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Hegemonic Masculinity and Militarised Femininity: Military, Women and Combat

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ABSTRACT

History is full of abundant instances of policies of male conscription. Masculine identity is appealed during wars or to demonstrate strength of armed forces, and militarised masculinity is constructed, relied upon and reproduced despite changes in the gender composition of armies. The concept of militarised masculinity, produced by both military institutions as well as state security discourse in relation to hierarchical opposition to women and feminine identities through perpetuating unequal gendered power relations, manifests both within and outside of the military. Feminist scholars find out that the gendered duality of masculine protectors and feminine protected serves to justify both the use of military force and unequal power relations. Feminists explore how masculinities and men become militarised and aim to redefine militarised masculinities within institutions and also demilitarise masculinities in societies at large. The paper sheds light on how tensions between equal opportunity and disparity continue to influence public discourse about women in the military even after all legal obstacles to their full integration have been removed. Female soldiers still tend to serve in noncombat capacities, are underrepresented in the combat arms, and struggle to uphold the standard of masculinised militarisation. By shedding light on how gender dynamics intersect military practices, the present paper significantly emphasises on how women military members come to practice gender and represent preferred forms of masculinities.

Keywords: Militarised Masculinity, Militarised Femininity, Hegemonic Masculinity, Women, Combat.

INTRODUCTION

Military forces are the primary instruments of security for the state. However, they have historically been, and continue to be, a significant source of unequal gendered power relations around the world. Men, masculinity, and militarism are inextricably linked, the gendered duality of masculine protectors and feminine protected is constructed to justify unequal gendered power relations. Gender stereotypes are still used to persuade male soldiers to engage in the state-sanctioned acts of violence, viz. war. The present paper uses a fluid and context-specific social construct, militarised masculinity (now acknowledged in its plural forms), as an analytical lens to shed light on significant insights to the study of militarism and women in combat. Analysing militarised masculinities demands consideration of both men and masculinities as well as women, femininities, and gendered power relations. The feminist researchers of international relations emphasise to investigate militarisation of masculinity and men with an aim to not only redefine various militarised masculinities within institutions

but also to demilitarise masculinities in the society. Worth pondering is that militarised masculinities are not only constituted within and outside militaries, but also formed at various levels. The paper only briefly mentions on the multiplicity of militarised masculinities and overlapping hierarchies which emerge when gender intersects with other dimensions of difference, such as class, ethnicity, sexuality or race etc. As these issues demand in-depth discussions, they are outside the scope of the present paper.

As far as the state-sanctioned acts of violence are concerned, viz. war, who fights, who dies and for whom continue to considerably depend on gender. Gender is a social construct and significant empirical category or analytical tool to comprehend global power relations. It normalises a gender-based hierarchical social structure where masculinity is privileged and the feminine is devalued. Masculinity, which is the social practice of gender, expects men in heterosexual roles, in antagonism to women and femininity. Thus, the conceptualisation of militarised masculinities is required in the context of gendered relations of power alongside its varied and evolving forms. Investigating masculinity, combat, and the military as a dynamic social construct in terms of femininities and gendered power dynamics becomes crucial. The present paper employs discourse analysis and finds out, while analysing various studies, that there is a plenty of research on the gendered experiences of women in the army but a dearth of it, in particular, on how women in military organisations acquire to practice gender and represent particular preferred forms of masculinities.

MILITARY, MASCULINITY, AND WOMEN

The relationship among masculinity, combat, and the military as a social institution, sparking theoretical debates, is an essential area of study for feminist and critical masculinity research studies (Connell, 1995). In international relations, the study of militaries and war must take constructions of masculinity as well as gender inequality seriously. Even today, "ideal soldier" still refers to a man and the warrior is still seen as "a key symbol of masculinity" (Morgan, 1994). Breaking with the strong connection among men, states and war, feminist theories of international relations, increasingly popular since the early 1990s, have introduced gender as a meaningful empirical category and analytical tool for understanding global power relations as well as a normative position from which to create alternative world systems (True, 2005). As structures are human-made, gender is structured. When Enloe states "gender makes the world go round", she means that it inspires people's beliefs or concerns regarding their own masculinity or desires for their femininity. A variety of gender-related theories makes some arrangements appear normal and hence invincible. It gives the impression that certain hierarchies, race and class as gender, are effective. The world goes round because of those hierarchies being normalised (Schouten & Dunham, 2012). Thus, gender, a social construct establishing a binary of man and woman based on socially constructed traits, normalises a gender-based hierarchical social structure where masculinity is given preference over feminine identities.

Whereas masculinity is the social practice of gender expecting men to conform to socially prescribed manly and heterosexual roles and traits, in contrast to men who are seen as effeminate or homosexual and women (Vojdik, 2014). Masculinity, establishing what a man should be, is not a fixed identity. Connell (2005) points out that the idea of masculinity is plural and formed in antagonism to women. As gender identities, Hooper (2001) states, do not emerge from a single process rather through multifaceted, open-ended and intricate processes. The interaction between physical sex, institutions, social processes, and the gender role itself produces gender identities of masculinity and femininity. Kimmel (2000) contends that daily interplay inside many societal institutions constructs and reproduces masculinity. The creation of masculinity includes a political power dynamic in which the

masculine is privileged and the feminine is devalued and subordinated as the "other" (Kimmel, 1996). Similar to how gender intersects with different identities, such as class, rank, race, sexuality, ethnicity, or disability, masculinity does the same (Connell, 2005). Several masculinities have developed in relation to numerous femininities.

The claim that characteristics stereotypically associated with masculinity may be learned and demonstrated through military duty or action, and battle in particular, is what is meant when the term "militarised masculinity" is used (Tickner, 1992; Enloe, 2000). Traits such as toughness, ferocity, aggression, courage, control and dominance have been considered to be connected to militarised masculinity (Connell, 1987). Male citizens' recruitment into the military to appeal military masculinity perpetuates it further (Eichler, 2014). Militarised masculinity is a fluid and context-specific social construct, unique to particular areas and time. In the military institutions and the state security discourse both, militarised masculinities are created in connection to and often described in the hierarchical antagonism to femininities through reinforcing unequal gendered power dynamics (Connell, 1987; Eichler, 2014). For instance, the masculine "just warriors" who guard the feminine "beautiful souls" (Enloe, 2011). According to the feminist scholars, Young (2003) states, the gendered duality of masculine protectors and feminine protected serves to legitimise both the