis to highlight how militarized masculinity impedes women's participation from Special Forces and private security firms. Feminist scholarship by Cynthia Enloe, Ann Tickner, Sandra Whitworth, and Charlotte Hooper has examined how militarized masculinity is associated within a particular political/situational context and therefore should be understood in its plural—as militarized masculinities. However, there is limited scholarship focusing on how masculinities vary in Special Forces and private security firms. This lack of scholarship results in limited knowledge of the implications militarized masculinity in these units has for women's security and for women's participation in these units. The purpose of this thesis is to add to the current literature by exploring, through militarized masculinities, the gender barriers to women's participation and the consequences of the security produced when these units deploy. To analyze the impact of militarized masculinity in these units I conducted interviews with authorities on these units, applicants interested in participating in these units, and performed a content analysis of Blackwater's website. I argue based on the information gathered that militarized masculinity, while varied in its application in special units and private security firms, continues to impede women's participation and in some cases can cause greater insecurity for women where these units are deployed.

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Chapter 1: The War Narrative: A Tale of Men and Their Masculinities

The war will be won in large measure by forces you do not know about, in actions you will not see and in ways you may not want to know about, but we will prevail (A.B. “Buzzy” Krongard Executive Director of CIA, cited in Scahill 2007: 44).

Introduction

Masculinity in security discourse is being further embedded with the increased salience placed on privatization, specialization, and technological innovations in the contemporary war narrative. However, the way different military entities assert versions of masculinity varies depending on its interface with special skills, technology, the market, and what role these units play in the new war narrative. Because of the increased importance militaries place on special skills and private services, and the varying roles military units are performing, militarized masculinity should be understood in the plural as militarized masculinities. The intent of my research then is to add to the expanding literature on gender studies in the military. With the purpose of examining barriers to women’s participation in these units, I explore how gender (and more specifically masculinity) is constructed discursively in Special Forces—Canada’s Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) and leading Private Security Firms (PSFs) based in the United States and elsewhere, and how this construction informs who can and cannot participate in the war narrative.

Theoretical Approach

My research is theoretically grounded in the concept of “militarized masculinity” in order to examine the social construction of the private and public Special Forces soldier. Militarized masculinity is a well-developed concept used by Enloe (1989, 1993, 2007), Tickner (1992, 2001A, 2001B), and Whitworth (2004, 2005) to highlight the embedded social construction of masculinity in the military that produces and defines the ‘ideal’ soldier. At the same time, this analysis deconstructs the naturalness of the soldier’s masculine characteristics, which are often taken for granted. Militarized masculinity as a discourse is reinforced by valorizing traditionally-ascribed “masculine” tropes, such as rationality, activeness, and aggressiveness in the military, and discouraging characteristics that could be considered feminine (Hooper 1998: 31). It embeds a discourse that enforces a gender binary and informs participation based on polarized feminine and masculine attributes. Moreover, this discourse treats masculinity as the ideal. According to Whitworth (2004), these traits, which are socially constructed, are designed to improve the organization’s operations as they assist in constructing a soldier who is able to go to war and perform various duties perceived necessary for military operations. However, owing to the varied roles that Special Forces and PSFs are playing in the contemporary war narrative, varied masculinities are created that are particular to the political context and organizational cultures in which they appear.

War narrative, for my research, is understood as the particular way in which the military, governments, and security organizations are all understanding emerging security threats. War narrative here is used interchangeably with contemporary war narrative and the War on Terror narrative. This particular narrative understands terrorism as one of the

biggest threats to the security of Western states.¹ According to this narrative, terrorists are currently described in small shifting networks, having diffused authority, and are dynamic and resourceful.² The subsequent solutions to this threat are articulated as being best managed through robust military intervention and more specialized security participants. More importantly though, this war narrative tells us specifically why we go to war and how we win wars (Hunt and Rygiel 2006: 4). The narrative further embeds gendered binaries centering around both women's and men's level and type of participation in these wars (Hunt and Rygiel 2006: 1).

Many scholars, led by the pioneering work of Enloe, Tickner, and Whitworth, have sought to advance militarized masculinity as a useful concept by which to make sense of the military as an institution. In turn, more recent scholarship has come to understand militarized masculinity in the plural; that is, militarized masculinities. Studies based in sociology, organizational culture, and feminism have, in broad terms, provided important theoretical and practical insights into this gender-based exclusion within military cultures. These studies have examined masculinity as being both a detriment in military peacekeeping deployments and embodied in the soldier warrior framework, as impeding women's full participation in combat roles, and as being a factor in greater insecurity for women (Davis 2002, Pinch 2002, Sasson-Levy 2003, Whitworth 2004, Woodward and Winter 2004). However, as Woodward and Winter (2004: 282) have claimed, this wealth of scholarship should not indicate that there is nothing new to be said

¹ See for example: Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (FAITC), www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/internationalcrime/terrorism-en.asp, last accessed 10 September 2007; United States Government's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nsct/2006/nsct2006.pdf, last accessed 10 September 2007; and NATO Review, www.nato.int/docu/review/2005/issue3/english/art1.html, last accessed 10 September 2007.

² Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) Website, www.jtf2.forces.gc.ca/en/about_e.asp, last accessed 4 September 2007.

on this subject. Since masculinities are situated in particular/specific political environments, context is important. As political environments and military operations change, so does masculinity. Therefore, scholarly work pre-9/11, although insightful, does not provide adequate information into how gender discursive productions continue to privilege participation of some over others. This thesis, through its exploration of JTF2 and PSFs—namely Blackwater’s operations in Iraq—examines some of these varied masculinities in security and how they structurally assert themselves through personal image and through cultural organization.

My analysis is important for two reasons. First, despite the existing scholarship on gender and militaries, there is little research into masculinity in JTF2 and PSFs. Notably, Canada is one of a few Western countries that legally allows women into combat arms and Special Force roles. Second, as the war narrative and the political environments are changing in many Western states, women are finding more military positions open to them in non-traditional combat roles. However, as these positions are being opened to women, militaries like the Canadian Forces (CF) are forming special units that continue to act as bastions of masculinity. Thus, this thesis intends to complement and contribute to the existing literature on militarized masculinities.

Sex and Gender

While there appears to be two faces to the sex/gender division in arguments used against women’s participation, in that both sex and gender are departure points against female participation, my analysis shows that there is an important overlap. Moreover, many scholars and participants in militaries confuse gender and sex, using these terms

interchangeably. In fact, when interviewees were asked about the “gender neutral” selection process of JTF2, one authority asserted that selection was “neutral” because there were women scientists involved in the science to justify the selection process for JTF2. His argument highlights the preconceived notions that gender (reduced to mean ‘woman’) and sex means the same thing. For this reason, it is important then to make the distinction between the two.

Butler (1990: 8) asserts that sex has been understood as the biological and anatomical traits one is born with. She furthers this claim by stating the sex/gender distinction is designed to argue that “whatever biological intractability sex appears to have, gender is culturally constructed: hence, gender is neither the causal result of sex nor as seemingly fixed as sex” (1990: 8). Within this context, gender is understood not as biological, but as a social construction or identification designed to explain, enforce, and justify power and social relations.

Gender refers to the “ideological and material relations which exist between” men and women (Steans 1998: 10). Gender also refers to the relations that exist between various men and various women. Alsop, Fitzsimons, and Lennon (2002: 77) comment that race and sexual orientation are important identity markers that signify a hierarchy of gender, of “woman” and of “man”. Thus, the multiple variations in the terms “masculinity” and “femininity” highlight these social relations and guide a person’s conduct based on the varying gender imposed on them. These genders are directly related to the sex of a person but sex and gender cannot necessarily be collapsed into each other. While a person is born of a particular sex (female or male), they are socialized to act according to their varying gender (woman or man, and feminine or masculine).

Understanding the sex/gender divide this way also highlights how gender is a “free floating artifice” (Butler 1990: 9). Masculinity in theory can just as easily signify a female body as femininity can signify a male body (Butler 1990: 9).

Connell (2002: 33) contends that science-based knowledge often enforces sex/gender assumptions with research into sex differences. It does this because while scientists study sex differences (female or male), they do it by segregating their subjects based on their gender (feminine or masculine). This illustrates that our gender is linked to our sex and how cognitively difficult it is to separate the two. This also highlights how, in science, gender is embedded in what “we presume and therefore what we ‘see’ when we look at a complex reality” (Connell 2002: 33). So, while “scientific research” conjures up images of objectivity and neutrality, it continues to be embedded in gendered assumptions. Many persisting barriers in special forces and PSFs, although appearing to be arguments based on sex and anatomical differences and founded in science, continue to be rooted in gender assumptions. Although beyond the scope of my research, there are postmodern feminists, such as Butler (1990), who further suggest that sex too is a social construction and claim that binary gendered units of analysis of “woman” and “man” can be problematic. Furthermore, Somers (1994) contends that identity and representative claims need to be understood beyond gender by incorporating race, religion, culture, and class.

With that said, my research indicates that “woman” remains a relevant unit of analysis. Admittedly, there are limits to using the ontology of “woman” as it hides the heterogeneity of identities that women possess and in turn simplifies these women’s roots of oppression in the military. Conversely, it appears that throughout Western militaries

men continue to have more opportunities open to them (such as in combat arms and special forces). Woodward and Winter (2006) have examined diversity policy in the British army. While gay men are now allowed to participate in the British combat arms, women remain denied this opportunity. Furthermore, contemporary studies of women's participation in the CF and combat arms indicates structural opportunity differences between "woman" and "man" in many military settings (Davis 2002, Davis and McKee 2004). With this said, future research should explore further the various impediments men face in participating in special forces based on their gender interfaces with various other identity markers.

Masculinity/Masculinities

Masculinity is a gender construction defining "social practices and cultural representations" that are often associated to the male body (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 82). Masculinities refers to the varied ways of "being a man" that are based in cultural and historical differences (Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 82). Connell (2000) contends that in Western societies, masculinities are privileged over femininities in their access to power. He further claims that there is a hegemonic masculinity that is defined as the ideal within a particular group or organization. According to Connell (2000), very few men can achieve this masculinity. Therefore, there are a "range of masculinities" which do not fully meet the ideal masculinity. However, femininity is always at the bottom of gender hierarchy (Connell cited in Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 84). While scholars continue to associate masculine behaviour to the male body, MacInnes (1998) claims that masculinity should be understood as "an ideology about what men should be like" (MacInnes cited in

Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 84). Conversely, Connell (2000) argues that masculinity needs to be separated from the male body and understood as a concept that “names patters of gender practice, not just groups of people” (Connell cited in Pilcher and Whelehan 2004: 84-85). My research indicates that masculinities are understood in both attached to the male body and in the organizational culture of military institutions.

Militarized Masculinities

The military supports a gender binary of masculine and feminine and in turn polarizes these genders with arguments based in biological sex in order to privilege participation of men over women (Tickner 1992). However, only a few men, and what seems to be zero women, can achieve the ideal masculinity. While in special forces and by extension PSFs, many men appear to be excluded on a variety of fronts (as defined in the JTF2 attributes assessed during selection—discussed in Chapter 3), women continue to be denied participation based on their biology and inability to physically perform at the same level and in the same manner as their male counterparts.

Enloe (1993: 72) contends that militaries structure and embed a variety of military masculinities depending on historical and political contexts. She claims during WWII the American military’s masculinity was embodied in a particular comic strip character, Steve Canyon. This character represented the type of soldier that was desirable and needed for the US military—a white male who was an individual and had emotional attachments to women. Furthering the importance of historical and political aspects playing into masculinity, Enloe (1993: 74) illustrates during the post-Vietnam era of the 1970s and 1980s, the US soldier was embodied by Rambo. Rambo represented a soldier who was suspicious of authority, hyper-individualist, and had no attachment to women.

Extending this line of inquiry, Whitworth (2004: 16), illustrating the Canadian UN peacekeeper, described masculinity as an ideology of manliness rooted in aggression, violence, heterosexism, homophobia, misogyny, and racism. Currently, masculinity in the military appears to be taking on varying images. However, masculinity in Special Forces and PSFs, while continuing to show aggression and violence, also has ascribed “brain and brawn” characteristics. The “ideal” Special Forces soldier must show a complexity of skills incorporating conflict resolution, networking, brute force, technical proficiency, and the cognitive ability to know when to use each skill in specific environments (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The soldier must be highly autonomous yet highly self-disciplined. At the same time, this soldier must maintain a high level of physical fitness that favours the male physique.

Discourses and Narratives

Discourses are “systems of concepts, in which things (be they material things, actions, or ideas) are made meaningful” (Woodward and Winter 2004: 283). They are constructed and sustained through “social activity” and are political acts that speak directly about power (Woodward and Winter 2004: 283). The military as an institution and PSFs use masculinity as a particular discourse that produces knowledge about who can participate in their organizations and who cannot. These masculine discourses are structurally performed through the ideal image of the participating soldier and through organizational culture of the military entity.

Somers (1994: 606) describes a narrative as a form of “social ontology”. This concept posits that through narratives we come to know, understand, and make sense of

the world. We then determine our social identities based on this understanding (Somers 1994: 606). There are a variety of war narratives but the one that I discuss, namely the War on Terror, is being told with a particular military perspective that carves space for JTF2 and Blackwater operations. Furthering this narrative embeds a brain/brawn masculine image as ideal in security discourse and in soldiers.

The War on Terror narrative has created a particular discourse within the security realm that focuses on combat and the reinventing of the warrior soldier. Caught in this discourse is a narration of war that tells us “why we go to war and how wars are won” (Hunt and Rygiel 2006: 4). This war narrative is centered in “gendered tropes and notions of masculinity and femininity” explaining women’s need to be protected and men’s reasons to fight (Hunt and Rygiel 2006: 4). While men continue to sacrifice their lives in order to illustrate their patriotism, women are portrayed as “casualties of the 9/11 attacks, mothers of fallen soldiers, victims of dictators, and widows rebuilding their lives in the aftermath of war” (Hunt and Rygiel 2006: 1). This discourse has redefined the new threat and further entrenched masculine notions of war and solutions to ending war. Who defines the war narrative and how it is told is important because they frame the purpose of military forces and those who are to be considered legitimate participants.

The War on Terror, as understood in this narrative, is a contemporary war that begins on “11 September 2001 when millions in the USA and around the world watched powerlessly as two aircrafts ploughed into the Twin Towers in New York (sic)” (Youngs 2006: 4). The threat to the West was subsequently embodied in Al Qaeda and Islamic fundamentalism (Youngs 2006: 4). The enemies are described as loose networks of “shifting mobile cells of individuals and groupings ... who cannot be regarded as an

external threat as [understood] in traditional state centered” international relations (IR) (Youngs 2006: 4). These enemies are resilient and aggressive,³ they are elusive, sophisticated, and determined.⁴ The war is defined as a battle space that is “volatile, uncertain, constantly changing, and ambiguous” (Horn 2007B: 116). It is a war that is both complex and technical (Horn 2007A: 51). In order to combat the new threat in this war, the war narrative tells us that Canada and its allied countries must be aggressive and specialized (Maloney 2004: 47, Horn 2007A: 50). Overall, Canada has seen an increase in political and financial support for a more robust combat force and one where masculinity continues to flourish as illustrated in Canada’s contribution to the War on Terror (McQuaig 2007: 70).

Because of this narrative, Canada and a variety of Western countries are relying more and more on special operations to combat terror (Haney and Thomsen 2006: viii). Maloney (2004: 47) contends that “the nature of conflict today and in the future should dictate that special operations forces have a permanent place in Canada’s reservoir of operational capabilities”. The contemporary conflicts are about intelligence and in turn the “new” soldier needs to be rearticulated in order to achieve military success. These soldiers need to be either brutes or diplomats or peace-builders or a little of all three depending on context and circumstances.

However, some critics argue that the War on Terror appears as a new narrative but carries with it the same descriptions of “state and geopolitics of hegemony” as it has done historically (Youngs 2006: 4). Though terrorism did not begin on 11 September

³ Canadian Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) Website, www.csor.forces.gc.ca, last accessed 17 April 2007.

⁴ Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) Website, www.jtf2.forces.gc.ca/en/about_e.asp, last accessed 4 September 2007.

2001, this date is paramount in the understanding of this new war narrative. Moreover, the University of British Columbia (UBC) *2005 Human Security Report* (2005: 6) shows that while terrorism remains a concern, on average over the last 30 years, throughout the world, less than one thousand deaths per year were attributed to terrorism.⁵ Given that terrorism is neither new nor especially fatal compared to other forms of war, the degree to which there should be political and military concern over this threat remains debatable (Human Security Report 2005: 6). Some argue that the salience placed on terrorism in this war provides an excuse for unilateral aggression as illustrated by the US's role in Iraq (Youngs 2006:4). The war narrative has also provided an opportunity for specialized forces both in the private and public realms to fulfill new operations where there appears to be little accountability and transparency.

Canada's Involvement in the War Narrative

In Canada, special operational units are being created and deployed overseas to fight the War on Terror. In fact, Canada's Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) is a new unit, created in February 2006, within the Canadian military that is specifically designed for special operations.⁶ Canada has given more political and financial support to the creation of CSOR and the continuation of JTF2 than it did during the 1990s peacetime military. After 11 September 2001, the Canadian government increased the Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF) budget by \$119 million over 5 years "as an

⁵ The report goes on to say that terrorism remains a concern because of 1) it provides rationale for wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2) war on terror has created a large volume of anti-Americanism in the Middle East and this anti-Americanism could lead to more terrorist recruits, and 3) terrorists have the opportunity to possess weapons of mass destruction (WMD) (2005: 6).

⁶ Canada Special Operations Regiment (CSOR) Website, www.csor.forces.gc.ca, last accessed 17 April 2007.

integral part of Canada's participation in the global war on terror (GWOT) with an intent to double the size of [the JTF2]" (de B. Taillon 2005-06: 67). Canada's participation in current conflicts now calls for a permanent Special Operations Force (SOF) as part of the political and military strategy.

Canada Special Operations Force Command (CANSOFCOM) is a command predominantly made up of units that are specially trained in counter-terrorism, biological threats, and covert operations. These units are created and funded with a specific type of security threat and a subsequent solution in mind. In turn, soldiers are socialized and constructed in a particular masculine way (incorporating brawn and brain) in order to be effective in war. In addition, Canada and its allied countries not only employ these special operations units within contemporary wars, they also rely on the open market to provide additional security services—namely PSFs.

PSFs are seen as the “more effective and least costly alternative” (Shearer 2001: 30) as well as providing a covert type of operation for the contracting government (Leander 2004: 1). This type of mission allows governments to participate alongside their allies while maintaining public support back home. Covert operations, whether delivered through public or private forces, appear to be effective for governments, especially in countries like Canada, where the resolve for war and a robust fighting force is not as strong as some of its allies (Gray 1999: 3). This type of political strategy is called a “high value/low density” national action (de Taillon 2005-06: 73) and can be an attractive foreign policy tool for governments. Modern states have been employing contemporary PSFs since the end of the Cold War. That being said, it is important to note that the

Canadian government has yet to employ actual private security contractors. Nevertheless, they still rely on these private firms for training and logistical support (Perry 2007).

The rise in the use of PSFs was particularly evident in the mid-1990s as part of the Sierra Leonean and Angolan civil wars. PSF operations are appearing to gain legitimacy in the current world order and are taking advantage of the expanding global market, as well as the War on Terror and the present US-led war in Iraq. The employers of these firms are increasingly varied and include state actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), multinational corporations (MNCs), and citizens seeking to challenge state authority (Singer 2003).

Canada's overall contribution in this war narrative has gone largely unexamined in scholarly literature when compared to the United States. However, two polarized positions over the past few years have developed and are exemplified by the contrasting work of Linda McQuaig (2007) and Jack L. Granatstein (2007). McQuaig contends that the Canadian government and military are moving Canada into a direction that increases militarization and a foreign policy that projects aggression all the while advancing Canada into a closer relationship with the United States. She warns the Canadian public of the negative ramifications the War on Terror can have on our ideals of being helpful "problem-fixers" and our dedication to human rights. Conversely, Granatstein argues that Canada has become too weak and insignificant to matter in world affairs. He argues the War on Terror is a wake up call to the Canadian public to realize the dangers of the world and respond accordingly—namely through robust military action—in order to protect Canada's national interests.

Through media reports, academic research, and transformations in Canada's military force, we are seeing the immediate effects of this war narrative. The impacts are uneven and often contradictory in their application. Canada's Department of National Defence (DND) is currently conducting an internal debate regarding the facets of this war narrative. The dialogue centres on purpose and direction of the CF. Underpinning this discussion are two conflicting ideas of the purposes of professional arms. One position holds that militaries are primarily for coercive force and in turn their main responsibility is to train for war (Bland and Maloney 2004: 10). This argument assumes that all other roles the military performs, such as humanitarian and peacekeeping missions, are secondary (Hillier cited in McQuaig 2007: 72). The argument is rooted in the combat masculine warrior model as it defines war and the soldiers needed in war in a particular masculine way. The combat masculine warrior model is a paradigm depicted by Karen Dunivan and based in her research on the US combat arms, which provides "the foundation for [military] values, attitudes, and notions" (Dunivan cited in Pinch 2002). It is a model that favours men and masculinity. The model "includes symbols that not only exclude women but also which define women in terms of weakness and deficiency while male participation is defined as strength and normalcy" (Pinch 2002). This same model that valorized the warrior soldier has been critiqued as being one of the major barriers to increasing women's role within the military; especially the combat arms (Davis 2002, Pinch 2002).

The other side of the debate over the role of armed forces contends that Canada's military goes beyond coercive force because it needs to reflect the values and beliefs of the citizens that it serves (Pinch 2006: 6). For pragmatic reasons, the argument also

claims that drawing from a diverse group of participants will make the CF more combat effective because it will have a bigger pool of recruits and this will be able to respond to more diverse and complex conflicts (Davis 2002, Leuprecht 2006). The argument is further extended by elucidating the belief that war is increasingly complex and includes a variety of actors and skills needed to address these contemporary conflicts (Balasevicius 2007A and Horn 2007A). Soldiers need to possess a diversity of skills that move beyond the “soldier warrior” and “brute force” personas (Pinch 2002).

This latter argument is enforced in Canada by the country’s Employment Equity Act (EE Act) and other legislation that has been the impetus to increasing the participation of women, Aboriginal people, and people of ethnic and visible minority status within the CF (Leuprecht 2006: 122). This understanding fits more into what Pinch (2002) describes as the Evolving Culture paradigm. It is a paradigm that is based on “inclusionary culture, as a consequence of the influence of laws/policies, changing force structure, more positive attitudes and better social interactions” between minority and majority groups (Dunivan cited in Pinch 2002). Through the imposition of Canada’s legal and parliamentary frameworks, the CF has reduced its barriers to persons of diverse backgrounds inclusive of gender, ethnic, religious, and sexual orientation (Winslow 2002 and Davis 2002). While the CF is going through an internal transformation to increase participation inclusive of a more diverse demographic, the War on Terror narrative has created space for new, elite units. These units, through personal image and organizational culture, are forming new bastions of masculinity.

Special Forces and PSFs have been privileged with access to new technology, whether through the market or through their expertise (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

Because of this, they are playing such large roles in telling and re-telling the war narrative, and how we come to understand security and so involving women in this process becomes of increasing importance. This is not to say women offer a different and valid perspective because they are women. Rather, because of their gendered roles in patriarchy and in the military, women are placed in a disadvantaged position in relation to power and their experiences are often ignored in security discourse. Including women in the security dialogue, based on their experiences, would likely allow for a greater comprehension of how complex security truly is and hopefully lead to an increasingly effective response to security issues.

Despite the diversity push and the recognized need to include women as part of the dialogue and through legal impositions to increase women's participation within the CF, the combat masculine warrior model has persisted in defining Canada's military culture, and more specifically the combat arms. Canada's combat arms are used to provide solutions to security problems in the War on Terror narrative. Whether in the private or public domain, combat-experienced soldiers continue to provide security in a variety of forms in contemporary conflicts. These units are also said to be the "last bastion" of overt militarized masculinity specifically in Canada and more broadly across Western states (Pinch 2002, Winslow 2002, Whitworth 2004). Combat arms' cultural organization continues to resist what is felt as an imposition by Parliament to change the military ethos centering around the warrior (Pinch 2002).

The Warrior Ethic and Image

The warrior soldier is a key symbol in the combat masculine warrior model. The soldier in this model is defined as one who embodies brute force, aggression, and propensity for violence. It has also advantaged men over women (Pinch 2002). While women are legally able to participate in all trades within the CF, the combat masculine warrior model that embeds a particular masculinity continues to impede their full involvement. In fact, the proportion of women within the Canadian regular force combat arms remains at 1.4 percent (Goldenberg 2006).

The warrior ethic that embodies the combat soldier centers around war that requires brute force and privileges some male soldier above all other participants who fail to meet the warrior image. The warrior image has been used as an exclusionary tool to promote unit cohesion among smaller combat arms units. According to scholars such as Cohn (1998), Niva (1998), and Whitworth (2002), sexual orientation, height, weight, age, and sex have acted as barriers in military forces. These have privileged the participation of men over men and men over women. These various barriers have been used in arguments about unit cohesion and how heterogeneity of participation breaks down unit cohesion. Researchers have determined that combat social cohesion is what keeps soldiers in the heat of battle—not patriotism (Winslow 1998, Pinch 2002, English 2004). Persons in the combat arms have argued that incorporating women will decrease this cohesion and in turn reduce combat effectiveness (Pinch 2002). Cohesion is extremely important for both these special units and the CF as a whole (Winslow 1998). At the same time, cohesion and the warrior ethic have been used as reasons to keep women and some men out of combat arms because the argument relies on gender assumptions of

female and male despite empirical evidence suggesting women do not have any negative affects on cohesion (Davis 2002).

Masculine Tools of Exclusion

Masculinity as an exclusionary tool is seen in the market and advances in technology. So, while Canada is transforming and debating over the internal culture of its military, it continues to outsource traditional military roles to PSFs (Perry 2007: 13). Private industry is also playing a role with its advancement in military technology. Moreover, increasingly former Canadian soldiers—predominantly former Special Forces soldiers—are joining PSFs and deploying as private security contractors. This is raising concern among Canadian policy makers and key academics in security studies (Beyer 11 November 2005, Spearin 2007). The concerns expressed center around maintaining combat effectiveness in the CF along with maintaining a positive reflection of Canadians and Canadian values internationally.

Technology in the military is becoming increasingly complex. Technology, in its popular and amoral definition and application, has also been critiqued by feminists as a continual point to women's exclusion in organizations because it is to be linked to patriarchy and masculine understanding of culture and power (Bush 1997, Wajcman 1997). Military technology is linked to domination, violence, and aggression in its application of efficiently killing the enemy. Masters (2005) has commented that technology in warfare has changed masculinity on the battlefield. Men now assume a feminine role as actors who need to be protected by their masculine technology. However, technology still relies on specialized forces to gather the intelligence needed for the technology to operate effectively. With greater technological capability, the

military demands increasingly specialized participants to make the technology work properly. Special Forces and PSFs play an integral role in the application of this technology and men continue to have access to the warfare technology through training with the technology and applying it during war. Women are denied the opportunity to work with technology and in turn the opportunity to develop it. Furthermore, the imagery of the technology continues to be overtly masculine in its efficiency and violence in killing the enemy. Technology enforces the perception that its application during war is masculine and the people using it are masculine.

Discussing the various organizational cultural barriers that exclude women's participation is an important exploration. Social scientific research into gender-based barriers has given the impetus to increasing women's participation within the CF. However, since the conception of the Human Rights Tribunal (1989) that directed the CF to fully integrate women into all areas of the CF (except submarines) by 1999, there has been a reduction in research into this area (Davis 2004). As a result, there has been little push for women's increased involvement in units within combat arms. These units continue to be predominantly male (and exert a particular type of brain/brawn masculinity). This results in the development of a cultural organization where militarized masculinity persists as normal and where responses to women's participation is hostile (Winslow 1998, Davis 2002, Pinch 2002).

Women's increased integration in the CF was based on pragmatic reasons (i.e., a shortage of males to recruit) and political reasons (i.e., an external political push to open up all military trades) (Davis 2004). However, research into the barriers has moved more towards focusing on persons of visible and ethnic minorities since their representation

rate is even lower in relation to women. With that said, women continue to make up less than 17 percent of the total forces (Goldenberg 2006).

PSFs and Special Forces in Canada predominantly recruit from combat arms. If women's role within the combat arms remains low, the propensity for these women to join Special Forces and PSFs as security contractors will remain low to non-existent. Canada's military as well as PSFs, based on historical and contemporary reports, will continue to play a dominant role in international security. Women have the right to be a part of these organizations and security dialogue. Moreover, deconstructing and displacing masculinity as the norm in military culture would not only instigate change in participation but also provide future academic studies with the tools to envision what a military that is not embedded in masculinity might look like. While the exclusion of women continues to be a concern, one needs to examine how a force projecting overt masculinity affects security upon deployment. Whitworth (2004), Pugliese (2003), and Singer (2003) have all commented how the safety of women and local populations has been compromised when various masculine-dominated units, whether public or private, have been deployed to maintain peace and security.

The War on Terror narrative has also challenged the military's conception of war. This narrative has created a space where military units and institutions in private and public domains are struggling over which institution and perspective holds the privileged position in the war narrative. Regular combat arms, Special Forces units, and PSFs are all vying for top masculine image in this war narrative. There is a lot at stake for the winner. The unit will receive political support and financial means to play out how it perceives security threats and the solutions.

Multiple Masculinities in Organizational Culture

It is important to recognize the assertion of militarized masculinity within this battle of resources. All security organizations, in attempting to garner political support, are defining and justifying their role in the war narrative. All of them carry a specific masculinity. Militarized masculinity on the individual level entails conditioning a person to perform in such a way that would not otherwise be natural—namely kill for military objectives (Whitworth 2004).

Within this context, there is currently a competition of masculinities within organizational cultures in the security sector. One type of masculinity is based on physical strength, rationality, lack of emotion, and brute force (Whitworth 2004). Another is intrinsically linked to technology whereby masculine traits are embodied by the technology that in turn protects the human soldier (Masters 2005: 121) along with increased specialization. Yet another type of masculinity plays on the technology and specialization with the benefits of the private market for increased flexibility in employment opportunities. The second and third masculinities are played out predominantly in Special Forces and PSFs operations where the soldier is required to be skilled and technologically-capable (Balasevicius 2007A: 104). These soldiers need to incorporate both brain and brawn characteristics (Balasevicius 2007B, Shearer 2007). They continue to be described in tropes of masculinity as articulated by Whitworth (those being aggressive, having a propensity for violence, and misogynist) but are also described as being perceptive, intelligent, and technologically-capable.

While the masculinity that links with technology appears to provide more room for women, the technology itself appears to continue to privilege white, heterosexual men and therefore provides little space for women (Masters 2005: 124). Masters (2005: 125)

further contends that until the “hegemonic articulations of power and knowledge” are deconstructed, this technology will cease to be emancipatory for women.

Notably, United States’ Special Forces and Canada’s JTF2 organize themselves somewhat differently. While technology appears to be integral in US special operations as Masters has indicated, my research through personal interviews with authorities on Canada’s JTF2 suggests that placing salience on the human over technology continues to occur. However, Canada’s JTF2 places a lot of importance on science to justify its selection and training of the Special Forces assaulter. This science and the disproportionate weight placed on physical endurance and strength as a selection criterion in the JTF2 continues to act as a barrier for women’s participation (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Moreover, JTF2 continues to benefit from US technology on its deployments (Pugliese 2003).

This contemporary war has allowed Canada’s military and security firms to specialize and create a space within the private and public forces. These forces project a different type of militarized masculinity incorporating brain and brawn attributes. The warrior soldier framework found predominantly in the combat arms continues to embed masculinity and act as exclusion tool based on gender. In addition though, Special Forces have been able to carve a new masculinity that places importance on a variety of attributes within the soldier that go beyond the physical as they require increasingly technical and mental capabilities (Balasevicius 2007A: 92, Horn 2007A: 50). Private security contractors have employed images of being more efficient and technically advanced in order to deal with the new security threats (Leander 2004: 8). By branding themselves this way they create a market for their services but they also create a

perception of public military being incompetent and practicing poor management (Leander 2004: 10). The accuracy of these images is somewhat less significant. What becomes important is the implications from this “evolving understanding of the competence and value of public and private actors as security experts” (Leander 2004: 10). While public militaries, Special Forces, and PSFs all vie for supremacy in telling the security story, they each embed a masculinity that holds privilege as the war narrator.

Methodology and Analytical Perspective

Drawing from these feminist theoretical approaches and the aforementioned debates, my research explores whether the overt masculinity of the private security sector and Canada’s special operations units have acted as a motivator for professional soldiers to leave the public forces and join these branches. These soldiers’ understandings of the special units and their propensity to join is an important exploration. It highlights whether masculinity continues to be a motivating factor in joining units that consist of a predominantly male demographic.

I have conducted small-n qualitative research focusing on personal interviews with soldiers who have either left regular army units to join or are in the process of leaving for employment with JTF2 and PSFs. The interviews were initiated in order to explore motivations such as remuneration, contract lengths, personal benefits offered, and deployment locations. My research focuses primarily on regular force combat arms, JTF2, and PSFs in general, and Blackwater more specifically.

Where appropriate, I have included information from interviews with two authorities on JTF2. The persons have particular expertise on JTF2 operations and its

internal culture. Their interviews have been beneficial in that there is very little information on JTF2 available to the public. I also felt it was important to explore, albeit limited to one interview, how men react and understand their soldier identity and identity as men when they do not succeed in JTF2 selection. Masculinity is not only damaging to women but to any person who cannot achieve the projected image. Where appropriate, some of this person's insights in the JTF2 selection process have been included.

The interviews are small in number because of the difficulty getting soldiers to discuss aspects of the military or their security employment. The military acts as a closed society such that members of the forces through normative practices are very reluctant to talk about their experiences. When pressed to explain their reluctance most soldiers who declined the interview claimed they felt a sense of fear of their information being divulged to unintended persons or the fear of someone who was unauthorized listening to our conversation.

With the exception of LCol Karen Davis, the people interviewed are all men. There are very few to no women participating in these units. The actual numbers of men and women are not known despite numerous requests to CF recruiting authorities. CF recruiting informed me that a gendered breakdown and other statistics pertaining to Special Forces were classified and they do not keep actual numbers for these units. Blackwater's department of human resources never replied in reference to the gendered percentage of employees although the company claims to be an equal employer on its website.⁷ Both of these situations raise concern over how one holds them accountable to diversity and equal opportunity legislation; specifically in the Canadian context. It also highlights the secrecy and gives the perception that they are less accountable than their

⁷ Blackwater Website, www.blackwaterusa.com, last accessed 4 September 2007.

regular armed forces counterpart. This lack of accountability plays into the idea of masculinity where the person participating possesses a high level of autonomy.

One of my interviews was with a former US Delta Force officer and author of *Bloody Business: America's War Zone Contractors and the Occupation of Iraq*, Colonel [ret] Schumacher. He served for 32 years with the US army and 23 of those were with Special Forces. Over his service he obtained intimate and unique knowledge of PSFs and his comments were very helpful in my understanding of how PSFs in general recruit, train, and operate.

My interviews are designed to reflect more of the interviewees' narrative. I asked very broad questions and let the interviewee expand in the areas he felt most salient. This style of interviewing allows for the process to be driven more by the interviewee rather than myself, the researcher. It is a particular method that seeks to reduce the power difference between the researcher and the interviewed. It is underpinned by feminist research methodology that advocates for the research to be driven by the interviewees' perspective. This is a process where the voices of the interviewed are given salience over the researcher's particular interests. This methodology also provides a way of avoiding particular research being driven by the researcher (Mann et al. 2004).

Along with the interviews, I also perform a content analysis of the Blackwater website. Through this analysis as well as an examination of popular books on PSFs authored by Singer (2003), Pelton (2006), Schumacher (2006), and Schaihl (2007), I explicitly looked at language employment and particular images in order to ascertain what is important to these soldiers and how they define themselves to each other. Content analysis methods of internet sites have primarily employed similar methods of ones used

by print media. They focus on images and particular language to determine who the material is catered for and what messages are being portrayed.

Organization of the Study

The second chapter defines and explains the purpose of my conceptual framework of militarized masculinity. I detail a literature review of IR feminist historical scholarship and current debates in the field as it pertains to studying the military.

The third chapter explores the history of JTF2 and explains various reasons as to why it is a dominant player in Canada's security discussion. I examine the various gendered implications that are raised with the organizational culture of this elite unit.

The fourth chapter examines the rise of post-Cold War PSFs and how they are becoming a dominant feature with Canada's and US foreign policy and military employments. I focus primarily on security contractors and elucidate the implications they have on security and the security realm.

The fifth chapter discusses various implications masculinity in the military has for women's participation and the continual barriers that persist for women because of the brain/brawn masculinity found in these units. I explore the embedded masculinity in these organizational cultures through recruitment and training strategies and individual motivations for joining these units. I conclude that unless this masculinity is deconstructed, de-linked from and combat effectiveness, and understood as a problematic artificial barrier, women's participation will remain low.

My sixth and concluding chapter explores some limitations to my research and further studies that are both important and necessary. The chapter details future

implications of my findings and elaborates on research that is required to continue to understand both Special Forces and PSFs and their roles in contemporary global politics.

Preliminary Assumptions and Conclusions

I assume that a gendered perspective on military culture and within security discourse is both necessary and heavily under-researched. I believe women, just as well as men, regardless of their race, religion, creed, language, or ethnicity, have the right to participate on an equal level in military institutions based on the idea of equality in citizenship. I feel that this will only occur by continual vigilance into persisting social and gender barriers. Military cultural changes have occurred in the CF because of external pushes and have often coincided with changes in the public domain (Davis 2002). However there is a popular sentiment within the CF that gender is no longer an issue and that women have now achieved equal ground because they have legal access to all military roles (Davis 2002). This is simply not the case.

I also assume that militarized masculinity and the masculine combat warrior model remain the major barriers to women's equal participation in combat arms and special forces. These terms offer unique insight into persisting masculine barriers that would otherwise likely go unnoticed. I argue that the operational conception of the CF, founded in the combat masculine warrior model, is problematic not only for women but for any person who does not meet the standard of soldier based on a male, heterosexual person (Cohn 1998, Davis 2002). In addition, this model restricts who can participate in a time when the CF continues to be plagued with low recruitment rates and continual personnel capability issues (Leuprecht 2004).

My research is important because there have been relatively few scholarly studies conducted on the impact of both Special Forces and PSFs on world order and our understanding of its evolution. The creation of Special Forces has allowed the CF to evade certain legislative measures that work to ensure equal opportunity for all Canadian citizens to serve in the forces. JTF2 has justified its selection process resulting in cultural exclusion as paramount for combat effectiveness and its justification has gone largely unexamined. Canada and its allied countries are now employing private-public partnerships (PPPs) in security realms. The boost in employment of both PSFs and special operations units within Canada and the United States are further embedding a militarized masculinity within security both as internal organizations and with reference to the types of deployed missions. Special units along with PSFs have embedded brain/brawn masculinity as a requirement in becoming a successful soldier. Therefore, they have lowered the propensity of anyone who does not come close to meeting this image in participating.

Most importantly, though, women's voices are often silenced when constituting who and what is political (Enloe 1993 and 2007, Sylvester 2002, NiCarthy 1995). I hope to challenge the myth of women not being important political actors through my examination of Canada's Special Forces and PSFs, such as Blackwater, and the structural gendered frameworks that keep women out of both security organizations and the politics of war.

Chapter 2: Militarized Masculinity: Viagra for the Flaccid Peacekeeper

“When Canadian troops go overseas,” declared the general, “they expect sex”. Within a split second, Hillier had corrected himself: “success”. It was a slip of the tongue, nothing more. But it also somehow fit the mood of the room. After years of feeling like an emasculated army of peacekeepers, the Canadian Forces now had a real fighting man at their helm. No more girlie-men peacekeeping, boys! We’re gonna make war! (McQuaig 2007: 70).

And peacekeeping came to have a devastating effect on the Canadian military. “Soft power” Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy called it, but a flaccid military was more like it (Granatstein 2004: 34).

Introduction

My research is inspired by post-positivist feminism as I examine the re-articulating and construction of militarized masculinity within the private and public security sectors. Post-positivist feminists, as articulated by Goldstein and Whitworth (2005: 110) “are more interested in the ways in which representations of differences may impact upon, or be used to legitimize, certain events in IR”. Gender, and more specifically masculinity in the military, has been used as an exclusionary tool to privilege participation of few over many. Militarized masculinity does this by separating men from women and men from men.

Theoretical Assumptions

To develop this argument further I use organizational culture theory because it provides a heuristic look at how gender within organizations is used to exclude women (Mills 2002: 287). Cartwright and Gale (1995: 12) use a sociological-anthropological perspective in describing organizational culture whereby it is defined as a process that

internalize “a set of values, feelings, attitudes and expectations which provide meaning, order and stability to the lives of organizational members and which shape and influence their behaviour”. While there are a variety of perspectives that can be examined in determining the culture of an organization, I explore the gendering aspects and how participation within a culture is determined by one’s gender. Scholars who have studied gender in organizational culture have found that masculine cultures are characterized by power relationships and are results-orientated whereas feminine cultures tend to be more “concerned with interpersonal relationships and [are] process-orientated” (Cartwright and Gale 1995: 12). Moreover, feminine cultures place more salience on “expert knowledge” and “allow members more individual autonomy” (Cartwright and Gale 1995: 13).

Hooper (2000: 32) claims gender identities (more specifically masculinity) are created through “discursive constructions, institutional practices and physical bodies”. I use her understanding of these three levels in my exploration of masculinity in organizational cultures of both JTF2 and PSFs. I examine how masculinity is articulated and understood in:

- gender assumptions of war, technology, and participants;
- recruitment, selection and training within the organizations; and
- the image that both PSFs and the JTF2 project.

By focusing on these three levels, I explore how different masculinities manifest themselves and work as an exclusionary mechanism to allow participation of men over women.

Feminism in IR

Feminism as an analytical perspective and as Enloe describes it in her book *Globalization and Militarization Feminists make the Link*, is rooted in curiosity (2007: 9). Feminism stems from a curiosity to explore aspects of women's lives that are taken for granted and assumed private. She further expresses that the actual act of exploration into these areas is political because it exposes the "taken for granted" and turns it into a political issue (Enloe 2007: 9). My research is based in this understanding of feminism and feminist inquiry. In examining the three areas of gender construction as depicted by Hooper (2000), I specifically look at the individual soldier's motivations for joining and the characteristics recruiters look for in their soldiers. My primary research is conducted through interviews and focuses on Blackwater's operations in Iraq and the institutional culture of Canada's JTF2. There are many implications associated with the increased use of these entities. These units are shrouded in secrecy and the current debates around their employment focus on accountability and moral claims of legitimacy. In addition, comparatively little research has been done regarding the gendering processes within these armed forces, selection of assaulters, recruitment methods employed, and personal motivations soldiers have for joining these forces.

There seems to be a general reluctance to discuss gender within security issues such as Special Forces and PSFs. The lack of engagement with IR feminism is endemic of the larger issue where feminism continues to be marginalized as a scholarly approach (Whitworth 2000: 91). The reasons for its marginalization are founded in both history and feminists' political motivations.

IR is a theoretical study traditionally rooted in Cold War politics. It is a pragmatic field in so much as it attempts to answer and solve politicians' diplomatic and

government issues (Whitworth 2000: 93). Cox (1995: 31) asserts that traditional IR “takes the world as given and provides guidance” to policy makers.

IR theories remain hostile to the inclusion of gender and feminism. This is based on theoretical underpinnings as well as historical origins. While IR was developed to serve governments, contemporary feminism is rooted in social movements. Feminism offers a “protest directed at transforming the historically unequal power relations between women and men” (Whitworth 2000: 93).

Feminism is a political project that varies in its methods of achieving women’s empowerment and emancipation. Because of its politically motivated underpinnings, feminism encompasses a heterogeneity of methods inclusive but not limited to standpoint, liberal, radical, postmodern, and ecological theories (Ship 1994: 130). Feminism not only diverges from more traditional IR theories in its historical roots, but in its motivations as well. Traditional IR theories are concerned with keeping the status quo, while feminism is concerned with disrupting it (Whitworth 2000: 93). As a result, feminism as a subfield within IR has developed almost exclusively within international political economy (IPE). Feminism comes out of the IPE strain of thought because, as a paradigm, IPE has offered a safe space for feminism as a critical theory to develop. Hoffman divides IPE and IR up by describing the historical process that led to their division. He claims IR has gone through as “series of debates” that has led to its evolution as a discipline (Hoffman 1988: 231). These debates have opened up space for more critical theories; however there continues to be little engagement between the traditional IR theories and more critical approaches (Hoffman 1988: 241).

Cox believes this lack of mutual engagement is based in a divergence of agendas between the two theoretical frameworks. Cox argues that IR is filled with problem-solving theories and IPE envelopes critical theory. Problem-solving theories are focused on “specific reforms aimed at the maintenance of existing structure” (Cox 2000: 32). Feminism, however, is founded in IPE and is considered critical because it concerns itself with “exploring the potential for structural change and the construction of strategies for change” (Cox 1995: 32).

Conversely, feminism does debatably remain at the margins of IPE because most critical theories do not incorporate gender into their analysis (Ship 1994: 131, Whitworth 2006, Walen 2006). Ship (1994: 131) contends that although critical theories are undergoing a self reflection of underlying assumptions “little if any attention has been paid to androcentric metatheoretical assumptions” and because of this feminist scholarship remains at the “margins of the discipline”. Grant (1991: 21) argues that even though IPE is opening up space for feminism, few theories actually challenge the gender neutral foundations of IR. That being said, IPE, because of its critical underpinnings, has traditionally offered space for a variety of more radical, critical theories to emerge—inclusive to feminism. Walen (2006: 164) asserts that IPE and feminism share “enough common ontological and epistemological ground ... to make [gender analysis in IPE] possible”. Conversely, Walen (2006: 148) argues that IPE continues to misunderstand what it means to use gender as a category. Theorists in IPE continue to focus on class as the main unit of analysis and confuse analyzing gender as simply adding women in as a homogenous group to their analysis.

Feminism as a political project aims to gain a closer understanding of power and in turn how women situate themselves within power relationships. Feminists ask different questions than do traditional IR theorists. While IR theorists concern themselves with the state or international level institutions or forces (such as the market), feminists often focus on issues concerning marginalized groups, the ones whose voices are often silenced and feminists attempt to ascertain how these groups fit into the political picture. One of the most important differences between IPE and IR theorists is consequently found in what each considers legitimately political at the international level.

The development of feminism under the IPE umbrella is problematic in some respects in that IPE is often marginalized within traditional IR topics like the military, war, and the state. IPE historically remains outside the realm of IR; at least when one examines the evolution of IPE pedagogically. Because of IPE's evolution, the perception is that IPE is defined in its relations to IR and therefore depended on IR. IPE is marginalized within IR and feminism is marginalized within IPE. Within this context, feminism garners little voice in IR issues. However, feminists within IR offer valid and useful insights when one examines gendered aspects of security and the military. Moreover, there has been an increase in literature among feminists that examine the multiple levels of masculinity. They examine how class and proximity to women in organizations interface with masculinity to create a variety of levels (Winslow 1998, Sasson-Levy 2002).

Because feminists try to understand issues and ask questions pertaining to power that are not studied in traditional research areas, very few scholars in IR are writing about such topics (Tickner 2006: 24). Pragmatically, this forces IR feminist scholars to look to

other disciplines in assisting in their research. IR feminists also do not claim objectivity in research and actually attempt to physically place themselves in their research by openly expressing their motivations (Tickner 2006: 26). Some feminist scholars contend they can reach a higher state of objectivity by expressing their biases for the reader to explore (Longino 1993: 103).

IR feminism is an important analytical perspective because it explores the continued gendering of security by examining the masculine overtones in the public militaries (Enloe 1993; Withworth 2001; Tickner 1992) and, by extension, to PSF recruitments and operations. An IR feminist perspective will also highlight how the provision of public goods (such as security) through the global market directly affects women as well as identify various implications on women on women's security when an overtly masculine organization is deployed.

Militarized masculinity is the construction of a particular type of masculinity that creates specific traits in its soldiers ultimately to the presumed benefit of the military as an institution. This type of masculinity projected is varied, historically, and spatially situated (Enloe 1993). Whitworth (2004: 16) claims that a militarized masculine soldier must possess a certain idea of manliness in order for the military as an institution to function.

The construction of a militarized masculinity within the military is created for a specific reason and pragmatically serves the military. The military counts on a soldier possessing a "lust for violence (when needed) and a corresponding willingness to subordinate oneself to hierarchy and authority (when needed)" (Whitworth 2004: 155). Moreover, these attributes must be self-consciously cultivated (Whitworth 2004: 155).

The image of the soldier is founded in “Greeks’ and Machiavelli’s depictions of the citizen-warrior” (Tickner 1992: 39). This image is directly tied to men. Tickner argues that “more than any other social institution, the military separates men from women” (Tickner 1992: 39). While Tickner’s argument is accurate, it is also important to understand that the military, through elite units, also works to separate men from other men. Moreover, masculinity is also situated within its political context. So while all these accounts of militarized masculinity are useful, the attributes described as “masculine” are changing. Because of this change, it becomes important to further examine the manifestation of masculinity in Special Forces and PSFs.

The socialization of the soldier’s image is highlighted through basic training, which is similar in its indoctrination across militaries (Whitworth 2004: 155). What this process does is “inculcate recruits into the norms and values—in other words, the ideals—that constitute the imagined community of military institutions” (Whitworth 2004: 155). Militarized masculinity is masculinity where the “other” is denied in order to produce an elite form of man (Whitworth 2004: 161). According to Tickner, a soldier is socialized to be a “protector; he must show courage, strength, and responsibility and repress feelings of fear, vulnerability, and compassion” (Tickner 1992: 40). The latter traits are considered feminine and are incommensurable with what a soldier needs to be during times of war. This type of masculinity denies soldiers of everything in them that is feminine. The feminine becomes the other. The othering process is seen in rituals of chants, shaving heads and group hazing (Whitworth 2004: 161). These rituals are filled with gendered assumptions and work to create a certain truth for the soldier to participate. The socialization process of creating militarized masculinity asserts that “war demands

manliness; it is an event in which boys become men, for combat is the ultimate test of manliness” (Tickner 1992: 40). This masculinity is centered around war and the war on terror provides the soldier with the narrative to prove his masculinity. Hegemonic militarized masculinity, as articulated by Connell (2002) is an ideal type of masculinity that the military tries to create. Currently there appears to be internal battles between combat arms, Special Forces and PSFs in terms of which organization holds this image. Masculinity in the army is treated as natural and regardless of the contradictions it creates, is rarely questioned. However, not everyone has equal access to this masculinity. As will be illustrated in subsequent chapters, units within militaries create a particular type of masculinity that works to construct their ideal soldier.

This construction is done through selection, training and image. These constructions have also been implicated as being barriers for women’s participation in these units. This creation of masculinity does not only exclude women from participating, it excludes anyone who does not meet the desired image. Connell (2002: 142) writes that this hegemonic masculinity creates a patriarchal dividend where men receive more resources and support than women. This is illustrated in the Special Forces and PSFs as they are receiving more political and financial support in the current war narrative, yet, not surprisingly, women are not participating in these units. Moreover, Connell writes that “individual men may get more of [the patriarchal dividend] than others, or less, or none depending on their social order”. He further asserts that men who do not meet the hegemonic masculine image are also denied access to resources and to these units.

Interestingly though, this inequity in resources and power is socially based and requires a buy-in by both the oppressed and the oppressor. Cynthia Enloe (1989), in her

book *Bananas Beaches and Bases*, discusses how military wives, prostitutes, girlfriends, mothers, and female soldiers along with their male counterparts all bought into the particular idea of masculinity within the forces.

Militarized masculinity is specific to the military as it defines the soldier in such a way that it privileges men over women in recruitment and types of participation within both private and public military organizations. Enloe claims that

militaries are composed of men as a result of quite conscious political policies. State officials-themselves primarily male-create an explicit link between the presumed cultural and physical propensities of maleness and institutional needs of the military as an organization (Enloe 1993: 52).

Militarized masculinity is created and sustained to allow the military to function and sustain itself as a particular war making and fighting institution.

Importantly, many feminists in recent works are moving beyond seeing masculinity as one homogenous oppressive force. Whitworth contends that we need to examine masculinities, not a single masculinity. She states that masculinities are in competition and certain forms do not become hegemonic because of their natural characteristics, “rather it is the result of social practices” (Whitworth 2004: 155). Hegemonic militarized masculinity “assumes a central role in shaping a hierarchy order of gendered and civic identities that reflects and reproduces social stratification and reconstructs differential modes of participation” (Sasson-Levy 2002: 357). Hegemonic masculinity is also an image that no one can fully achieve. Within this context, militarized masculinity is projected in special units within the CF and in PSFs. There are a level of masculinities that are formed within security organizations in that they cross sect with class, race, gender and occupation. While beyond the scope of this research, the hierarchies in militarized masculinity are seen within the CF and PSFs. These hierarchies

are found in perceptions with soldiers participating within the army. These sentiments are that the general military appears to carry a lower level of masculinity because of its proximity and level of women's participation and the more peacekeeping and reconstruction deployments. These deployments require less brute force and aggressive posturing. Combat arms carries a higher level of masculinity, but is still subject to legislative imposition and regular garrison drill and furthermore, special units and private security organizations like Blackwater hold the highest level of this masculinity because of their link to greater autonomy (through lack of accountability measures) and technology. These units hold the highest level because they are the most secretive, autonomous from the rest of the CF and government, are specialized, and have very few women participating. With the understanding of feminine and masculine organizational culture as expressed by Cartwright and Gale (1995), it appears that both PSFs and Special Forces carry some feminine attributes. They allow for more decentralizing of power and salience placed on expert knowledge when compared to their conventional army organization counterpart, yet interestingly women still are not seen as legitimate participants.

A gendered division of labour immediately appears when militarized masculinity is applied to the CF. This division justifies and naturalizes men and women in particular roles. The CF is structured to promote and valorize masculinity by alienating femininity. The organization does this by creating an image of the soldier that is based in a gender dichotomy. Femininity acts as the "antithesis of soldiering" (Kovitz 2000: 39). Moreover, it assists in shaping the military soldier's identity because it defines what a soldier should not be.

Militarized masculinity has been the major barrier that has kept women out of the forces. It does so by naturalizing roles based on gender. War and the military are underpinned by these gendered roles and privilege men over women. Patriotism and nationhood are depicted by masculine ideals of war and men sacrificing their lives for their country whereas women's are "demonstrated in the surrender of sons to significant deaths" (Kovitz 2000: 39). Both sexes have to buy into this "common sense" masculine discourse. The gendered roles within the forces are central to the organizational structure of the military. Whitworth (1994: 172) contends that militaries "depend on attracting young people, especially young men, to the idea of becoming 'real men' through the initiation rituals associated with soldiering". Women soldiers in turn mimic the hegemonic masculine characteristics. Simply adding more women into these forces will not necessarily see a change in behaviour. Masculinity itself needs to be problematized before significant structural change can occur in military institutions.

Sasson-Levy has researched extensively into women's behaviour within the Israeli combat arms. He states that while women comprise 32 percent of the regular forces, only a few women are serving in combat roles. These combat women imitate masculine traits of the soldier by "lowering the tone of voice, using foul language, wearing a big and dirty uniform, and carrying a weapon" (Sasson-Levy 2002: 371). He furthers his analysis by stating women in these roles gain a sense of empowerment by essentially constructing an "alternative gender" and eroding the dichotomy of gender within the forces (2002: 371). However, this trend can also be understood as women attempting to achieve a type of masculinity but because they have a particular sex (female), they are unable to achieve the ideal image. This is in part because their sex

impedes them from achieving the ideal image. Masculinity is still rooted in the male sex. Conversely, these participating women continue to enforce militarized masculinity within the military organization (2002: 370). They do this by accepting the inherent masculine characteristics that have been deemed necessary to produce an effective combat force. Their participation illustrates one level of the multiple levels of masculinity being preformed in military institutions. It also enforces femininity as being undesirable.

However, this masculinity produces its own contradictions and tensions that highlight and expose militarized masculinity as “less impermeable and more fragile” (Enloe 1993: 9) than originally thought. One of the contradictions is that militarized masculinity is equally damaging to the men serving in the forces. Militarized masculinity is an ideal. It is unachievable even to most men. There are emerging mental health studies that illustrate how military male soldiers stress is increasing due to the realization that they cannot achieve the image of the ideal soldier (Howell 2006). Masculinity is not a single entity. All men are not afforded the same privileges of masculinity (Wiegman 2002: 35).

Conclusion

Feminists have now begun to explore the multiple levels of masculinity that are constructed. This new line of research is also important to understanding masculinity within the CF, its special units and PSFs. Currently no masculinity appears to have assumed the dominant position. In the CF there is internal debate centering around which image of the soldier warrior is most appropriate for the contemporary War on Terror. What continues to be important is how the war is defined and in turn what military

measures remain appropriate. Special Forces operations, while continuing to struggle for acceptance within the larger military culture, are placing importance on diversity of skills in their soldiers and decentralization in authority. These attributes are paramount for mission success in a war that is defined as dynamic, technical, complex and inclusive of a variety of actors. PSFs are marketing themselves as a healthy alternative to the slow and inefficient public sector. Their ability to mobilize quickly with large databases of specially skills contractors allows them to get more contracts and more say in the war narrative. The War on Terror is definitely creating a discourse around the need to be more decentralized, more dynamic, and more diverse. More focus is placed on unconventional forces that challenge some embedded attributes of what traditionally a soldier is constructed to be. How this alternative brain/brawn masculinity found in SOF is manifesting itself and whether women can find space in this masculinity will be examined further in the following three chapters.

Chapter 3: Contemporary Conflicts and the Rise of Special Forces in the New War Narrative

Of course there are women in the JTF2. How else would men affirm their masculinity?—statement from an authority on the JTF2, 27 July 2007

Introduction

The changing nature of conflicts and threats has brought about new discourses within security realms. The international community is recognizing that contemporary security issues include threats of terrorism and intra-state wars. Furthermore, violent conflict is defined as dynamic, multi-faceted, complex, and including a variety of actors (Maloney 2004, Balasevicius 2007A). When conflict is understood in a more sophisticated manner, it subsequently defines the solution in a particular way. Ending violent conflict involves a series of actors from the military, government, and NGO realms but it also requires more robust military deployments that include more specialization among increasingly skilled participants (Horn 2007B: 116).

In order to address violent conflict in the present era, soldiers must incorporate “irregular support to conventional operations” (Maloney 2004: 39). This recognition by countries such as Canada and the United States has been the impetus in creating space for Special Forces and the development of a new militarized brain/brawn masculinity. However, there continues to be barriers impeding full cooperation between the Special Forces soldier, private security contractor, and public service soldier (Horn 2007B: 127). This lack of cooperation is partly due to both PSFs and Special Forces challenging the very notion of traditional militarized masculinity (as articulated by Enloe, Tickner,

Whitworth, and Davis) by being less authoritative, less hierarchical, and rooted less in tradition (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

Canada's Special Forces' history is plagued with a struggle between its ideal brain/brawn masculinity and the more traditional militarized masculinity found in the combat arms. Technology plays a vital role in this struggle. The military has viewed technology as an autonomous force that it has to adapt to in order to be effective (Stone 2007: 29, Boot 2006). Special Forces have been able to market themselves as more adaptable, dynamic, and better suited to take full advantage of this technology. JTF2 has technical capabilities that include night vision goggles (NVGs), advanced radio systems, better sighting technology for weapons, and more advanced surveillance equipment (JTF2 Authority 27 July 2006). Balasevicius (7 June 2007) commented that because JTF2 is smaller in size and specialized they often trial the military technology before it gets dispersed amongst the rest of the CF. Technology also appears to have a more decentralizing affect. Some scholars have suggested that the military needs to become more decentralized (employing peer production) and specially skilled in order to take full advantage of the military technology (Verdon et al. 2007). JTF2 markets itself as a natural fit for this role.

Although JTF2 is challenging the traditional masculinity found in the combat arms, it is perpetuating its own unique version of masculinity that remains exclusive to a particular demographic. This chapter will detail the history of special operation forces (SOF), the resistance it faced in its struggle to participate in emerging war narratives, and its entrenchment of the brain/brawn masculinity. The chapter then examines the problems

that SOF masculinity raises in operations, how this masculinity affects women's security, and finally how its organizational structure continues to impede women's participation.

Special Forces

Special Forces is a contested term. This is due to its diverse set of operations and lack of an institutionalized doctrine in training. SOF's main advantage is its ability to surprise the enemy. Its methods and operations are constantly changing (Leebaert 2007: 22). As stated by Pentagon policy and further acknowledged by Canadian authorities on JTF2, Special Forces have been defined, whether delivered through the public military or through the private sector, as: "specially selected, organized, trained, and equipped military and paramilitary forces that conduct high-risk, high value special operations to achieve military, political, economic or informational objectives" (Horn 2007B: 116).

Special Forces often work alongside conventional armies and combat arms units but perform unconventional methods to achieve their objectives. The recognized and legitimate participation of the Special Forces in contemporary conflicts did not come easily. Special Forces is a description that has been given to a multitude of military units such as Canada's Airborne Regiment (CAR). While units like this play a different role and perhaps a more specialized role than the conventional army they are not considered Special Forces (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Special Forces, in Canada, US, and UK have military models that take on the forms of JTF2, Green Berets and Delta Force, and Special Air Service (SAS), respectively. Their mandate allows them to perform counter-intelligence and anti-terrorist missions. Their training, selection, and deployments are covert (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The secrecy around their organizations and operations

further contributes to the masculinity of their units because it allows them to operate with less direct oversight and without direct public scrutiny (Pugliese 2003).

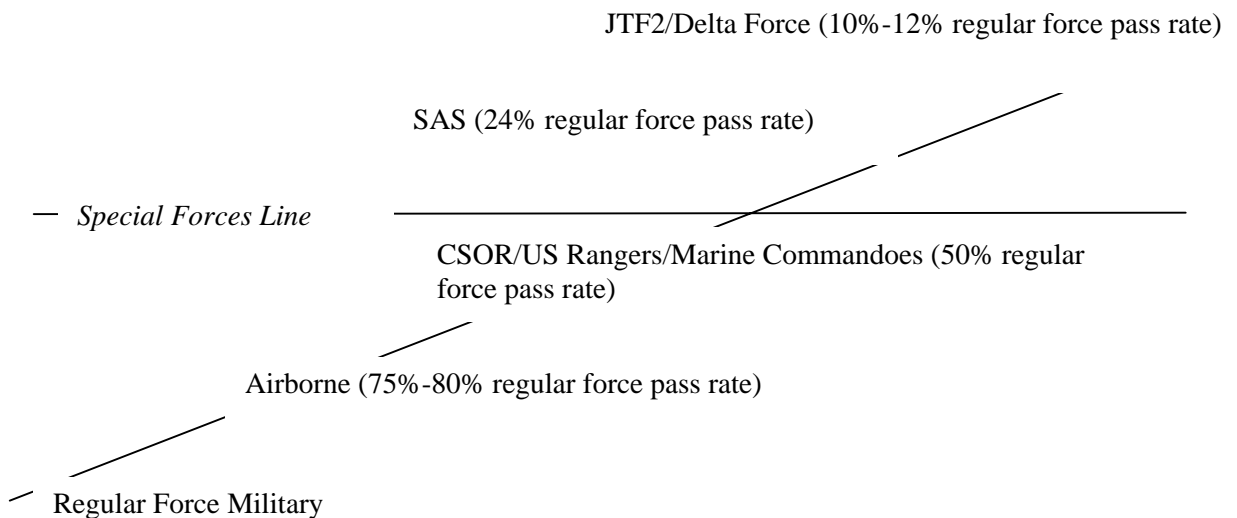
Figure 3.1 (on page 48) illustrates the continuum of CF combat driven units to Special Forces operations and the percentage of regular military soldiers who are likely to be selected into each unit. The Airborne predominantly performed direct-action missions where they often parachuted into combat though they were not trained to stay for long missions (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). CSOR and its allied counterparts perform rapid deployment operations in heavy conflict zones. They are trained to be able to deploy quickly to a combat zone and remain there for a short period of time (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

One of the biggest aspects that separates these more elite units from Special Forces is that the training in Special Forces cannot be integrated with the actual experience. Whereas an elite soldier from the Airborne or CSOR can be trained to become successful upon deployment, SOF personnel must possess 39 specific attributes in order to determine if she or he will be a successful assaulter. These attributes are based on scientific studies and have been classified because they are linked specifically to the selection, training, and, in turn, the mission of JTF2 (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The “science” is determined by persons with backgrounds in psychiatry, psychology, kinesiology, and biology (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). This science is directed by subject matter experts and their interpretations of what they believe are important attributes an assaulter must have in order to be successful (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

Both Special Forces and elite military units carry significant masculinity in their organizational culture. This is due in part to their special training and selection process.

Canada's JTF2 appears to hold the highest esteem among its combat arms counterparts. This is attributed to the length of time JTF2 has been around, when compared to its elite counterparts, and the idea that other elite units such as CSOR, have direct links to predecessors such as the Airborne. Anecdotal claims by interviewees have suggested that the same individuals who comprised CAR are now involved in CSOR (JTF2 authority 27 July 2007, SOF Applicant 8 August 2007). CSOR is still a relatively new unit and future research will be required to determine the role of embedded masculinity in how they deploy and train for missions. JTF2, to shed the Airborne past and perception of SOF being unaccountable and rogue, has emphasized its professionalism through its deployments in Afghanistan and publicizing various exploits on its website.

Figure 3.1: Scale of Elite Units in the CF and Allied Forces and the percentage of Soldiers' Pass Rates



Source: Interview with Maj. Balasevicius 7 June 2007

Figure 3.1 depicts military units and levels as well as a career progression for the regular force infantry soldier. The infantry soldier will progress higher up the scale in

order to receive more specialized training and perform higher intensity missions (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The socialized process involved in creating these soldiers to be effective as they progress differs because each unit's mission goals are different. Because of this, there is also a certain degree of difference in the militarized masculinity embedded in the selection, training, and image of each of these units. However, the highest esteem appears to be with SOF where it is the most exclusive in choosing its participants, who tend to be highly skilled, and more secretive. Selection and training allows this unit to foster a more cohesive and homogenous traits in its participants. It also entrenches a particular brain/brawn masculinity. The esteem of JTF2 appears to be associated with its exclusivity and its smaller, highly secretive, and autonomous, self-contained training operations—as well as limited participation of women.

Canada's Special Forces

Special Forces in the Canadian military trace their roots to World War Two (WWII) where Canadians participated in Special Operations Executive (SOE). SOE was a special operations unit formed in Britain in order to advance past German military lines (Hennessy 2007: 201). Canada assisted Britain's special operations in espionage and in theatre specific reconnaissance (Maloney 2004: 39). However, the Canadians sent to these units were soldiers who were seen as incompatible for various reasons within the regular forces. Special units were seen as places to put the rogue and inadequate soldiers (Hennessy 2007: 201). True military professionalism and the soldier warrior continued to be the domain of the conventional armies and the combat arms (Hennessy 2007: 201).

Winston Churchill believed in using Special Forces during the War. He felt that Special Forces operations fulfilled a security gap and they were able to meet specific needs that conventional forces were unable to accomplish (Hennessy 2007: 202, Horn 2007C: 161). In Canada, French-Canadians and Chinese-Canadians were employed by these forces to “conduct strategic reconnaissance and hamper enemy’s lines of communications in France and the Far East” (Hennessy 207: 201). Canada also allowed Special Forces to train in Camp X, which was located outside Whitby, Ontario. Canadian scientists researched into chemical, biological, and psychological warfare during WWII (Hennessy 2007: 201). Nonetheless, salience in military missions privileged conventional combat arms over Special Force deployment. SOF continued to remain ad hoc in nature and at the end of the War, Canada’s units were disbanded (Hennessy 2007: 202).

The Cold War created a war narrative that led to large standing peacetime armies throughout Western countries and “two large heavily armed camps facing off in Europe” (Horn 2007C: 161). Special Forces in general were used in strategic reconnaissance and unconventional forces by Britain and the United States (Horn 2007C: 161). British and United States Special Forces were deployed to report on Soviet movements. United States Special Forces were tasked to develop and exploit resistance movements behind Soviet lines (Horn 2007C: 162). However, the Cold War narrative took a different turn that included a rise in communist and nationalist movements where political solutions rather than military ones were required (Horn 2007C: 162). The large conventional forces were not designed to work in this different war environment that included operating in a “complex terrain that provided cover, concealment, and protection for the less heavily armed and equipped insurgents” (Horn 2007C: 162). Special Forces appeared to be the

best suited military force to deal with counter-insurgency and guerrilla tactics involved in nationalist movements. SOF skills were proven to be effective against guerrilla warfare in low-level conflicts in places such as Malaya, Oman, Brunei, Borneo, Aden, Indochina, Algeria, and Chad (Horn 2007C: 163). Based on this understanding, both the United States and the Britain increased their SOF capabilities (Horn 2007C: 164). However, the expansion appeared to come too quickly and SOF were plagued with inexperienced soldiers that had a devastating effect on the perception of its units. Its professionalism was therefore questioned by both the public and its conventional force counterpart. It was not until the late 1960s that the war narrative changed again and embraced terrorism as the dominant security threat bringing SOF back into the spot light (Horn 2007C: 167).

Canada contributed to SOF through its Airborne Regiment and special services force; both units have since been disbanded (Hennessy 2007: 202). Despite Canada's active engagement in unconventional warfare, Special Forces roles were not considered legitimate with the rest of the CF. Their missions were seen as an "inconvenient nuisance that distracted the military from the real business of high intensity warfare" (Horn 2007C: 166). The narrative of this war claimed that the most appropriate response continued to be with conventional forces.

Conversely, the changing nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era helped solidify the need for special operations in Canada's security discourse. Throughout the 1970s, Europe and the Middle East experienced a rise in terrorist activity (Horn 2007C: 167). Canada, like many of its western allies, experienced terrorism with the *Front de Libération du Québec* (FLQ) and the October Crisis in 1970. The new war narrative stated that no one was immune to terrorism (Horn 2007C: 167).

This new terrorist discourse carved space for Special Forces deployments. These units were very successful internationally and created a new image of quality soldiers (Horn 2007C: 167). Special Forces have marketed themselves as the specialized alternative to conventional war fighting. Conventional forces and combat arms rely on “a body of tried-and-true approaches” and “draw on experience, hard-earned wisdom, and sternly refined techniques” (Leebaert 2007: 21). Special Forces conversely embrace approach to conflict that places salience on improvising, intuition, and personal judgment (Leebaert 2007: 22). The description of Special Forces approach appears to suit the current understanding of the War on Terror narrative.

While there was a push for more special operations during the FLQ crisis in the mid-1970s (Horn 2007C: 167), Canada’s SOF drew its institutional beginnings with the establishment of the Airborne Regiment but its counter terrorist measures came from the formation of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) led Special Emergency Response Team (SERT). SERT was established primarily for hostage crises (Hennessy 2007: 199, Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The Munich Olympic massacre led to its formation and SERT remained the domain of the RCMP until April 1993. In 1993, the CF assumed responsibility over the unit due to various financial budget cuts, a re-articulation of security threats, and who was responsible for addressing these threats (Hennessy 2007: 199, Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The name of the unit was subsequently changed to JTF2. Until 11 September 2001, JTF2 missions and training were primarily domestically-based, although it did participate in a few foreign missions in the former Yugoslavia, Haiti, Central African Republic (CAR), and Lima (Pugliese 2003: 10).

The Post-9/11 Afghanistan Mission

Afghanistan and various post-9/11 missions appeared to be a turning point for SOF in the US, UK, Australia, and Canada. The early mission provided the opportunity to entrench brain/brawn masculinity with military exercises that involved both SOF (for intelligence) and war technologies (Boot 2006). After the first Gulf War, the US had learned the spectacular and efficient strategic impact of combining their military air technology with Special Forces on the ground in terms of gathering intelligence and marking locations (Boot 2006: 350). Afghanistan was no different. The Bush administration needed to react fairly quickly after 9/11 and SOF could mobilize more rapidly than their conventional force counterpart and provide the intelligence needed for air strikes. Western SOF worked with local Afghans in the northern regions of Afghanistan to combat the Taliban. Imagery of old and new warfare tactics converged in an attempt to win the war.

The early operations involved United States Special Forces working with the Northern Alliance (rival to the Taliban) in finding targets and calling in air strikes (Pugliese 2003: 27). Pugliese (2003: 27) explains the imagery of ancient and modern warfare tactics where:

[t]he Northern Alliance troops charged in a full gallop cavalry attack on Taliban positions, while Green Beret-directed smart bombs slammed into the enemy trenches just seconds before. The horsemen rode through the billowing dirt clouds caused by the explosions, cutting down any Taliban who had survived the bombing.

The converging of masculinities in warfare was clear. Technology assumed a violent masculine role where, with the assistance of men on horses, it could efficiently deliver a crushing blow to the enemy. At which point the cavalry would ride in and finish off the

mission. Collectively, technology and men could not be defeated. Technology now provided the protection to the men in order for them to achieve their mission.

Masters (2005: 116) contends that in the information age of technology gender is still apparent. While she claims that technology assumes the masculine and the soldier is the feminine that needs to be protected, militaries need men to “man” the technology (Stone 2007). Real power is now displayed in the “beauty” of violence and technology during warfare. Masculinity is seen in how fast and efficiently a state can decimate its enemy. The brain/brawn masculinity, seen in the combination of technology and SOF intelligence, appeared to be the new military weapon of choice in the current war narrative.

Yet, missing from this imagery is the loss of human life, the loss of infrastructure, and what all this meant for sustaining peace in Afghanistan. Technology appears to neutralize the devastations of war. It turns killings into an abstraction and technology assumes an amoral role (Masters 2005: 123). Carmola (2004: 125) comments how the descriptions of the violence ensued romanticized SOF and Northern Alliance warlords combining efforts to win the battle. At the same time these descriptions hide human rights atrocities committed during the assaults, and moreover, these SOF soldiers were valorized for their efforts (Carmola 2004: 125). Hidden behind the beauty of the brain and brawn masculinities working together to achieve their mission is the ramifications for their actions.

The George W. Bush administration was feeling domestic pressure to show tangible evidence that something was being done to avenge the terrorist attacks on its soil. Video footage was taken during night operations that showed bombs being dropped

and United States Rangers parachuting into various areas in Afghanistan (Pugliese 2003: 25). The amount of bombs dropped in the beginning of the mission in Afghanistan increased quickly. Air Force combat controllers (the ones in charge of calling in bombs to be dropped) were ordering as many as 10 to 30 air strikes per day. With every strike and explosion, “the combat controller excitedly transmitted into the radio ‘shack on target’ indicating the bomb hit exactly where it was [intended]” (Pugliese 2003: 26).

The American media romanced the imagery of United States technology and the employment of SOF. The *Washington Post* reported comments by a special forces soldier saying “[i]t was beautiful ... the whole area was laden with machine guns and mortars. We completely smoked everything” (Pugliese 2007: 28). In this sense, technology along with the specialization of Special Forces allowed Western forces to exert their brain/brawn masculinity and win the battle—with little thought of how to win the war.

Canada’s SOF Commitment

The understanding of the new threats and need for an aggressive and sophisticated force was not lost on Canada. Canada further entrenched and institutionalized its special operations in the mid-1990s (Maloney 2004: 39). The War on Terror and special operations in Afghanistan further solidified the role of Special Forces in contemporary conflicts (Horn 2007C: 167). Canada’s JTF2 had participated in Operation Anaconda where it “led a mountain climb to reach a high altitude observation post” (Pigott 2007: 87) as well as participated in Task K-Bar where it had strike teams assault on Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters (Pigott 2007: 87). The US, along with allied forces from Canada, Denmark, Britain, Australia, Turkey, New Zealand, Norway, and Germany, formed K-

Bar and provided the intelligence and interrogations necessary in finding Taliban and Al Qaeda. The mission consisted of 1,300 SOF personnel in total (Pugliese 2003: 40). Their contribution to the US-led mission resulted in the JTF2 serving members being awarded the Presidential Unit Citation (Pigott 2007: 87).

JTF2 was officially recognized, albeit publicly by another state, as a vital resource for the War on Terror. However, its missions raised issues about the lack of oversight and accountability of this unit. One such incident occurred on a mission in Band Taimore on 24 May 2002. Pugliese (2003: 111) described the US-led attack where “men, women and children were dragged off the floor mats they had been sleeping on and were handcuffed with plastic constraints”. Two young girls were killed in the attack. After the raid, local Afghans expressed to the media that they were “punched by soldiers and the women were shoved and tied up [which was] highly offensive behaviour in any society but more so in Islamic culture” (Pugliese 2003: 111).

SOF actions were justified by United States politicians as merely fulfilling its mission. Members of this community had weapons so the SOF were only acting accordingly (Pugliese 2003: 111). The success on their mission appears to have absolved them from other responsibilities and ramifications on how they conducted themselves. Their mission appears to only entail displays of aggression. Relationship building and networking to foster sustainable peace does not appear to be their concern. It appears that the SOF objective was solely achieving their immediate mission.

SOF aggressive tactics and posturing, while achieves their mission, also has negative ramifications for other actors involved in bringing sustainable security to conflict zones. Various SOF personnel posture themselves in an aggressive manner by

not smiling and by spitting on the ground when they pass through communities (Pugliese 2003: 112). They do this as a means of creating a tough exterior and in turn protecting themselves from potential threat. However, their behaviour also leaves local communities, in this case Afghans, with the impression that SOF are just another foreign invader (Pugliese 2003: 112). SOF use whatever means necessary to achieve their objectives. There is nothing random about how they conduct themselves (Canadian SOF participant 8 August 2007). This seems contrary to the “winning hearts and minds” military approach to gather intelligence and foster more long-term peace. However, it does not appear to be a behaviour that the SOF community is looking to change (Pugliese 2003: 112).

Despite the negative feelings towards various missions, and the display of aggression, JTF2 participated in while in Afghanistan, government support for SOF appears to be strong and JTF2 continue to be held in high regard for its professionalism. In April 2007, CANSOF celebrated 14 years of service, and after September 11 2001, CANSOF received financial support “with the intent to double [its] size” (de B. Taillon 2005-06: 67). Pugliese (2003) claims JTF2 was projected to have 600 personnel (support staff included) by 2006. This additional funding is also assisting in the creation and capabilities building of CSOR in Petawawa. While CSOR is relatively new to Canada, it is designed to perform more of a light infantry role and has been foreboded by some in the military to be the recreation of the Airborne Regiment (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

Accountability and Oversight of JTF2

JTF2's chain of command is more streamlined than that of regular force combat units. It consists of the command officer of JTF2 who answers to the commander of CANSOFCOM. The commander of CANSOFCOM in turn answers to the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) who is responsible to the Minister of National Defence.⁸ Officially, JTF2 states that its accountable to the CF and falls under their legal framework. However, the level of civilian oversight of the units remains debatable (Pugliese 2003: 172, JTF2 authority 24 July 2007).

Canada's involvement in Afghanistan has provided an opportunity for SOF to garner more political and military support for their operations. Conversely, Canada has yet to develop a clear chain of command and oversight for strategic policy and planning for Special Forces (Hennessy 2007: 202). This is in part a legacy of Canada's colonial past where since WWII the "Canadian government avoided being responsible for such guidance" (Hennessy 2007: 202). There is no clear doctrine that articulates what are the roles, who is responsible, and who controls special operations deployments (Hennessy 2007: 204). This lack of civilian oversight for the organization continues to plague operations with accusations of not being legitimate (Hennessy 2007: 203).

The limited civilian oversight was made clear on 22 January 2002 when a picture was released throughout the world showing JTF2 assaulters escorting prisoners off of an United States airplane. This picture surfaced at the same time Canada's then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien was denying Canada was taking prisoners and handing them over to countries (like the United States) who do not abide by the Geneva Convention when it comes to torturing prisoners (Pugliese 2003: 104). The then Defence Minister Art

⁸ Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) Website, www.jtf2.forces.gc.ca, last accessed 4 September 2007.

Eggleton also appeared to be uninformed of what the JTF2 were actually doing in Afghanistan (Pugliese 2003: 173). However, Canada's politicians seem to be "almost blissfully unaware of the unit's activities" (Pugliese 2003: 172). The mission in Afghanistan also allowed the military to further restrict what the senior government officials were to know about the JTF2 missions claiming it was for national security and the protection of the assaulters and their families (Pugliese 2003: 175). This type of behaviour on the military's part and the lack of oversight appears to be unprecedented when compared to other countries such as the United States and Britain (Pugliese 2003: 175).

While the lack of oversight increases its autonomy—thereby its particular masculinity, it also raises concerns about how missions are conducted and whose interests are being met, especially given the characteristics and cultural organization of elitism and sentiments of having laws unto themselves that tends to form in these units (Horn 2006B: 127). If cross-governmental approaches Canada is taking, such as the diplomacy, defence, and development (3D) or "whole government approach" are to be successful, many scholars argue that Canada needs to incorporate more strategic control and oversight of its Special Forces (Hennessy 2007: 205). Furthermore, if Canada is to successfully participate in "the full spectrum" (Hennessy 2007: 205) war, then it needs to work further on a civilian command for the JTF2. The level of autonomy JTF2 possesses has been a concern raised predominantly within the conventional forces and some government ministries (Horn 2006B: 127, JTF2 authority 24 July 2007). JTF2 relies heavily on its professional image. This image gives it the ability to conduct themselves with limited public oversight, however it continues to deal with projected fears of its

comrade Airborne unit's less-than-scrupulous past actions in Somalia. However, JTF2's privileged status is put into question because it often runs counter to the very hierarchical conventional force organization. Horn (2006B: 127) explains that elite forces' status includes

special badges and dress, special equipment and training, and streamlined access to the chain of command, as well as special consideration [that run] counter to a very hierarchical, traditional organization that prides itself on uniformity, standardization, and rigid adherence to military norms, values and traditions.

Whether justified or not, Canada's public and combat arms academics have raised concerns about elite units' organizational culture and highlighted a fear of them operating under a "law unto themselves" (Horn 2006B: 127).

Both JTF2 and PSFs use professionalism as a currency to garner more freedom in training and operations. Professionalism is paramount for the JTF2 to disassociate itself from the Airborne while still enjoying maximum levels of autonomy. Some academics who have more experience with the unit believe government oversight is not really needed and advocate for a high level of autonomy for the unit so it continues to be effective (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

Conversely, without a clear mechanism of accountability and civilian oversight, given the vast literature on how elite units can organically become detached for their greater organization and act in rogue ways (Horn 2006B: 132), one should be concerned with a highly secretive unit which has civilian limited accountability. This has been an argument to rein in JTF2's operational capabilities. It is an argument used in the battle between Special Forces and combat arms. This argument attempts to discredit the masculinity in Special Forces by arguing it is too autonomous and therefore cannot be

trusted. Niva (1998) claims that masculinity in war is still associated with governance and rule of law. JTF2 continues to negotiate how it maintains its high level of autonomy while giving the perception that it is committed to rule of law. Balasevicius (7 June 2007) states that JTF2 recruitment drives are to attract only the most mature and responsible soldiers. JTF2 website claims that it is committed to the rule of law and is accountable to the government.

The New Take on Militarized Masculinity

The entrenchment of SOF in Canada has not been an easy task. The creation of a new brain/brawn masculinity that links with technology, special skills, and a higher level of autonomy has been met with resistance by leaders in the combat arms. Caught in this competition over militarized masculinity that defines the soldier and his role in a specific way is a battle over image and resources. Special operations have been critiqued “as interlopers that siphoned off scarce personnel, equipment and money” (Horn 2007B: 120). The image that Special Forces project is one that tends to attract the best and brightest soldiers away from the conventional army including experienced non-commissioned members (NCM) (Horn 2007B: 120).

Special Forces have historically been used for ad hoc reasons since WWII and private security contractors even longer. The formation and deployments of Special Forces have been privileged by key political figures throughout history but have been recently institutionalized with the popular belief that the changing nature of war has meant Western militaries no longer require large standing forces but special small, self-contained units who are capable in technology and highly skilled. Along with this new

military capability comes the evolution of a new brain/brawn militarized masculinity that relies on a multitude of diverse skills and capabilities. Spearin (2007: 29) claims Canada's JTF2 is a reflection of soldiers who embody both brain and brawn. This masculinity has been met with resistance and the struggle plays out in discourses of war, how the internal culture in the military defines threats, and solutions to those threats. The battle-ground continues to be fought in terms of capabilities, funding, and image.

Converging Mandates and Masculinities

Currently regular military forces in Canada and allied nations are increasing integration of women and other diverse demographics. The reason for this is largely for pragmatic purposes to increase personnel and sustain combat effectiveness as well as being seen as modern and progressive (Davis 2002, Leuprecht 2004, Enloe 2007). This integration is based primarily on compliance policies driven by external forces—such as national legislation (Davis 2000, Pinch 2002). At the same time, these militaries are re-creating bastions of masculinity in Special Forces. Interestingly these same units are beginning to dominate discussions and directions in security (Leander 2005A, Avant 2005).

Whether it is through legal, social or cultural barriers, women are not participating in security contractor or Special Forces assaulter roles. Discussing the reasons for a low women's participation and the various implications this raises is important because Special Forces are increasingly becoming dominant voices in international security dialogue. Militarized masculinity, and more specifically the Combat Masculine Warrior Model, while being full of contradictions and uneven in its application, continues to act

as the major barrier to women's integration—as well as to any male who does not achieve the dominant masculine image.

The biggest differences between Special Forces and combat arms are seen in recruiting, individual motivations, training, and leadership command. These differences lead into different cultural make-ups and in turn there is often a lot of miscommunication and resentment between the two entities.

Recruitment and Individual Motivations

The CF and other public military forces recruit from their general civilian populations. Public Special Forces, particularly JTF2, will recruit from within the public forces, most often from the combat arms as soldiering experience found in combat arms is considered important to special force missions (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). JTF2 will go on recruiting drives across Canada to various bases to explain the training and selection process.⁹ At this point, an interested soldier will apply through the soldier's home unit's chain of command. The soldier will then take a physical fitness test at the unit to determine the soldier is at a certain physical standard before she or he is referred to the JTF2 six-day selection (pre-selection) trial. During this six-day selection the soldier is assessed on her/his mental and physical endurance (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). This involves a series of mental tests performed individually and in a group under physically gruelling environments (SOF applicant 8 August 2007). The selection process is one of the most physically gruelling in the CF. Pinch (2002) argues that roughly 1 percent of male soldiers can actually achieve the expected physical standards. Balasevicius (7 June

⁹ Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) Website, www.jtf2.forces.gc.ca, last accessed 4 September 2007.

2007) claims that only 10 to 12 percent of combat arms applicants will be successful through selection. Given this context and with the CF as a whole having difficulty with recruitment levels, JTF2 is finding it increasingly difficult to maintain its personnel capability (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). This is of increasing concern being that SOF units are being demanded more often. SOF within Canada and across allied countries are attempting to find solutions to the recruitment problem while maintaining the high physical requirements (Pugliese 2003: 170, Spearin 2007).

While there has been some discussion of having different standards for women and men to increase women's representation in the assaulter role, this has yet to occur (Pinch 2002). Major Balasevicius (7 June 2007) explained that JTF2 is currently looking at recruiting various nationals (such as Afghans) for specific missions but as of yet there have been no strategic plans in place. He commented that the salience placed on physical endurance is more space and time based in that during WWII greater emphasis was placed on persons who had linguistic skills (7 June 2007). He claimed that the intensity of selection and its focus on high physical endurance continues to be a barrier for some applicants—namely women (7 June 2007). Moreover, he admits that as long as there is a cultural bias placed on physical fitness and endurance as imperative to mission success, lower standards for women are not likely to occur (7 June 2007).

To date there has been no known successful woman applicant into the JTF2 and the actual numbers of women applying is not available to the public. The physical endurance component remains the major barrier preventing women from succeeding and given the low numbers of women already in the combat arms, and the projected image that JTF2 is career progression for combat arms, it is unlikely that large volumes of

women have the propensity to join this unit. Propensity to join is also linked to the image that is projected from these Special Forces and PSF security contractor units. Various studies conclude that women, just as men, are unlikely to join environments that are incongruent with their personal career goals. Women, it appears, are reluctant to join combat arms as they perceive the work environment undesirable for a variety of social and structural reasons. One of the main reasons mentioned by a variety of academics continues to be the culture of masculinity (Davis 2002, Pinch 2002). This masculinity does not appear to fit women's motivations and desired career environment. Furthermore, women currently serving in the combat arms are reluctant to recommend it as a career of choice to other women (Davis 2002, Pinch 2002).

JTF2 is seen as a career progression within the combat arms. Once soldiers become proficient at basic soldier they move onto more advanced units. While this line of thinking is contested among leadership in the combat arms, this sentiment is generally felt within the combat arms culture (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). An interviewee claimed that he was motivated by the fact SOF does "something different than ordinary forces". He claimed that "when I hit my 30s I thought about what I was going to be doing that would really define my life. I really believe in our mission in Afghanistan wholeheartedly. This mission will be a defining moment for [Canadians]" (SOF applicant 8 August 2007). He further admitted to wanting to be in a role where he had more autonomy and leeway to make decisions for himself in the unit (SOF applicant 8 August 2007).

People who appear motivated to join JTF2 are soldiers who are high achievers and have a desire for job improvement (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). They have a personal

desire to continue to challenge and push themselves. There are career/life motivating factors in that the applicants see more flexibility in missions in JTF2. The teams are more decentralized, smaller, and they are organized in such a way that everyone feels like they are contributing despite their rank; everyone has a voice (SOF applicant 8 August 2007).

Financial reasons are a factor as the JTF2 assaulter makes considerably more money, specifically on deployment, than their combat arms counterpart, but the desire to professionally improve appears to be the main motivator (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). This improvement occurs when a soldier is exposed to more combat. There is also a belief among applicants interviewed and through various academic testimonies that soldiers will be better trained and take advantage of more sophisticated weaponry in JTF2. Motivated applicants appear to be frustrated with the bureaucratic burdens found in garrison and in regular combat arms (Balasevicius 7 June 2007, Horn 2007B, SOF applicant 8 August 2007, SOF unsuccessful applicant 9 August 2007).

The professionalism and motivations, while not necessarily articulated this way by interviewees, appears to be directly linked to increased autonomy and a decentralization of power from hierarchy to the individual. While technology did not seem to be a major motivating factor, new skills and knowledge in addition to perform in a specialized role during combat were (SOF applicant 8 August 2007). This specialized role gives participants the feeling that they are directly contributing to the direction of combat. They have more autonomy and personal investment (SOF applicants 8 August 2007). The selection process gave them the impression that they were working with the top soldiers and performing with an elite force.

Soldiers are motivated to join JTF2 because they often see it as a career progression. There is less oversight over the assaulters and a sense of elitism is bestowed upon them. They train in small units and their missions remain secretive. They also enjoy, as a unit, a more streamlined chain of command. They see a variety of conflicts more frequently. Soldiers interviewed who tried out for JTF2, whether successful or not, claimed they became tired with the annoyances of garrison life. They felt micro-managed and that their talents were not being utilized. They felt they would achieve a greater level of specialization, personal investment, and skill from joining JTF2 (SOF applicant 8 August 2007).

Selection and Training

Selection to JTF2 differ from combat arms because it recruits from units where majority of the personnel are already trained in combat environments. Combat arms units on the other hand, recruit and in turn train civilians to be combat soldiers. These combat units have to put much more investment in the initial socialization of the soldier. The selection process of this soldier in combat arms is based on physical fitness as well as the ability to follow orders. There continues to be informal and formal standards these soldiers must achieve in selection and training in order to be successful (Pinch 2002). The informal standards continue to be a barrier and often work to reinforce a particular culture of masculinity within the combat arms in Canada. Barriers exist in that current validations processes which leave room for individual instructors to arbitrarily decide who is a good soldier and who is not (Pinch 2002).

Due to operational demands, the combat arms have had trouble recruiting the numbers they need to be effective. The CF in particular is now strategically recruiting from more of a diverse population within the Canadian public (Leuprecht 2004). Other militaries such as the US have looked at fast-tracking citizenship to new immigrants if they serve with the forces (Quester 2005: 31). In the beginning of the 1990s, Australian forces began to look at recruiting women as they are seen as an untapped resource in the labour market (Smith and McAllister 1991: 371). This trend is continuing. All the diverse recruiting strategies appear to be for pragmatic reasons of maintaining operational effectiveness. JTF2 is facing these same operational demands. However, until the combat arms are more diverse in demographic, or JTF2 begins recruiting outside the military, it is unlikely that the unit will attract a more diverse applicant pool.

The image of JTF2 is considered to be elite. It is a career progression for someone within the combat arms (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Their selection process plays into their “exceptional” image. Horn (2006B: 127) claims that

demanding and rigorous selection standards, strenuous training, immense capability and privileged status normally creates and feeds a ‘cult of the elite’ mentality that is inwardly focused and that rejects those from the outside of the group.

Once applicants pass the six day pre-selection they move onto the assaulter course. This selection is designed in such a way that an estimated one percent of the CF males could achieve (Pinch 2002). The process disproportionately places salience on physical endurance. The training of the soldiers as assaulters in JTF2 is different because an assaulter cannot be trained and then tested. While the combat arms can do work up training, then test, then have a final assessment of the applicants potential, Special Forces

training cannot be separated from the actual mission. Given this understanding, the selection for JTF2 must test the scientifically proven attributes a soldier brings to the selection. These attributes cannot be trained and are tested in a physically gruelling selection process (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

JTF2 relies heavily on “science” to determine who will make suitable and successful assaulters. The “science” determining these necessary attributes is founded on scientific field studies of Special Forces assaulters combined with subject matter experts—men who are former or current assaulters (O’Keiff 2001: 51). The attributes tested fit into eight main task specific categories as determined by subject matter experts (O’Keiff 2001: 51). These categories are weapons handling, explosive handling, night vision equipment, communications, first aid, navigation, physical fitness training, and hostage rescue and close personal protection (O’Keiff 2001: 51). The attributes were further placed into six attribute clusters (personality, interpersonal, psychomotor, strength/stamina, vigilance/attention, and cognitive ability). These attributes were then broadly defined in three factors. These factors are social, physical, and mental (O’Keiff 2001: 52). Some of the attributes being tested are honesty, integrity, maturity, independence, trustworthiness, coordination, stamina and strength, courage, memory, verbal and analytical abilities (O’Keiff 2001: 52). All these attributes are tested during a selection period where the assaulter candidates will work in team orientated, physically gruelling settings while JTF2 operators (the persons who validate the candidates), watch and record the applicants capabilities (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). One physically demanding task will have five or six attributes that are being tested in which the operator will evaluate the applicant’s performance. Out of those five to six attributes, the

researchers will randomly determine which ones they will measure for the specific task but not inform the operator. This is to ensure the operator observer bias is reduced (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

One applicant claimed he thought the process was very fair. He admitted to having friends already in the unit but said none of them were testing him. He felt he was given positive feedback throughout the whole process and felt good about his prospects but claimed he still had to perform to the same level as everyone else. Selection, he felt, was not a popularity contest (SOF applicant 8 August 2007).

At the end of the selection process the operators, chief trainers, and researchers tally up points allocated to each applicant. The scientific researchers give the rankings of pass, weak pass, and fail to the board. The board then sits and determines who will be extended an invite for further training as an assaulter (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). The board consists of the Command Officer (CO), Chief Instructor, Training Sergeant Major, and non-commissioned officer in command (NCO I/C) (O'Keiff 2001: 53). The physical component of selection continues to be upheld as necessary for operational effectiveness because the missions of the JTF2 are understood in such a way—through subject matter experts—that physical endurance at the time of selection is imperative and something the unit cannot afford to train (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Given this understanding, although women can be trained—albeit through different programs than men—to meet these demands, there appears to be little internal motivation within the unit to explore this further.

Persons who are not successful with selection are not told what contributed to them failing selection. Major Balasevicius (7 June 2007) explained that this is because

the applicant's selection is directly linked to mission success and there is a high degree of secrecy in the actual process of selecting an applicant. He admitted that this can be frustrating for the applicant especially if they passed all the physical requirements. In this regard there is very little debriefing of the soldier and he is left with frustrated feelings as he returns to his home unit (SOF unsuccessful applicant 9 August 2008).

By extension, an interesting study was published by Carol Cohn in 2000 examining various perceptions of gender and racial integration within the United States military. The views ranged from positive to more skeptical depending on who was speaking and what standpoint they perceived the policy. Women and people of different racial backgrounds other than Caucasian tended to see the policy with skepticism (Cohn 2000: 113). While this is a completely unrelated study, it highlights how a diverse background of people might view the same standard as problematic—especially when that standard appears to validate people of the dominant culture. Just because none of the applicants perceived the selection as biased, does not mean that these biases do not exist. An important limitation to my research is that I was unable to get perspectives from applicants who were not white or male. Their diverging opinions would have been useful in understanding the how the selection process is viewed by someone who is not a part of the dominant culture.

Leadership and Command

The leadership command differs fundamentally from the traditional hierarchical one found within conventional forces and combat arms. This is in part because Special Forces contain a very different mission and different personnel make-up. They rely on the

attributes of all their soldiers and everyone brings something important to the team (Balasevicius 2007A: 88). Because Special Forces soldiers often operate in small units in dynamic environments the leadership style demands a different approach. Special Forces leaders cannot demand legitimacy simply because they are the leaders. Their leadership is not based in hierarchy or unquestioned authority (Balasevicius 2007A: 88). Balasevicius (2007A: 88) goes onto define the leaders as “visionary men, not encumbered by traditional conservative ideas. They [are] able to think outside the box and often [develop] practical solutions to the operational problems”. These leaders need to be flexible in order to effectively adapt to their dynamic and evolving operational environments (Balasevicius 2007A: 88). In other words, these leaders lead in a more decentralized way that comes at complete odds with the conventional combat arms who continue to profess discipline, authority, and hierarchy.

Special Forces soldiers are socialized through their training to perform different tasks and in turn produce more of a brain/brawn militarized masculinity. Their deployments are often secretive and the very nature of their training runs the risk of the unit understanding themselves as detached from their greater community of armed professionals (Horn 2007B: 126). This type of masculinity although being more autonomous, has also met resistance by the traditional soldier warrior and this competition is seen as the two military entities are often pitted against each other (Horn 2007B). Trustworthiness and credibility seem to be the major currency being used to determine which masculinity is more required and therefore should dominate. The conventional forces critique Special Forces on their lack of oversight and bring up historical experiences from CAR operations in Somalia as an example of what can

happen to an elite military unit without adequate oversight. At the same time conventional forces have acted negatively to having civilian oversight. The CF's responses to EE Act and other legislation has been paternalistic, claiming that the military is in the best position to decide what is best for itself (Harris-Jenkins 2004: 26).

The philosophical and tangible transformations occurring in the military that opened a permanent space for Special Forces also saw a change in the expectations of the soldier and in turn a transformation in militarized masculinity. This understanding was seen as militaries began to understand alleviating conflict required a much more complex approach that interfaced with development and humanitarian aspects. The new soldier is required to carry out a variety of roles at the same time. This perception of war did not come easily. The narrative requiring brain/brawn and diversity in skills in soldiers continues to be seen throughout missions in Afghanistan and Iraq where militaries continue to attempt to *win the hearts and minds* of the citizens they are supposed to defend and at the same time defeat their enemy through aggressive assaults and bombings (Braudy 2003: 547). This type of conflict needs a variety of actors working together. However, the conflicting masculinities occurring between combat arms units and JTF2 lead to tensions upon deployment and therefore can decrease combat effectiveness.

Advanced technology in warfare equipment specifically in the United States has created a masculinity that is embodied in technology (Masters 2005: 115). The closer linked a soldier is to the technology and new skills, the more masculine he becomes (115). While it is not completely clear thus far if this same militarized masculinity that links to technology is occurring in JTF2; the increased dependency soldiers have with technology across Western countries definitely would suggest this.

In Canada and through imagery and selection of Special Forces, there continues to be a high salience placed on physical fitness of soldiers. This symbolizes the similarities of militarized masculinity between the combat arms and Special Force units—albeit Special Forces are more selective. These masculinities, although varied, continue to be founded in the soldier warrior and the Combat Masculine Warrior Model.

While a war narrative that calls for advanced technology and special-skilled assaulters are continuing to open up space for Special Forces in the security realm, the salience placed on the open market to provide solutions to military problems has also opened space for private industry. PSFs with Special Forces background are becoming a permanent fixture in understanding conflict and the actors involved. The next chapter will detail their rise and how their operations are challenging and embedding a slightly different type of masculinity in security.

Chapter 4: The Last Bastions of Masculinity: A Market Alternative

The anger in their telling served to reinforce the feeling among Iraqis here that private security companies care little for Iraqi lives. In a war where perceptions are paramount, the effect is poisonous—Tavermise and Glanz, 19 September 2007

Introduction

Changes in Western militaries and the war narrative have created space for PSFs. Four key aspects driving military transition, and creating space for PSFs, are technological innovations, increased need for specialization, the trend towards reductions in military personnel strength, and the focus on the global market to meet emerging security demands (Nossal 2001, Singer 2004, Avant 2005, Boot 2006). Out of the aforementioned, the global market has played a significant role in creating space for PSFs. The market, backed by neo-liberal philosophies and theoretical frameworks such as new public management,¹⁰ is playing a role in how states understand the new war narrative and subsequent security policies. Within this re-envisioning of conflict that places salience in finding solutions with the market, new PSFs began to emerge and advertise themselves as a cost effective alternative (Singer 2003, Hough 2004).

Avant (2005: 122) claims that while PSFs have been employed by the US and other Western nations for a variety of traditionally military services throughout the 1990s, their services and the amount of PSFs operating has increased significantly in the post-9/11 era. Their rise can in part be related to the changing war narrative that defines

¹⁰New Public Management as defined by Salamon (2006) is a policy used by government that incorporates a joint public/private partnership in the delivery of public goods to a state's citizens.

the enemy (terrorists) in a particular way and in turn privileges small, dynamic, adaptable, and specialized forces to provide adequate security solutions.

Currently, PSFs are operating in over 50 countries and their average annual revenue is over 100 billion USD (Singer cited in Shadow Company 2006). Moreover, between 1994 and 2000 the US spent 300 billion USD on over 3,000 contracts (Singer 2004: 522). Some scholars estimate that Canada's military spends almost 22 percent of its military budget in Afghanistan on private services through CANCAP¹¹ (Perry Summer 2007).

Both the JTF2 and PSFs security contractors deploy in smaller, self-contained units. This allows them to be more autonomous than the conventional forces and market themselves as being more innovative and dynamic, focusing on individual initiative, and creativity (Leebaert 2006: 22). While claiming that these are realities of their operations and marketing themselves as an effective alternative to conventional forces, both entities create a varied form of brain/brawn militarized masculinity that includes links to technology, special skills, and autonomy. Conversely, PSFs carry a somewhat different type of masculinity when compared to their SOF counterpart. Where SOF continues to operate under its nation's flag, PSFs rely on the market and privatization of services to advance its role in the war narrative.

The first part of this chapter details the history of contemporary PSFs and the various debates around their rise and deployments. The latter part of the chapter focuses primarily on how the organizational culture of PSFs and security contractors, through

¹¹ CANCAP is Canada's policy to hire and incorporate private service contractors in military deployments. CANCAP was used in Y2K preparations and since has been used in Bosnia and now Afghanistan. It differs from the US LOG in that private contractors are not allowed to deploy where there will be immediate and known danger.

image, recruitment, and training—found in the personal, institution and discursive production is embedding masculinity in the war narrative (Hooper 2000). Given the plethora of organizations and their multitude of roles, when discussing organizational culture, I focus primarily on Blackwater security contractors' operations in Iraq. The reason I do this is two-fold. Firstly, according to Avant (2005: 123), when examining the regulation and definition of PSFs, it is more useful to use the specific contract as a unit of analysis as opposed to the individual contracting firm. Secondly, Blackwater is the largest contractor of security in Iraq for the US government and its role as a security provider is significant (Rasor et al. 2007).

Current Debates on PSFs

Debates centering around PSFs appear to have shifted from advocating an outright ban on their operations to the assumption that PSFs are increasingly entrenched in the current security climate (Singer 2003 and 2004, Avant 2005, Leander 2005B, Percy 2006). The questions that are now raised are primarily concerned with both the regulation of and finding proper definitions for such entities.

Nossal (2001) and Singer (2004) both trace the history of various reactive national and international legal frameworks that have attempted throughout history to regulate private security activity. These scholars claim that the major problem is that the current legal frameworks lack a coherent definition of PSFs and therefore are unable to understand the contemporary reality of the global private security business.

The definition of PSFs is important because it frames the basis for understanding their operations and who is to be held accountable for their actions. How PSFs are

defined varies depending on who is speaking about them and for what purpose. Many NGOs will call them private military firms to differentiate between private industry that provides logistical support and training to the ones who are full-fledged mercenary contractors (JTF Authority 24 June 2007). PSFs provide a wide variety of services ranging from logistical support to trainers of security groups to personal bodyguard services and security guards to actual soldiers fighting in conflict (Singer 2004, Avant 2005, Shadow Company 2006). Often contemporary companies can be seen doing all three services.

History of PSFs and Varied Masculinities

Contemporary PSFs draw their post-Cold War institutional origins from Executive Outcomes (EO) and Sandline International operations in the mid-to-late 1990s. These companies primarily operated in Africa. Their operations were brought on by both a downsizing in military forces across the globe, and specifically with the South African Defence Force (SADF), and the reluctance of the West to continue to intervene in African conflicts (Nossal 2001). Essentially these PSFs were fulfilling a new security gap on the African continent (Ortiz 2004: 207). What ensued was private “soldiers for hire” who often worked along with multinational mining corporations to alleviate conflict in both Sierra Leone and Angola—two countries rich with oil and diamonds (Howe 1998, Drohan 2003). While EO missions were overall successful in ending the conflict and often claimed more effective than the UN, there were also a lot of concerns raised by various scholars over their operations (Singer 2003). Drohan claims that while they filled a security gap they operated within an accountability gap (Shadow Company 2006).

A variety of scholars, in disciplines of security studies and international relations, have written on EO either critiquing or commending the activities of this firm. Critiques of their operations were based on morality claims of legitimacy and the lack of regulations surrounding their operations (Cilliers et al. 1999, Howe 1998, Mehlum et al. 2002, Drohan 2003). Advocates for EO and more contemporary PSFs state that these firms provide a legitimate service on the open market, and that the ideals of the free market will keep these companies honest (Cohn 2003, Singer 2003). This argument, known as the 'self-regulating market', extends to explain that private firms, by virtue of wanting more contracts, will be inclined to keep a clean track record in terms of who they accept contracts from and their soldiers' conduct upon deployment. Their professionalism will guarantee them more contracts and the unprofessional companies will cease to garner employment (Shadow Company 2006). This is an argument that continues to be advanced today with current PSFs. EO, prior to ceasing business operations in 1999, specifically claimed to only work for sovereign state leaders (Singer 2001, Cox 2003). Global Risk claims it only accepts contracts that are legal, where it is guaranteed payment, and ones that are moral (Shadow Company 2006). However, Lock asserts that PSF operations have a "self-promoting effect" that turns economic inequality into "social inequality of services" (Lock 1999: 26). The employers who can pay are the ones whose needs are met.

Since EO ceased operations, smaller companies such as Dyn Corp, ArmorGroup, Triple Canopy, and Blackwater have grown and developed offering a variety of military assistance (Singer 2003). These firms are some of the fastest growing companies in the private security realm and both Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) and Blackwater are two

of the largest contractors in Iraq (Rasor et al. 2007). KBR has assumed a monopoly over logistical services for the US Department of Defense (DoD) in Afghanistan and Iraq and Blackwater is the main US government-funded private security contractor provider for Iraq (Rasor et al. 2007). Some of these firms are even listed in *Fortune 500* as the fastest growing security companies (Singer 2004: 521). Their employers have been the United States government, Beyond Petroleum (formerly British Petroleum), and various developing states such as Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina (Singer 2003). The growth of these firms is seen in Iraq and Afghanistan, where PSFs provide logistical and tactical support to the US armed forces. The ratio of private personnel to US soldiers in the Gulf War was one to ten. This ratio has increased ten-fold with War in Iraq (Singer 2004: 523).

The Security Contractor

Security contractors, specifically Blackwater employees, have gained notoriety through their operations in the war in Iraq. In fact Blackwater has recently been in the news over its contract suspension by the Iraqi Government (*New York Times* 19 September 2007). The suspension is over the death of an estimated 8 to 11 civilians in Baghdad (*Washington Post* 20 September 2007, *New York Times* 20 September 2007). However, there are reports claiming Blackwater continues to operate in Iraq because of the US governments' dependency on it for security (*Aljazeera* 23 September 2007). On the 23rd of September 2007 *Aljazeera* reported that the Iraqi Government reversed its initial decision to suspend security contractors' operations but is jointly investigating

with the US government Blackwater's conduct in the deadly incident in Bagdad (*Aljazeera* 23 September 2007).

These contractors are defined by Schumacher (26 June 2007) as the persons legally able to carry weapons. Singer (2003: 93) contends these contractors are defined by their operations. They are the ones who are on the "tip of the spear" in that they are engaged in combat in the battle space (Singer 2003: 93). Numerous scholars studying PSFs claim security contractors are the ones who are paid to strategically change the military situation. Their operations in Iraq are defined as "providing a steel barrier around US foreign policy" (Shadow Company 2006). Currently there are over 20,000 security contractors operating in Iraq (Shadow Company 2006).

Avant (2005: 125) asserts that these contractors who specialize in counter-insurgency and anti-terrorism are harder to categorize because their operations often blur the lines between combatant and non-combatant. Blackwater is a PSF that "promise[s] to respond offensively to crises with armed personnel" (2005: 125). Although they do not aim to engage in combat, "their actions are sometimes indistinguishable from military forces" (2005: 125). These contractors' missions include training soldiers, provide personal protection, and engaging in combat. They protect the "nouns"—a person, place, or thing (Shadow Company 2006). Out of all current PSFs operations, these types of employees make up roughly 10-15 percent of all PSF employees in Iraq (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). Yet, their operations continue to be the most contested by authors critiquing PSF operations (Nossal 2001). Their role is heavily contested because security contractors are the closest civilian employees to actual combat. What appears to separate them from the actual combat soldiers is based in legal and normative practices

where a military soldier fighting under her/his nation's flag is protected under international law to perform a combat role during war that might otherwise be constituted as murderous activity. A security contractor lacks this immediate social justification (Shadow Company 2006).

Productions of Masculinity and the Growing Insecurity for Women

The struggle to find legal frameworks that can effectively regulate the role of PSFs in international security predominates in the literature on private security. As a result, there is little dialogue on how these PSFs have embedded masculinity in security and what the implications are to women and the disenfranchised and who are directly affected by the type of protection ensued in conflict environments. Large (1995: 23), for example, has commented that militarization and conflict has created an environment that is silent to women. She further claims that war continues to be imagined in the minds of men but its ramifications are felt on women through increasingly internally displaced persons (IDPs), growing refugee populations, and political and domestic violence that accumulated during conflict when rule of law is broken (Large 1995: 23).

These issues are rarely taken into consideration when PSFs are deployed to maintain security. NiCarthy (1995: 52), when discussing feminist perspectives on war, furthers this argument when she examines the lack of salience placed on security in the home. She claims that national security and security of the citizens continues to be linked to territorial security that privileges men. While PSFs protect convoys, oil sites, and VIPs, there is an absence on the protection of women's domains inclusive of security against domestic violence, security of medical access, and security of environment to

name a few. Furthermore, turning to the market to provide security has implications to persons (such as women) who are historically at a point of disadvantage in accessing these services. The implications can be that women do not get their security needs met as they are not the ones employing these services. Security then ceases to be a non-divisive public good.

When states have difficulties addressing security of women, there are at least some legal and theoretical frameworks in place that allow avenues for women's voices to be heard and their security to be addressed. Some of these frameworks are seen in UN mandates and resolutions addressing women's security during conflict.¹² However, the protection of women's rights and security becomes more acute with PSF operations because there are no legal frameworks in which PSFs are held accountable. Feminists concerned with women's security therefore have a stake in this debate over regulating PSFs and some valid insights to offer. Yet, their voices appear to be largely silent in the actual discussion of PSFs. The concern around the lack of regulatory and legal frameworks of PSFs internationally gives women little avenue to seek justice or have their voice heard in the manner to which their security is addressed. In this regard, oversight and accountability become imperative to ensuring the security of women is met.

¹² On 31 October 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security. Resolution 1325 marks the first time the Security Council addressed the disproportionate and unique impact of armed conflict on women, recognized the under-valued and under-utilized contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal and full participation as active agents in peace and security ("Peace Women" Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, www.peacewomen.org/un/UN1325/1325index.html, last accessed 19 October 2007).

The Market Advantage

PSFs use open market and privatization discourse of being more efficient and cutting edge in technology and training. While regular combat arms are deep-seated in tradition and predictable patterns of operations that have been tested in the field and proven, the new war narrative increasingly calls for forces that are flexible, dynamic, and cutting edge (Boot 2006). This war narrative conjures up solutions in images of advanced weaponry and elite forces. PSFs appear to fit this particular masculinity that is specialized and has increased skill more so than regular combat arms. Blackwater boasts of having the most high-tech training facilities in the US and trains American military, allied countries' militaries, and police authorities (Scahill 2007: 34).

While these new services security contractors perform are an attempt to fill a security gap in international conflicts, the security contractors are also reproducing, and at the same time challenging, traditional conceptions of militarized masculinity and what it takes to be an effective security provider. Because the war on terror narrative is defined in such a way that it demands fast, effective, dynamic, and specialized personnel, PSFs are considered a natural fit. Avant (2005: 126) claims that PSFs remain a force of choice because they can mobilize faster and draw on an international database to meet the particular specialized needs that are required. State leaders can pick the type of force they want for a particular mission and then disband them once the mission is completed (Avant 2005). Most importantly though, by employing PSFs, state leaders are not obligated to engage in the same level of political will in order to sell the mission to the public because there is not as much at stake—nations' soldiers.

Drohan, Singer, and Pelton have commented that security contractors who deploy and die overseas do not carry the same political weight as a military soldier's death

(Shadow Company 2006). Security contractors' deaths do not have to be reported as military casualties but their death toll is mounting. Singer estimates security contractors total death rate in Iraq is roughly 250 (Shadow Company 2006). PSFs contractors and military soldiers are not treated the same way (Shadow Company 2006). This allows state leaders to contract out services without experiencing the political backlash of increasing troop casualties.

This decrease in conversing with the public results in a disproportionate amount of decision-making power placed at the executive level and out of public scrutiny (Avant 2005). Removing the public reviews impedes a healthy democracy where "checks and balances" are "integral to democratic system" (Singer 2003: 213). Public scrutiny is necessary to prevent "wars of self-aggrandizement, foolish wars and in the case of the United States, hegemonic imperialist wars" (Scahill 2007: xxiv).

Militarizing the Security Agenda

Owing to their prevalent role in security, PSFs are playing a major role in how security threats are defined and in turn where the solutions to these threats come from. Leander (2005A) discusses how PSFs, by marketing their skills in a way that creates a perception that private industry responds better than the public service to security challenges, have created a narrative where PSFs have increasing control on setting the security agenda. Within this context, Leander contends that it matters little that the authority to choose remains in the states' hands. If the PSFs are giving the options of security solutions to choose from they hold a considerable amount of power. Furthermore, because PSFs have a major voice in security and are focused on increasing

their profits (and number of contracts), PSFs by virtue of their operations increase global militarization in that they are likely to frame all political and humanitarian issues as military ones.

Cockburn (2004) and Enloe (2007) have both commented on how increased militarization within a community has negative ramifications for women, specifically when violence and the soldier are valorized over all else. Militarization places salience on hierarchy, obedience, and the use of force as the most appropriate means because the world is a “dangerous place best approached with militaristic attitudes” (Enloe 2007: 4). Lancaster, a retired Canadian major, asserts that the rise in PSFs since 9/11 is more of a reflection of paranoia than states responding to fill a security gap (Shadow Company 2006). When PSFs frame security issues as military and private security issues they continue to create a market for themselves but they also create a perception that military intervention is the most appropriate (Leander 2005B). By increasingly relying on PSFs, we create an environment where we begin to see all solutions as military ones.

Brain/Brawn Drain

While the discussion of PSFs have centered around US examples it is important to note that Canada is not immune to the employment of PSFs. Emerging legal arguments specifically in Canada centre around former Canadian soldiers who performed predominantly peacekeeping missions leaving the forces to join PSFs as security contractors (Pugliese 14 November 2005, Spearin 2007). There are currently no legal frameworks in Canada to prevent former soldiers from becoming security contractors. General [ret] Romeo Dallaire and other supporters of stricter regulations, have argued

that these former soldiers are acting in contradiction to Canada's values of human rights and democracy (Pugliese 14 November 2005). Furthermore, there are journalist reports claiming that a large number of former service persons are now leaving the CF for private employment, largely for financial incentives (Pugliese 14 November 2005).

Authorities of JTF2 have claimed that this is perhaps overstated and suggest that the reason soldiers leave is more of a military institutional problem where the CF does not provide adequate incentives, beyond the obvious financial ones, for Special Forces soldiers to stay in once they reach the age of retirement (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Some soldiers who leave for PSF work claim they generally feel dissatisfied with the type of work and lack of war opportunities (Pugliese 14 November 2005). Moreover, this same institutional problem exists in the US Department of Defense (DoD) (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). In the US DoD when officers are promoted beyond the rank of Captain they tend to move into desk jobs and away from combat roles. For a lot of serving members this is a big disappointment. Many of them once they reach the age of retirement will end their service with the forces and join a PSF where there is more "action" (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007).

PSFs recruit primarily from SOF organizations and use their employee's training and calibre to market their organizations as more specialized and skilled. Spearin (2007) contends that as Canada's JTF2 continues to grow and develop, its skills will be highly sought after by the private sector. The CF will continue to face brain/brawn drain and capability loss from assaulters moving over to the private sector.

Contemporary PSFs and Insecurity for Women

There are several concerns that pertain to the operation of PSFs; these include a lack of definition, a lack of legal framework, and ineffective enforcement capabilities (Nossal 2001, Singer 2004, Avant 2005). Singer (2004: 531) contends that “a total ban on mercenaries in international law does not exist”. While the lack of regulations and accountability around PSFs security contractors’ operations gives them flexibility, it also has drastic implications for the type of security and who is afforded this security.

Singer (2004: 525) has detailed accusations made against DynCorps employees in Bosnia. These accusations claim employees were conducting themselves in “perverse illegal and inhumane behaviour [as well as] purchasing weapons [and] women”. One site supervisor was accused of “videotaping himself raping two young women” (525). Conversely, according to Singer, none of these employees have been criminally charged with any offence and there was no mention of any national or international body further examining these accusations. Moreover, Singer (2004: 525) mentioned that Dyncorp has a major contract training Iraqi police. This example illustrates how a lack of accountability and legal frameworks negatively impact women’s security and give women little recourse to address their grievances. Singer also asserts that over the last two years of private security contractors operating in Iraq not one contractor has been prosecuted for a single crime (Shadow Company 2006). Pelton further argued that if a contractor was found to be conducting himself unlawfully he would be removed from the environment rather than be prosecuted (Shadow Company 2006).

The Rise of Blackwater

Security contractors operate in an environment that is void of international regulations and one that Blackwater in particular has been able to exploit. Blackwater rose during the mid-1990s. However, the ground work for Blackwater to flourish began under the authority of George Bush Sr. and Dick Cheney. Between 1989 and 1993 the US military was experiencing a massive reduction in force strength and an increase in outsourcing military tasks (Scahill 2007: 28). Blackwater officially became a PSF in May 1998 (Scahill 2007: 32). The firm began with training US troops and various police officers in its state-of-the-art facilities in North Carolina. The September 11 2001 attack on the US resulted in a huge boost of employment opportunities for Blackwater (Scahill 2007: 33). It was one of the first security contractors on the ground in both Afghanistan and Iraq because it could mobilize its forces the fastest (Scahill 2007: 45).

Blackwater continues to operate in a lawless environment and has used it to its advantage. On the one hand security contractors are civilian contractors and Blackwater claims should not fall under military law (Rasor et al. 2007, Scahill 2007: xxvi). This argument allows security contractors to evade military prosecution for their conduct overseas. On the other hand, and particularly pertaining to domestic civil suits centering around four Blackwater contractors who were killed in Iraq, Blackwater claims they are employed under a total force and that the contractors need to fall under the same liability as their military counterparts (Rasor et al. 2007, Scahill 2007: 232). A lack of clearly defined legal frameworks for PSFs has enabled Blackwater and firms like it to conduct themselves with a level of impunity.

Scahill (2007: 71) has mentioned situations where Blackwater has projected an overt masculine image in their conduct in Iraq and how their actions have hindered the

US's mission to "win the hearts and minds" of the local population. While they employ intimidating methods to protect their noun, a US military official claimed that they make "enemies on every single pass out of town". There have been numerous reported incidents to journalists where locals claim Blackwater contractors have opened fire on civilian vehicles with no warning and no signs of aggression given by local populations to provoke this response (Scahill 2007: 73). Its operations produce local animosity. The operations also further de-legitimize the Iraqi Government because the government appears unable to uphold Iraqi security and security contractor accountable for their conduct (*New York Times* 19 September 2007).

Blackwater's main goal is to protect its "noun". By market principles, if it fails in this mission it is unlikely to receive more contracts. This understanding creates an environment where they are likely to be results-orientated and less concerned with protocol that protects the local population. Contractors act in intimidating and aggressive ways. Overt masculinity has led to complications in the mission because it alienates local populations from Western forces.

These contractors dress and conduct themselves in a manner that is described as "chiseled like body builders". Blackwater security contractors wear "wraparound sunglasses [and] Blackwater T-shirts with the trademark bear claw in the cross-hairs, sleeves rolled up. Some of them look like caricatures, real-life action figures, or professional wrestlers" (Scahill 2007: 71). Motivations to join PSFs go beyond money. Many SOF assaulters have felt robbed of their glory during the 1990s peacetime armies. They feel that PSFs offer a chance to "return to their glory days on the battlefield" (Scahill 2007: 82-83). Furthermore, there is also an added bonus of the "cool-guy factor".

As one of the founders of Blackwater claims: “Chicks dig it”. The projected image leaves little room for women, let alone values of community, holistic understandings, and diverse approaches to security.

One of the reasons for lack of international protection afforded to the security contractor was to attempt to deter people engaging in mercenary activities (Nossal 2001). Avant (2005: 127) claims that their lack of protection under international law has created an environment where they cannot rely on support from conventional military forces. Pelton describes their operations as persons in a chaotic environment. These contractors see themselves as pitted against the unknown and elusive enemy (Schumacher 2006). They are compelled to rely on themselves, void of community support, and without international law (Avant 2005). Their main goal is to stay alive so they can complete their objective (Shadow Company 2006). The image that continues to be projected about security contractors through these authors’ writings suggests that security contract operations are the epitome of masculinity—autonomous, aggressive, and rationally operating in a complete chaotic environment.

The descriptions are somewhat underpinned by Morgenthau (1993: 3) and other IR classical realists scholars understand war and a Hobbes interpretation of human nature. While these descriptions and the role of PSF security contractors may be accurate, they remain partial and are perhaps reflective of only one type of interpretation. This masculine narrative, projected as a mission imperative in order to survive, privileges male understanding of war, the enemy, and conflict.

The image of PSF security contractors is romanticized in video games such as *Soldiers of Fortune* where one person has to fight off 40 enemies in order to achieve his

objective (Shadow Company 2006). Hollywood has glamorized the trade through imagery found in movies such as *Rambo*, or television shows like *A-Team* (Shadow Company 2006). Schumacher's book cover of *A Bloody Business America's War Zone Contractors and The Occupation of Iraq* has men standing in a semi-formation on sand coloured steps. All the men have Kevlar vests, and displaying various guns at ease in front of them. On the back cover there is a hard looking white man with dried blood on his face. In his book, Schumacher details a image of men fighting against all odds and keeping calm under intense combat (2007:171). Schumacher (2006) describes how tough and level-headed a contractor has to be in order to succeed. The pictures of security contractors in the middle of the book show them calm, even smiling, with explosions behind them or their vehicles riddled with bullets. All of these images depict the security contractor in an overtly masculine way. According to authors like Pelton, a certain level of machismo should be afforded to security contractors because they are operating in an environment where they could be killed at any moment (Shadow Company 2006).

Pelton's book entitled *Licensed to Kill Hired Guns in the War on Terror* describes the contractors' image they try to maintain as being directly linked to their heterosexuality and masculinity in that their ideal image would be one that women find attractive. The security contractor will take on two types of images while on deployment. One is a low profile image where they dress in accordance with the local population and attempt to blend in as much as possible. The low profile security contractor will work directly with the locals and often employ some of them (Schumacher 2006). The problems with this profile is that they often get mistaken for "enemies" to the US military

(Schumacher 2006). One security contractor operating in Iraq contends one of his biggest threats is the US military (Shadow Company 2006).

The other image assumed is high profile where the security contractor “looks bad and acts bad” in the hopes that people will take him for an aggressive person and will be deterred from “messing with him” (Shadow Company 2006). Blackwater contractors assume this type of profile. Schumacher (2006: 170) states that these contractors drive in black SUVs, with the “windows down and the guns are pointed in every direction”. They wear black body armour with pistols attached to their thighs. They have an assortment of rifles, have military style hair cuts, and carry “enough ammunition to wage a five-hour battle”. They look like “they would shoot to kill in the blink of an eye”. One contractor claimed he saw a colleague shave his eyebrows in such a way as he looked like he was perpetually frowning (Shadow Companies 2006). This contractor further describes high profile contractors as “troopers and ZZ Top brigades” who have a high level of vanity. These contractors look and act with overt aggression. Blackwater’s image appears to be directly tied to their mission.

Blackwater assumes US military standard operating procedures during operations in Iraq (Shadow Company 2006). In convoys they keep civilians 100 meters back (which during rush hour in Baghdad can be difficult). If a civilian driver comes too close, Blackwater security contractors will fire a round in the air first to warn the civilian to back off, the second round will be in the engine of the vehicle, and the third will go into the driver (Shadow Company 2006). While their aggressive driving (sometimes coming in contact with other vehicles) and aggressive behaviour does not “win the hearts and minds of the locals”, it keeps the contractors alive (Schumacher 2006: 171). This line of

thinking has gotten Blackwater in trouble in recent events. Blackwater's contracts in Iraq were suspended due to allegations of its security contractors conducting themselves in an overt aggressive manner resulting in the death of 8 to 11 civilians in Baghdad (*New York Times* 19 September 2007). Conversely, this decision by the Iraqi Government has since been reversed since the US Government could not sustain its operations without Blackwater (*Aljazeera* 23 September 2007). Nevertheless, diplomacy and cultural understanding appear not be essential to this operating profile.

PSFs, along with Special Forces and conventional combat arms, often take for granted how security organizations privileges male understandings of war. PSFs as organizations have barriers that impede women from participating as security contractors. These barriers are found in their recruiting, training and the image they project in websites, popular media, and on operations. While the actual number of women participating in a security contractor role is not known, specifically within Blackwater,¹³ the way these companies recruit, train, and operate makes it unlikely that many women participate in a security contractor role.

PSF Recruitment and Training

Private security contractors such as ones who work for Blackwater often recruit through networking—and predominantly from Special Force units (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007, Byers 11 November 2005). Again, this is largely because they can use SOF training and skills to market themselves are viable alternatives to large cumbersome militaries. In this sense, they rely a great deal on the calibre of SOF assaulter that is

¹³ Numerous email requests from the author to Blackwater's Human Resources Department asking for percentage of women operating in security contractor roles have not received a response.

produced in public militaries (Spearin 2007). PSFs project an image of an organization that is faster, more efficient and better suited for the fast-paced security contractor demanding in the current war on terror. Blackwater's CEO Erik Prince was quoted saying that his "corporate goal is to do for national security apparatus what Fed Ex did to the postal service" (Scahill 2007: xix). He paints an image of his corporation and in turn private security alternatives as being better suited for the contemporary war narrative. He plays on the debate between public and private services and while marketing his company, he also inadvertently (or advertently) claims public services are slow, heavily bureaucratic, and ill-equipped to deal with fast-paced reactions demanded in the war narrative (Leander 2005B).

One motivating factor that leads public SOF to move to the private sector is that private security contractors offer a higher level of autonomy that gives the individual contractor more control over her/his work/life balance (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). These contractors pick which missions they deploy to and under what conditions (Shadow Company 2006). PSFs also offer the opportunity for the individual to engage in a high degree of "action" without institutional oversight (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). The way these contractors conduct themselves on deployment is primarily left up to their own discretion (Shadow Company 2006). Their main goals are to stay alive and to protect their "person, place, or thing" (Shadow Company 2006). Soldiers can decide when and where they want to fight conflicts. Given this context of the increased role and impact PSFs are having, it becomes important to examine the militarize masculinity in these organizations that affect their organizational culture and who can participate as well as the type and level of security they seek to provide.

Former Special Forces, now security contractor employees, approach their former colleagues within the public forces or persons who have Special Forces experience to work in the private sector with them (Schumacher 2006: 60). Majority of the recruiting is done through this type of networking. Although Blackwater and other security companies have application processes through their websites, most people who are employed with them would have obtained contracts through personal endorsements from current or former security contractors (Schumacher 2006: 60). Returning Canadian soldiers from Afghanistan often comment about being approached by PSFs for employment opportunities and Canada's JTF2 has also been known as a unit where PSFs recruit from (Byers 11 November 2005, Spearin 2007). Personnel leaving JTF2 for private security contracts are presumed to be bored with their job, want to expand the geographic locations they can deploy to, and obtain higher flexibility in their mission lengths (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Major Balasevicius claims that although JTF2 is not currently keeping actual attrition numbers to PSFs, assaulters leaving for private security contracts is not a large concern for JTF2 (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

PSFs security contractors traditionally have had special operations experience regardless of their country of origin (Shadow Company 2006). Conversely, this is now changing somewhat as the demand for security contractors, specifically in Iraq, is growing (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). PSF security contractor positions, while not specifically SOF, require them to have SOF training in order for them to be effective as they operate in increasingly hostile environments with little military equipment and military support (Schumacher 2006). Most of their missions include convoy and VIP protection (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). Nevertheless, there continues to be a

small percentage of private security contractors who perform SOF missions on behalf of their employer (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007).

Col [ret] Schumacher blames attrition rates of special force assaulters among western countries on the public militaries structural organization. He claims that experienced officers, once promoted, get place in desk jobs and their experience is not being adequately employed. These officers often get out and join PSFs to be closer to the action of war (Schumacher 26 June 2007). The armed forces within Canada and the US are lacking programs and policies that continue to provide incentives for retirement aged soldiers to maintain employment with the forces (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Many of these soldiers are in their early 40s when they leave the public forces. They have a wealth of experience and are physically fit to work in the private security sector (Balasevicius 7 June 2007, Schumacher 26 June 2007). Women are denied from participating in the majority of these contractors roles because they are often not afforded Special Forces training. Canada is one of the few Western countries who legally allow women to participate in its Special Forces. The networking for PSFs has been described as “an old boys’ network” and is left up to personal discretion of PSF employers (Shadow Company 2006). Without a standardized process detailing what is expected of a security contractor, and with a particular brain/brawn masculine image that is directly tied to their mission success, women are unlikely to meet this image and therefore unlikely to participate.

Diversity of skill and of workforce has been recognized by many security organizations as imperative for combat effectiveness as deployments (Avant 2005). Conflict are increasingly difficult and require a multitude of skills and attributes in a military force (Avant 2005). PSFs can mobilize quickly and draw on a international

contractor database to meet the specific demands of their employers. Blackwater and other PSFs traditionally have recruited people with SOF experience and because SOF (specifically in Canada, Britain, and the United States) participants are disproportionately males, the PSFs tend to employ males for security roles as well. However, PSFs are increasingly recruiting former soldiers from countries like South Africa, Colombia, and Fiji (Scahill 2007). PSFs, such as Blackwater, have used this diversity in national origin as a marketing incentive that plays on the importance of diversity. Recruitment from countries like these is cost-effective for PSFs as these contractors are not paid as well as Western-based soldiers and often demand less in employment standards based on their more desperate social economic situations (Pugliese 14 November 2005).

The training of security contractors include videos and personal stories that introduce the contractor to the war zone realities (Schumacher 2006: 65). According to Schumacher (2006) these stories are violent and graphic and are a way of weeding out the people who cannot handle these realities of war. These realities depict a war of chaos that appears to be almost exclusive male in participation and masculine in understanding.

Legitimacy Issues

PSFs like Blackwater continue to be plagued by their mercenary roots. Arguments against them continue to appeal to moral claims of legitimacy and accountability. Critics of PSFs contend that companies that are profit driven cannot have the best intentions in mind for public security (Drohan 2003). Stricter oversight and regulations on their operations are strongly advocated by many scholars (Drohan 2003, Avant 2005, Leander 2005A). Similar to discrediting arguments used on Special Forces, PSFs have been

critiqued for little oversight and no accountability measures. They are demoralized and criticized for being soldiers of fortune who fight purely for profit (Shadow Company 2006). Their lack of popularity and accusations of being profit driven soldiers for hire is linked to ideas of patriotism. States develop an idea “that fighting for one’s country [is] an honorable thing to do, and that foreigners with no attachment to the soil or history of a land for which they were fighting could not be depended on for their loyalty” (Schumacher 2006: 13).

To mitigate the negative assertions of PSFs being “soldiers of fortune”, companies such as Blackwater have pushed their patriotism in their advertising and image. The front cover of their home page has a US flag and a mission statement in line with US foreign policy of democracy and freedom promotion.¹⁴ Blackwater also makes its contractors pledge allegiance to the US before their deployment (Scahill 2007: xxii). Patriotism, along with technology and specialization of roles, appears to be necessary requirements in security operations. Although Blackwater is privately owned, it claims through its website that its patriotism and dedication to democracy and US foreign policy goals keeps them loyal to their employer.¹⁵ This allegiance appears to be more in balance with garnering political and public support by illustrating patriotic motivations. Blackwater also plays on its operations in Iraq being a part of the total force. This way it can be inferred that they link themselves closer to the military mission in hopes of increasing their legitimacy.

¹⁴ Blackwater Website, www.blackwaterusa.com, last accessed 4 September 2007.

¹⁵ Blackwater Website, www.blackwaterusa.com, last accessed 4 September 2007.

Content Analysis and Blackwater's Image

Blackwater has founded its empire on the idea that war solutions demand fast and technically advanced capabilities. In turn, Blackwater claims to be technologically advanced, specialized, and cutting edge. It does this through image and operations. The Blackwater symbol is a bear paw with its claws protracted. This symbol is found on Blackwater's website and a variety of clothing apparel. This bear paw symbolizes aggression, domination, and (because bears are near the top of nature's food chain), hierarchy. These attributes are all defined as masculine tropes by various feminists. While Blackwater markets a particular image on T-shirts, it also markets this masculine image on its website. Various PSFs have used the internet to frame security threats and subsequent solutions. Blackwater's website most likely has been used to market themselves as professionals with SOF experience to potential employers (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

Because of the likelihood of Blackwater using its website for these purposes, a content analysis is important. Paasonen (2005: 110) claims that despite arguments about the internet being "free" from racism, sexism, and class, gender continues to reassert itself through the internet and various websites. With this in mind, it is important to discuss the masculinity illustrated on Blackwater's website. The background on its website is gray-scale with straight lined font and a cutting edge, futuristic picture of a world map. It appears as though the viewer is looking at the world through technological lenses. It displays a US flag on its site as well to symbolize its commitment to US goals and values. The image projected is one of patriotism, technologically cutting edge, and masculine.

Regardless, the security scene that has been set dictates an effective force must be technical and innovative. This understanding gives more salience to private industry and is a small reflection of a larger issue at stake where private industry drives military and security agendas as well as other government services. Conventional armies and Special Forces are compelled to work within this new understanding as they struggle to define themselves as the dominant masculinity and in turn the major driver of security agenda.

There is also a reduction in accountability based on the organizational culture of these elite forces. Even within the public special units there appears to be little transparency and accountability. These units root themselves in a perceived eliteness where they give little respect to persons outside their own units (Horn 2006). These cultures foster a sense of elitism, arrogance and aloofness when it comes to legislation and overarching law (Horn 2006). Persons in these units have little time for bureaucracy and processes clinging to the philosophy of the ends justifying the means. They continue to place salience on results over process. This appears to be a result of a masculine cultural organization (Cartwright and Gale 1995).

War and actual combat experience play into the type of masculinity projected. War provides the opportunity for security contractors to prove themselves as warriors. The more heated the conflict is that they are involved in, the more masculine they become (Rasor et al. 2007). This was noted in various soldiers' narratives who operated in the and outside of the "green zone" in Iraq (Rasor et al. 2007). Pugliese (14 November 2005) details a soldiers' motivations for releasing from the CF to engage in security contract work. Pugliese claimed "if [this soldier] was going to be a soldier he would have to do it where there was a war". PSFs security contractors have the opportunity to engage

in more conflict roles because they are less tied to governments dictating where they go and in what capacity.

Soldiers in conventional forces that appear to have hostilities towards both PSF and SOF units like JTF2 are said to be younger and have less experience with the military (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). Schumacher contends this is because these young soldiers have a limited understanding of the role private security contractors play (Col [ret] Schumacher 26 June 2007). However, Rasor and colleagues (2007) have commented that they pay difference and the projected autonomous image of these PSFs security contractors continues to foster feelings of animosity among public militaries.

While PSFs continue to challenge traditional roles done through public militaries and Special Forces, they challenge the type of soldier needed in the War on Terror. While there are decentralizing effects in that PSFs rely on the market and technology, there continue to be social barriers in women's participation (and a large percentage of men) as well as an entrenchment of a particular type of security that continues to privilege masculine notions of security. Until these aspects of war and security organizations are adequately addressed, these institutions and how they define security will continue to be closed to women's participation and feminists' perspectives. An important limitation to my research is that I was unable to get perspectives from applicants who were not white or male. Their diverging opinions would have been useful in understanding the how the selection process is viewed by someone who is not a part of the dominant culture.

The next chapter will discuss in detail how through embedded masculinity through image, technology, physical fitness, and unit cohesion continues to act as barriers to women's participation in these security organizations, and by extension, voices are left silent in defining international security discourse.

Chapter 5: New Image but Same War Narrative: “The Patriarchal Challenge”

This experience [of having a section of women] was unbearable as I could not pee, fart, swear, eat or chew people out without being observed upon and I believe this affected my ability to command. The solution was to send them the A Echelon. I admit that I am “old school” and having females around made my life miserable—statement from CF Infantry Officer (cited in Pinch 2002: 10).

The issue of women in the military was never about women; it was about men and their need to define their masculinity—quote from Thomas and Thomas (cited in Winslow and Dunn 2002: 650).

Introduction

Masculinity as a discourse asserts itself through the person and through organizational culture in military institutions. The discourse produces a binary narrative that separates men from women (Tickner 1992: 30) and men from men. In military organizations, masculinity is seen as the ideal. This ideal brain/brawn masculinity in Special Forces and PSFs, is founded in general themes of privatization, specialization, and technology. While much of my analysis focuses on how this masculinity continues to exclude women’s participation, it also separates men from men in that only a small percentage of male soldiers can be successful in these units. Militarized masculinity as a discourse, is structured in the image of the Special Forces assaulter and security contractor and within the organizational culture of these institutions. Masculinity in the military continues to be an “emotional issue linked to military traditions and survival on the battlefield” (Winslow and Dunn 2002: 643).

There are persisting organizational culture and gendered assumptions that act as barriers for women’s participation in Special Forces and the private industry. Militarized masculinity not only impedes women’s access to special military organizations, it also

carries with it a particular vision of security and whose security interests need to be met. This section is structured under the four general themes that have been examined as tools of women's exclusion in the preceding chapters. Masculinity is explored in themes of SOF image, physical fitness, technology, and team cohesion that: 1) impede women's and many men's full participation in these special units; and 2) work to sustain a masculine and overall militarized security discourse.

The Patriarchal Challenge

War and conflict are central to all types of masculinities in the military. While Western militaries continue to recruit women for operational commitments, masculinity is preserved. Masculinity in the military is perceived as necessary for combat effectiveness—the ability to apply coercive force—and for the military to continue to recruit young men (Enloe 2007: 85). However, masculinity in the military is not a monolithic identity. Its creations and variations are inextricably linked to its political surroundings.

Times of conflict and post conflict are important periods during which to examine masculinities. As the political environments change, masculinities are forced to adapt. Within the military context, Enloe (2007: 85) details the masculine adaptation as the “patriarchal challenge”. The patriarchal challenge happens when: 1) personnel is needed and recruitment is low; when 2) there is human rights legislation that forces policy change in militaries; and when 3) there is increased salience placed on diversity and equity. During these times, Enloe shows, the military is also forced to meet operational

challenges at the same time holding onto its masculinities (2007: 85). The CF is currently facing a patriarchal challenge.

Gender, Diversity, Specialized Personnel, and the Patriarchal Challenge

Women's movements within the civilian sector have had positive affects in increasing women's participation in all sectors of the CF and more trades in its allied Western states. Allan English (2004: 90) asserts that the incorporation of more women in the CF (largely attributed to "the feminist revolution") has changed the culture of the military forever. The military is no longer the cultural domain of "men of British heritage".

Diversity is being pushed in many Western militaries as a way of enforcing a particular culture change within the military and to tap into a larger recruitment pool (Harris-Jenkins 2004, Leuprecht 2004). Diversity in Canada is underpinned by the EE Act. The perceived need for participation from visible and ethnic minorities is growing in popularity across western forces and private industry. However, this discourse has the potential to negate the continual gendered barriers that keep women from participating fully in military institutions (Woodward and Winter 2006). Diversity is a politically palatable term that places salience on projected targets in recruiting and moves away from quotas and affirmative action policies (Canadian Forces Personnel Newsletter March 2006). The people employing it attempt to increase the "buy-in" by soldiers in the Western forces. However, this discourse negates the embedded masculinity and patriarchy that continues to define participation in the military (Pinch 2006: 188, Enloe 2007: 87). Women's integration, while still a concern in the CF, has not received the

political and military support it had in the past. Changing this trend, in part, comes from continual primary social science research in this area, its findings and applications, as well as a continual external political push from the citizens (Davis 2004). Because women are in greater numbers in the CF than any other recognized group under the EE Act, there is more of a focus to increase the representation of Aboriginals and visible minorities (Leuprecht 2006).

The new war narrative dictates specialization and technological adaptation (Boot 2006). Both the CF and PSFs recognize a need for increased specialization and technically capable participants. As a result, the CF's masculinity is changing in that the institution has to open its borders to a wider array of persons that includes more technically capable persons. General Rick Hiller (2007) has claimed that while the CF needs men and women "of action", it also needs a few "geeks of action".

Yet, while the military is opening up trades to women's participation, and a greater percentage of men, it is also creating units within the culture that remain a sanctuary for men and for a particular type of militarized masculinity. These sanctuaries are found in Canada's JTF2 and other elite forces. By extension, because PSF security contractors are recruited from these elite units, the private security industry also remains predominantly male and exerts a particular type of brain/brawn masculinity.

Women Participation in Security Organizations

There are no known women acting as JTF2 assaulters (Pinch 2002) and the amount of women who act as security contractors is unknown, yet likely not significant in number. As the general forces are allowing more women to participate in order to meet

recruiting and personnel demands, these same organizations are reforming bastions of masculinity within the elite and Special Forces (both public and private). These units receive support through increases in financial and political support (de B. Taillon 2005-06: 67). The statement with which this chapter opened by a CF Infantry Officer, reflecting upon women in combat arms is an example of how leadership in the combat arms fosters a hostile environment towards women and how this has persisted well past the Human Rights Commission in 1989 and women's legally full integration (excluding submarine service) in 1999.

The struggle for women's integration in the CF has been a long and continual process. Davis (2004) breaks down the integration into four major time periods that came not only with a political push external to the CF but from social scientific research into gendered barriers within the CF. In fact, most changes to human resource policy and increasing women's integration has been compliance-based (Pinch 2002) and has required external pressure.

Despite the influence of academic research in pushing for historical policy changes, since 1999 there has been little research or policy push for women's integration into the combat arms, specifically in Special Forces. This has meant that women's participation in these units is low and explanations as to why remain unexamined. Furthermore, because combat arms and Special Forces experience is important as a skill and to network in order to become a PSF security contractor, women's participation in these private units would be limited at best.

Winslow and Dunn (2002: 643-644) have commented that women's integration into the CF and other militaries is not even. They understand this uneven participation

through technological advancements. Advancing technology has “created new patterns of combat and therefore modified organizational behaviour in the military”. The more advanced the technology, the more linked it is with its civilian counterpart (Janowitz cited in Winslow and Dunn 2002: 643). Winslow and Dunn further assert that because the combat arms do not have a civilian equivalent, they are more rooted in masculine discourses of war founded in battlefield traditions where men are the sole participants (Winslow and Dunn 2002: 642).

Conversely, Special Forces have direct links to technology and has its civilian counterpart in PSFs security contractors. However, majority of the personnel in the civilian PSFs have experience in the combat arms and Special Forces. Because of this, at least in part, it appears that masculinity persists in both organizations.

Masculine Mandate

Canadian citizens have seen a change in how the CF conduct themselves since the Afghanistan deployments in October 2001 to present. Canadian soldiers are moving away from peacekeeping missions to a more peacemaking and peace enforcement mandates. Whitworth (2004), Granatstein (2007), and McQuaig (2007) all contend that peacekeeping as internalized in that army was an emasculating experience. Afghanistan deployment in October 2001 was an important step for the CF. The army generally felt it was finally returning to a more aggressive and coercive role (McQuaig 2007). Conversely, the public continues to be concerned with the switch from peacemakers to a military body that primarily applies coercive force (Enloe 2007: 85).

This is not to say by simply adding women, a military force will be less militarized. There are many critiques that claim women are just as likely to become militarized as men (Enloe 2007). However, women need to be a part of the military direction dialogue through active participation. A diversity of voices from a wide array of experiences could potentially enhance military comprehension of conflict and when a military is the best solution to ending it. Moreover, while my research has focused primarily on the institutional barriers based on gender assumptions that persist in the military and how these assumptions affect how female soldiers participate, there are a multitude of examples illustrating how overt masculinity in military operations undermines the security of women these forces are designed to protect (Enloe 1989, 2000, Cockburn 2004, Whitworth 2004).

The images of both SOF and security contractors are underpinned by masculinity. They conduct themselves in aggressive and intimidating ways in order to protect themselves and the “noun” they are hired to protect. Security and their missions are defined in a particular way that sees the protection of the noun or the execution of their mission as paramount. They are more concerned with the results than with the process of how this mission is accomplished. Cartwright and Gale (1995: 12) claim that this results based motivation is directly linked to masculine organizational culture.

The JTF2 recruits from within the military and disproportionately from the infantry because the unit is seen as a career progression for people within the combat arms (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Other Special Forces within the UK, Australia and the US are not legally open to women. If women are not in the environments that SOF recruit from, their chances of joining these units is limited.

Recruitment of security contractors in PSFs has been from predominantly SOF units and the majority of these contractors have some Special Forces background. Because there are few to no women found in the Special Forces, it is unlikely that they are working as security contractors. However, official numbers of women within Canada's JTF2 or Blackwater were not available. It is difficult to ascertain women's participation in these units, but it can be inferred that their involvement in roles other than support is either non-existent or very small.

Masculinity, Elitism, and Oversight

Image plays an important role. How Special Forces are portrayed both to the military and the larger civilian population is of concern to participating soldiers and to the unit's organizational culture. The image is important because it assists in who has the propensity to join these units. Military personnel who want to achieve the image of a soldier who is autonomous, highly skilled and technologically-adept will be more apt to apply to these Special Forces both in the private and public spheres.

Lack of oversight in these units allows them to train and operate with a higher level of autonomy. While scholars such as Douglas Bland (2000-2001) have criticized lack of political oversight and political disengagement as being a major issue with the regular CF, there appears to be even less oversight with these special units (JTF2 Authority 27 July 2007). Lack of oversight raises concern about legitimacy and accountability. While this continues to remain a point of contention over the use of PSFs because they fall through international legal loopholes, it is important to realize with a lack of oversight, public Special Forces can be critiqued the same way. Oversight and

accountability issues are of concern for women's security as well. If there is no one to hold these units accountable for their actions, women have little avenue to address issues affecting their personal security.

There are also concerns pertaining to recruitment, selection, and training within these special units. Image and roles performed should be kept standardized through validations civilian oversight. However, as mentioned above, this appears to be missing within the CF and has been a major issue raised in response to PSF operations as well. Without good leadership and standardized selection and training processes, Special Forces units have the ability to create themselves into being a highly cohesive unit, detached from its greater community, who are rogue, and think of themselves as above the law (Horn 2006).

This type of organic elitism was illustrated well in Canada's airborne regiment (Winslow 1998). The resulting security afforded by this type of unit is also well documented (Government of Canada 1997, Whitworth 2004). There have also been cases both within PSFs such as Blackwater's operations in Iraq and Canada's JTF2's operations abroad when the units' behaviours were not aligned with their employer's foreign policy and the advancement of Canada's commitment to human rights (Pugliese 2003, Scahill 2007, JTF2 authority 24 July 2007).

The Militarized War Narrative

Notwithstanding these debates, contemporary militaries operate with the assumption that terrorism is a prevalent threat.¹⁶ These militaries continue to struggle to find ways, within their hierarchy and tradition, to combat small units of networks who are

¹⁶ Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) Website, www.jtf2.forces.gc.ca, last accessed 4 September 2007.

dynamic and dispersed in their operations (Boot 2006). Given this context, specialization and technological innovations appear to be salient in military culture in order to adequately address these new threats. The military continues to recruit specialized persons. Because of this, both Special Forces and PSFs have been able to market themselves as natural fits in combating the new enemy.

However, their operations are also working to dictate how future threats are defined and subsequent solutions needed to address these threats are determined. Both organizations through recruitment and selection processes combined with images of a particular type of technology are producing a culture that further embeds masculinity within security discourse. This type of brain/brawn masculinity, because it asserts a binary in gender based on sex and treats its masculine as the ideal, continues to impede women's participation in these organizations and has less than positive effects on the kinds of security that are delivered and on the recipients of this security.

Feminists' voices are absent from this war narrative and remains silent in the overall understanding of conflict. A lack of feminine voice has led to more support for an increasing militarized military and community. Militarization has historically had negative effects on women's position to power because military service is seen as important for citizenship.

The war narrative itself has largely centered in these military institutions, whether private or public, and has resulted in the war narrative turning into a narrative of international militarization (Enloe 2007: 4). This war narrative becomes militarized when we "adopt militaristic values," such as a belief in hierarchy, obedience and the use of force (Enloe 2007: 4). We begin to see military solutions as the most effective solutions

to international issues and we understand our world as “a dangerous place best approached with military attitudes” (Enloe 2007: 4). Cockburn (2004: 113) discusses how militarization can place women at a disadvantage in social standing, because full citizenship often equates to military service and whereby women are under-represented in most armed forces. Because of this, it is important to focus on the new war narrative and the resulting militarization embedding in the international security dialogue.

Whitworth (2005) examined some negative results in assuming that the CF, a military force, was the most appropriate force for peacekeeping missions. She raised valid concerns over CF Airborne soldiers’ conduct in Somalia. Whitworth suggested that while the Canadian public and government saw its peacekeeping forces as altruistic, moral, and helpful, the military never envisioned itself or trained with this image in mind.

Militaries, in part through rituals and training, instil “norms of masculinity which privilege violence, racism, aggression and hatred towards women” (Whitworth 2005: 103) as well as homophobic (Cohn 1998). By highlighting this case, Whitworth correctly claimed that a mission change to peacekeeping “does not by itself transform the years of training and socialization that have gone into the creation of a soldier” (Whitworth 2004: 103). This case illustrates how not all security solutions are military solutions. When we see security issues that need to be solved by military means we also must ask, even within a peacekeeping capacity what kind of organization we are sending and what type of security we expect them to provide. However, little research is done in examining the actual organizational culture of PSFs—not to mention Special Forces. Without studies into these security organizations, feminists’ concerns will not be addressed. Women have a valid role to play in military agendas because while militarization often leaves women

out of the discussion, they are still called upon to “support, and even work on behalf of, militarizing agendas” (Enloe 2007: 15).

Physical Endurance

Physical strength continues to be central to creating the soldier in Special Forces. It also continues to be used as the main barrier to women participating both in the combat arms and within Special Forces. Male interviewees in Special Forces and combat arms all expressed that women are not discriminated against but they simply cannot meet the physical standards set and backed by a “complicated and expensive process” (O’Keefe 2001: 50) incorporating scientists and focus groups made up of subject matter experts. Pinch (2002: 14) contends that the CF’s combat arms training is not standardized. Without proper validation of performance objectives, there is room for “arbitrary decisions on the part of the training staff”. This can work to the detriment of women’s participation. Currently JTF2 is standardized in its training, but this was not the case until recently (JTF2 Authority 27 July 2007). While anatomical and biological claims against women’s participation tend to be the major barrier to a successful female assaulter during selection, these arguments appear to be based in gender assumptions that assumes a neutral “masculine” standard that women have to fit into.

These standards that are backed by science and technology continue to privilege men. The standard is created for men and science continues to test on men to further justify the validity of the standards. The subject matter experts are male. This process is not unique to the military but it creates a scenario where women soldiers are forced to conform to a male standard. The Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services

(DACWS)—a division within the Department of Defense (DoD) in the United States argues that the result of ignoring gender and women in scientific performance studies creates a scenario where women are “simply disconnected adjustments to existing male standards” (Friedl 2005: 764). It creates a perception that sameness is imperative and if women cannot perform like men and be evaluated on their performance the same as men then they simply cannot do the job. Currently, this sentiment is felt within JTF2. Sameness is required and difference is seen as weakness.

Conversely, when women were studied for injuries and performance measures, women could perform at the same level as men if given different training programs (Friedl 2005: 771). Selection processes to determine an effective soldier for men (often based on individual strength tests) were found to be poor predictors of success for women soldiers in the same military role (Friedl 2005: 769). Moreover “isolated tasks that require great strength often represented a human engineering design shortfall” and presented high risk to anyone performing the task regardless of their gender (Friedl 2005: 769). In the JTF2, individual physical strength continues to be the baseline to test all other attributes in their selection process (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). This physical endurance baseline acts as a barrier for women who are unable to fit into the male model of physical fitness.

This science that focuses on women’s health and performance in military settings continues to illustrate that women are “not simply scaled down versions of men” (Friedl 2005: 769) but sometimes require different performance based testing and technology in order to perform the same job. In this regard the military would best be served in a philosophical change that difference does not always equate to weakness. Perhaps JTF2

is not engaging in science that is more inclusive of a variety of participants because their assaulters continue to be predominantly homogenous in characteristic. Their science is centered on participants currently within Special Forces. These case subjects are men. This self-perpetuating and enforcing masculine barrier continues to impede women's participation.

A focus group of women who participated in the combat arms in 1998 found that the "lens through which women are observed and evaluated is tinted in a way that discredits and devalues women in relation to male norms and standards" (Davis and Thomas 1998: 7-8). Moreover, it was found that if women were unable to perform to the same standard employing the same methods as their male counterparts, other soldier attributes they brought with them were not recognized (Davis and Thomas 1998: 7-8). Physical strength and brawn on an individual level continues to be the dominant measure of a good soldier (Davis 2001: 20).

This is also an argument that is not new and has been used historically by the CF to keep women out of male dominated roles. Arguably, as a variety of feminists who write on gender and IR have claimed, this discourse is not confined solely to the military and it is seen throughout society where men hold a position of privilege. Prioritizing sameness (and sameness based on a male standard) continues to impede greater integration of women in the military. Although "science" has illustrated that because of differences in physiology of men and women, technology and training needs to be different, this recognition is not felt within the greater military culture. If women cannot perform the task the same way men can and cannot be tested the same way men are then

they are seen to be weaker and given an unfair advantage at the cost of combat effectiveness (Davis 2001, Pinch 2002).

Male serving members who do *not* achieve this JTF2 soldier status is also worthy of examination. Where women are denied based on gender assumptions and their perceived lack of physical stamina and performance vis-à-vis a male standard, men's failure to meet this standard says something about varied masculinities that are founded on more than just anatomical sex. Although it is beyond the scope of the present research to delve further into this concern, it is important to consider this in further research. While the one interviewed applicant who was unsuccessful during JTF2 selection claimed he continued to see the unit as professional and one he would have liked to participate in, he was frustrated with their continual secrecy regarding his application about why he was not successful and not encouraged to try again (JTF2 applicant 9 August 2007).

Gendered myths are being debunked through women's continual participation within combat arms in Canada and through both the US and Canada's female soldiers' participation in combat environments in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the same time, this participation is not seen in Special Forces and PSF security contractors. A part of this appears to be with women's propensity to join these units. These units project an image of overt masculinity and this image appears to be one of the major barriers. As much as men are socialized into masculine roles through training and selection (Whitworth 1994), it appears that women are socialized not to participate.

Technology

War technology in its conception and application is embedding particular notions of masculinity and restricting women's participation. Women's restrictions appear to be based on the personal level (because women are seen as having to "fit" into the technology) and on the organizational level (where it works to entrench masculinity in the organizational culture).

In the United States, academics, specifically feminists, have critiqued masculinity embodying technology during war (Masters 2005). However, women historically and currently, remain outside of technology's development (Cockburn and Ormrod 1993). Acquisition of technology in the military (such as NVGs, technologically advanced sights for weaponry, and surveillance equipment), particularly in the Special Forces continues to privilege males in its design and application—in part because there are very few if any female Special Force assaulters (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). Control over the technology continues to privilege men.

Technological innovations are developed through creativity that comes from working directly with existing technology. This requires persons to have direct participation in the application of technology. However, women have been historically excluded from this process in the military. Evetts (1998: 3) comments how gender differences remain "a vital component of controlling social attitudes". She further states that women have been socialized to "opt out of technology" as much as men have been trained and conditioned to "opt into it".

Technologies acquisitioned to improve soldiers' capabilities are trial-tested on men. Davis, as she reflected on her 22 years of military services and various experiences in the CF, contends that women were always considered an afterthought and something to

fit in once the technology was deemed efficient (Davis 1 June 2007). Technology has been used to control who participates throughout history and is not confined solely to the military. Women continue to be “handicapped” by military technology because it has been “originally designed with only men in mind” (Friedl 2005: 769). This “handicap” for women was and continues to be illustrated in the most basic military equipment in the army—the rucksack. Military medical studies have indicated that women experienced a greater deal of medical issues and physical discomfort from load-carrying equipment when compared to men (Harper et al. 1997). Instead of seeing this issue as a technological flaw, women are often assumed to be ill-suited for the position.

Women’s exclusion from various non-traditional roles in the CF have been assessed as being because of gender assumptions of appropriate roles for men and women. The Servicewomen in Non-Traditional Environments and Roles (SWINTER) trials is an example of how women, when allowed to participate, can debunk gender based arguments.¹⁷ Technology in military warfare is designed to make killing more efficient and to keep the soldiers alive longer. There appears to be little push to develop technology in the military for anything other than destruction of life. This appears in various authors’ descriptions of the application of technology during the Gulf War and with the earliest SOF operations in Afghanistan (Pugliese 2003, Masters 2004). Not only is technology exclusive in its participants but it is employed for a specific purpose.

¹⁷ The SWINTER trials allowed women in participate in fighter pilot squadrons in Canada’s Air Force. The trials concluded that “social integration had occurred in a satisfactory manner in a majority of squadrons. Women had performed their tasks well, had received no preferential treatment, and a majority of servicemen agreed that women should be fully employed in previously all male units” (Human Rights Tribunal Decision cited in Winslow and Dunn 2002: 645).

Technology by its popular definition¹⁸ is problematic because it assumes an amoral description (Bush 1997: 172). This gender-neutral description hides how technology is linked to inequality and makes it difficult for feminists to ask questions of technology (172). Technology continues to be built on white male values in that it values “strength and speed in eliminating the weak, conquering competitors, and ruling over vast armies of men who obey his every instruction” (Wajcman 1997: 260). Moreover, it denies feminine values and tropes “such as intuition, subjectivity, tenacity and compassion” (Wajcman 1997: 260).

Women’s inclusion within organizational cultures that have been predominantly male-centric have been out of necessity and for pragmatic reasons. Once participating, women have pushed for greater involvement and have often debunked various science and technological assumptions that have been used to previously exclude their participation (Friedl 2005: 764). However, as long as women are denied access to these special units there will be little advancement of technology and science with women in mind.

Team Cohesion

Cohesion within units underpins combat effectiveness (Winslow and Dunn 2002). Through training and selection, strong social bonds are created in these units. These bonds, as described by Kaplan and Sasson-Levy, have acted as barriers for greater participation. They create an “us” and “other” binary (Pinch 2006: 118). Men go to war and continue to fight because of this cohesion and for their comrades. Patriotism and pay

¹⁸ Technology’s task “is to employ the earth’s resources and energy income in such a way as to support all humanity while also enabling all people to enjoy the whole earth, all its historical artefacts, and its beautiful places without any man enjoying life around earth at the cost of another” (Fuller cited in Bush 1997: 172).

incentives appear to be lower on the priority list. Col [ret] Schumacher (26 June 2007), in our interview, asserted an indescribable bond and cohesion with his “buddies” after a fire-fight. War increases the social bond between soldiers. Arguments for this cohesion that further embeds masculinity in the military have traditionally asserted that including women will break down this cohesion and in turn combat effectiveness (Pinch 2002).

Despite other studies that suggest possible benefits from mixed gender work environments such as greater social bonding and support (Bird 2003), male dominated work environments (such as combat arms, Special Forces and PSF security contractors) rely a great deal on gendering assumptions in social bonding. Pinch (2002: 3) describes two major problems with this cohesion argument. The first assumption is that the traditional conception of combat arms culture, rooted in masculinity, contains all the necessary elements for optimized operational effectiveness in the combat arms. The second assumption is that masculinity is imperative for social bonding and the cohesion necessary to make successful war fighters.

These arguments assume combat arms are solely for applying coercive force during combat. Moreover, since war fighting is masculine in nature, introducing women to the combat arms would somehow extremely alter the dynamics of this culture and have a detrimental affect on its combat effectiveness. However, according to Pinch (2002: 13), there is a systemic lack in validated performance standards that empirically prove women decrease unit cohesion and in turn combat effectiveness. Furthermore, in current conflicts, combat arms soldiers are expected to perform more roles than just coercive force and this new understanding is calling into question both of these assumptions (Pinch 2002: 3). Examining the “patriarchic challenge” continues to be important for

future research. While the military is forced to open its borders to increase diversity in participants, how will it hold onto its masculinity?

Studies by various sociologists have suggested that while male bonding is higher in all male work environments, this appears to be the case only when all the members of the organization live up to the dominant masculine image (Bird 2003). The social cohesion argument fails to take into account multiple masculinities that conflict with each other in male dominated organizations. Masculinities differ within units as they interface with race, socioeconomic, and religious backgrounds. While team cohesion is strong in organizations where all the men carry the same masculinity, this also appears rarely to be the case and multiple masculinities can result in a reduction of social cohesion. Competition and internal disputes have been alluded to with one interviewee when discussing the working relationship between support staff and assaulters in JTF2 (JTF2 Authority 24 July 2007).

Furthermore, Kaplan (2006) explains how women are excluded in masculine cultures. He indicated in a study done on males in homogenous organizations in Israel, that there appears to be a homo-social public display among male dominated groups. This is a way men bond with each other and obtain intimacy without questioning their masculinity. The bonding rituals are often highly sexualized and can impede greater inclusion from people outside the unit—namely women.

Nevertheless, women who do participate in these organizations do not appear to challenge existing masculine norms. Sasson-Levy (2003) studied women's performance in Israel's combat arms and found that while women had a sense of empowerment through what he describes as "gender bending" they only enhanced the normalization of

masculinity in combat arms units because they still disregard feminine attributes. This study demonstrates that merely adding women into the organization will likely not produce a positive cultural change.

Conclusion

Physical endurance in selection process for Canada's JTF2 continues to be founded on male-centric understandings of good assaulters because it is male assaulter who work in the environment and determine the requirements that make a good assaulter (Balasevicius 7 June 2007). This process impedes women's full participation. Selection processes that are based in technology and backed by a particular science prevent women from participating because both technology and science have historically and continue to favour men and a particular masculine understanding. Team cohesion has been asserted as being imperative to combat effectiveness as it, over all other forms of combat motivation inclusive of pay and patriotism, keep soldiers in combat (Winslow 1998). This has also been a major point that has excluded women from participating (Pinch 2002). While this reluctance is not founded on any empirical studies on how integrating women into male environments affects cohesion, it continues to rest in gender assumptions of male and female participation in war. The claim often made is that the cost of "trying women out" is too great if it goes wrong (Pinch 2002). This claim puts the responsibility on science to prove that women increase cohesion before the military allows women's participation.

All the aforementioned issues that affect women's participation treat women as the "problem" that needs to be fit in. Women continue to have to meet male standards.

When women are allowed to participate in a military role, that role is instantly devalued (Davis 2002). At the same time masculine bastions such as the PSFs and Special Forces continue to be areas where masculinity is being further embedded.

Masculinity is reasserting itself in varied forms in both JTF2 and PSFs. These units advance a particular type of masculinity that is linked with specialization, small unit cohesion, and technology. Structural barriers founded both at the personal level and at the organizational culture level act as forces that perpetuate this masculine discourse. This model of brain/brawn masculinity continues to create a culture of exclusivity in which a binary of us and them is created. The masculine model remains the ideal and all other attributes are considered deficient. This discourse produces a war narrative that requires a particular participant. Women and a large amount of men cannot achieve this image and in turn are denied participation. While this chapter focused primarily on the barriers that prevent women's participation, gender barriers impede a large amount of men from participating as well. Although beyond the scope of this analysis, this is an important consideration warranting further research. The following chapter discusses some current overarching debates in gender and security and highlights where future research is required.

Chapter 6: Militarized Masculinity Reconsidered

The dominant voice of militarized masculinity and de-contextualized rationality speaks so loudly in our culture, it will remain difficult for any other voices to be heard until ... that voice is de-legitimated—Carol Cohn (cited in Taylor and Hardman 2004: 3).

Introduction

Feminists in IR and scholars examining gender as a unit of analysis in the military have struggled with the continual marginalization of their efforts (Ship 1994, Whitworth 2000, Waylen 2006). Many scholars such as Whitworth, Tickner, Enloe, and Hooper have attempted, through their research, to give voice to women's issues in IR. Only recently, has there been more scholarship in gender and IR that examines multiple masculinities as a means of offering insight into oppression and organizational barriers for both women and men. Some scholars are concerned that focusing on men and masculinity de-centers women from study (Zalewski 1998: 6). However, if the goal is to mainstream gender, more scholars need to find connections with the research and feel that they can offer valid contributions (Zalewski 1998: 7). This goal entails incorporating how both women and men are affected by their assigned genders and the political environments in which they find themselves. With this in mind, scholarship has begun to focus on how men can contribute to gender studies and feminist agendas within IR (Smith 1998).

The Debate of Male-Centric Studies

The particular challenge for feminists and people studying gender is to negotiate between centering women in IR discourse as a unit of analysis, but not losing sight of

men's participation in the examination of masculinities as a mode of understanding oppression and power relations. Goldstein (2007: 321) commented that "men's gender conceptions, such as "protecting women", "proving manhood," and so forth, have a real impact on the practice of IR". Niva (1998: 112) comments that war, specifically the Gulf War, was as much about male posturing and male bonding where "the men were separated from the boys" as it was about disembodied political and economic narratives. Conversely, according to Goldstein (2007: 321), men get little attention in the discipline—or outside the discipline for that matter—so little that when many people hear "gender" they think "women".

From Military Masculinity to Military Masculinities

My research, although limited in scope, has attempted to add to the evolving understanding of masculinity in the military and in IR. My research highlights that masculinity is not "a fact of nature or monolithic" but a socially constructed identity that is specific to political contexts and changes over time (Niva 1998: 111). Hooper (2000: 32) contends that masculinity acts as an exclusionary abstraction that is created and performed through discursive constructions (gender assumptions embedded in selection criteria), institutional practices (myths, rituals, and symbols of PSF and Special Forces units), and physical bodies (projected image and personal motivations of individuals). This ideal masculinity, regardless of what military unit it situates itself in, works in a binary framework to normalize the military man from all others who do not fit the ideal image (Hooper 2000: 35).

I have highlighted these aspects of masculinity and how they blend together throughout my chapters. However, the goal for future research should be to examine gender as a unit of analysis with how it “intersects with other social divisions such as class, race, and sexuality to produce complex hierarchies of gendered identities” (Hooper 2000: 34). Although beyond the scope of this research, these social divisions should be explored in future studies, especially as the CF and its allied militaries begin to strategically recruit from a more diverse demographic. A wider gender study of military culture should incorporate reserve units and perhaps compare Canada with allied countries. This type of comparison would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of how culture, race, religion, history, the market, and diverse demographic participation interplays with gendered social relations in military organizations.

While my research is limited in that it is based on a small-n survey, it does incorporate key individuals who possess important insights on the JTF2 as well as PSFs. The primary and secondary sources that provide context and background for my analysis are predominantly from the United States and state-funded research in the 2000s in Canada. Arguably without continual empirical research on women’s perceptions, roles and contributions in the military, future research will remain limited. However, my research does highlight some trends that persist in women’s exclusion from more specialized roles and participation in more specialized units. Moreover, it highlights the various implications on women’s security when an overtly masculine organization is deployed to maintain security.

Many cultural and social barriers exist for researchers, and more specifically female researchers exploring the military. Compounded with the closed culture and sense

of paranoia military members have with talking with civilians, I experienced explicit sexual comments by potential interviewees. In two cases, the opportunity to interview was foreclosed by some sexually explicit comments and requests that were made over the phone and via email by potential interviewees. This behaviour jeopardized the professional manner of any further dialogue.¹⁹ These explicit comments, coupled with the paranoia and culture of secrecy within the CF, acted as limitations in obtaining a larger number of interviews. Because of the small amount of soldiers interviewed my research can only allude to possible motivations but cannot provide conclusive findings. If anything, my thesis acts as a catalyst for more research in this area.

Given the interviewees responses, it appears that career progression and motivations continue to be underpinned, at least to a certain degree, with motivations of achieving higher masculinity. Although no one expressed explicated a negative view on women co-workers, some did comment that their lack of physical ability could be a problem. It has also been noted that men in the combat arms would have no problem working with women as long as they could perform to the same level through the same methods as men (Davis 2002). Gender assumptions and liberal ideas of sameness-meaning-equality still persist in the CF despite empirical evidence suggesting women and men can obtain the same goal, just by different training processes (Friedl 2005). The “neutral” standards continue to place emphasis on males and masculine perceptions of what qualities are necessary to ensure that security is obtained.

¹⁹ As for example, an email was received by a SOF applicant (5 September 2007) stating: “hey Sweet tits (joke) whats your phone # so i can give you a call! (to dicuss your questionare not your sweet tits! LOL.” Another email (4 April 2007) advised the interviewer he would answer interview questions if the interviewer would have sex with him but be secretive about it.

The War Narrative

Within the contemporary battle against terrorists and Western countries committed to Middle Eastern and Asian conflicts, militaries are continuing to deal with conflicting masculinities as they demand a multitude of skills from their soldiers. Soldiers are now required to be technically skilled, exhibit brute force when they are required, be diplomats when they are required, and be linguistically diverse and culturally competent when they are required. This understanding has carved space for special and private forces to operate along side of conventional forces. Conversely, this sharing of space on the battlefield has not been a completely positive experience (de B. Taillon 2005-06). While these skills are required for successful missions and more salience is being placed on diversity of skill, women are continuing to be kept out of participating in these units. This is, at least in part, because of the persisting culture of masculinity.

The exclusion of women, whether through legal or social barriers, ensures the military holds onto its masculinities. While the CF has no legal barriers to women's participation in Special Forces as assaulters, ways masculinity is preserved is through image, recruitment, selection and training of these units. JTF2 links combat effectiveness to a particular physical endurance that favours the male physique over the female. This continues to be the case in selection for JTF2 where women and men are tested through the same vigorous physical endurance process. There has been no successful JTF2 female candidate (Pinch 2002). The barriers to women's success do not lay on their lack of technical, cultural, or specialized competency (or any of the other 39 attributes) but in their inability to meet the physical requirements in the time and manner allotted to them (Balasevicius 7 June 2007).

The images of war and who participates in it are divided on gender lines. While men go to war to exert their masculinity and their image of protector, women historically and continue to remain casualties of war and “the battlefield itself has been considered to be an exclusively male domain” (Winslow 2002: 641). War demands masculinity and because of this, peacekeeping and humanitarian missions have never been fully embraced by Canada’s regular force army (Whitworth 2004: 151). The latter demands more soft skills that embrace interpersonal skills and diplomacy. Canada’s changing role marked by their deployment to Afghanistan was welcomed in the army community as many soldiers, specifically those serving in the infantry, saw it as an opportunity to do what they were trained to do. Canadians on a whole however, continue to wonder what happened to their legacy of peacekeeping (McQuaig 2007, Enloe 2007: 92).

The warrior soldier images found in public combat arms, Special Forces, and private security contractors appear to be caught up in actual war. Without war it is difficult for a soldier to prove his worth as a man and as a warrior. War provides the right of passage where a soldier achieves manhood (Whitworth 2004: 159). There historically and currently continues to be a social barrier between soldiers who have served in combat and those who have not (Rasor and Bauman 2007: 78). David Morgan writes that “[d]espite far-reaching political, social, and technological changes, the warrior still seems to be a key symbol of masculinity” (Morgan 1994: 165).

While masculinity in military organizations continues to privilege the soldier warrior, competing masculinities are playing out with the institutionalization of Special Forces and the development of outsourcing international security to private industry. Special Forces both in the private and in the public domain carry with it a very specific

type of brain/brawn military masculinity that is uniquely different from the conventional army. They differ from conventional regular armies because they fulfill a different mission than combat arms that increasingly require technical skills.

PSFs, Special Forces, and combat arms all bring with them different militarized masculinities as their missions and roles in contemporary security agenda differ. While they are all vying for a permanent and dominant space, their masculinities are in competition as well. PSFs are often attacked for being rogue, mercenaries and soldiers of fortune. Security contractors are condemned for being unpatriotic and operating in a lawless environment. Conventional armies are critiqued for being soft, inexperienced and filled with bureaucracies that slow down military effectiveness. Special Forces are said to be prone to act in elitist manners and detach themselves from the greater military organization. Conventional armies want to see greater oversight over Special Forces and PSFs. They see these special units as unnecessary and financially wasteful. Legitimacy in applied force appears to continue to be placed with the state and PSFs reputations and marketing ability remains impeded by the lack of regulations surrounding PSF operations.

Interestingly, on 17 September 2007 Blackwater's operations in Iraq were suspended by the Iraqi government over the death of 8 to 11 civilians and injury of 13 in Baghdad (*New York Times* 17 September 2007, *Washington Post* 20 September 2007). Blackwater has disputed this claim and contends that its security contractors were fired upon first (*New York Times* 19 September 2007). However, given the contractors' "over the top" aggressive behaviour and its high profile operations, Blackwater has frustrated local Iraqis, other security contractors operating in the area, and Iraqi government (*New*

York Times 19 September 2007). Blackwater, and other PSFs, continue to be immune from Iraqi law and US law for its operations in Iraq but this latest fatal incident may change how PSFs are held responsible for their actions during conflict (*New York Times* 19 September 2007). While it appeared that until a full investigation was done into the Iraqi shootings Blackwater operations would be suspended, this has not been the case (*Washington Post* 19 September 2007). Because the US Government is so dependent on Blackwater in order to maintain its security operations in Iraq, Blackwater's ban has been lifted (*Aljazeera* 23 September 2007).

There appears to be a joint investigation with both the Iraqi and US governments into the fatal shootings in Baghdad. The Iraqi Government has indicated that it intends to look into pressing criminal charges or potentially suing Blackwater employees (*Aljazeera* 23 September 2007). Perhaps this event will be the push to bring PSFs under some regulatory framework that allows security contractors to be prosecuted for how they conduct themselves during conflict. Regulating PSFs may bring these firms the legitimacy they need during operations.

Barriers between the conventional military, SOF, and security contractors persist and are founded on organizational divergent based in philosophical, methodological, and identity roots (Horn 2007B: 127). Based on interviews by both former members of Canada's JTF2 and members of the regular combat arms, there appears to be an internal conflict emerging between these entities. Moreover, there is an increasing divide within JTF2 between assaulters and support staff (JTF2 authority 24 July 2007). Horn (2007B) details the turbulent history Special Forces has gone through in entrenching itself as a permanent tool for the Canadian government. He bases most of this troubled past

relationship on lack of communication between the two entities leading to a misunderstanding of Special Forces roles and responsibilities as well as a territorial war in which both divisions are pinned against each other as they battle for government funding and capabilities (Horn 2007B: 120). Furthermore, these competing interests and competing masculinities create varying degrees of masculinity and in turn levels of participation within the particular security entities.

It is difficult to understand the gender implications without taking a somewhat essentialist perspective on women and men. This is in part, due to the difficulty in separating women from femininity and men from masculinity (particularly in patriarchy) and in the military. While some women have attempted to participate in these units, they often have to perform a particular hybrid of the projected masculinity. Because of their biological sex they never fully achieve this image. Discussions of femininity and masculinity lead to the question as to how women became essentialized into femininity and men to masculinity within IR in the first place. One of the reasons given by Wajcman (1997) is that historically women have assumed a division of labour based on gender assumptions involving capital and education. Women have been denied the capital and education opportunities that would have given them the ability to pursue more science and technological related fields. This has allowed men, specifically privileged men, to assume these domains. In turn, they began to develop and understand science and technology in terms of their relation to their culture (Wajcman 1997). Because they were in a position of privilege, they rarely questioned the value-laden perspectives in their research (Wajcman 1997). While historical accounts only take us so far, it is apparent that the masculine tropes appear to be, in part, a reason why women's participation in male

domains—particularly in the military, are limited. However, this historical argument ignores the varying levels of masculinity that continue to be created. Further research in this area needs to examine why some men are privileged over others in achieving the projected dominant masculine image.

Smaller, more specialized units such as the JTF2 and various PSFs carry with them particular traits found in homogenous male work environments. Bird (2003) claims these men act out in a hyper-masculine way in order to seek validation for each other. Another study by Kaplan (2006) suggests that male-dominated work environments continue to exclude others from participation through social bonding that requires homosocial behaviour in public spaces. This behaviour includes derogatory, often sexual name calling as terms of affection and signs of friendship, to homo-erotic embraces. While this homosocial behaviour appears to be a way men achieve intimacy with other men and at the same time, without questioning their masculinity, to the outsider, these actions can prevent greater inclusion.

Women who do participate in traditional male roles appear not to challenge the overall masculine structure of the organization. Instead, according to Sasson-Levy (2003), they tend to reproduce masculinity by acting in manly ways. This illustrates the argument that it is not enough to incorporate more women. An overall system change that recognizes and problematizes masculinity needs to occur before any major shift in participation and security perspectives are changed.

Conversely, this argument could lend itself to question what would a military that is not embedded with masculinity look like? Moreover, is this feminization of militaries the answer or even feasible? The point of this research was not to argue that masculinity

is detrimental all the time and in all situations. Indeed there might, and most likely will be times when coercive force, and aggression are needed. However, this should not be the sole response for military forces. Whitworth (cited in Enloe 2007) has argued that a military not embedded with masculinity might look to other solutions to ending violent conflict. A military less embedded with masculinity might explore co-operation, emphasis interpersonal skills, and be more prone to due process as opposed to being power-driven and results-orientated. Tickner (1992: 136) has commented that cognitively understanding IR (and the military) in any gender terms—feminine or masculine—is problematic. Just because masculinity might be detrimental to women’s participation does not mean that exploring a military of femininity would be better (1992: 136). When we understand the military in gender terms of masculinity and femininity, we see women and men’s participation in “essentialist terms”. Tickner contends that we need to move beyond gendered tropes in understanding soldiers’ images and participation.

However, studying masculinity continues to be important because as a social construction it continues to impede women’s participation and silence feminists voices on what type of security should be advanced. It does this by exposing the social construction of masculinity that persists in military organizational culture. One can only speculate what a military would look like that is not embedded in masculinity. I believe a change in organizational culture that moves away from militarized masculinity would see more than just a personnel change and perhaps better equip the military in dealing with its emerging conflicts and challenges.

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Appendix A: List of Interviews

LCol Karen Davis (authority on women in CF combat arms) 1 June 2007

Major Tony Balasevicius (JTF2 authority) 7 June 2007

Col [ret] Schumacher (Special Forces and PSF authority) 26 June 2007

Joint Task Force 2 (JTF2) authority 27 July 2007

Special Operations Force (SOF) applicant 8 August 2007

Special Operations Force (SOF) unsuccessful applicant 9 August 2007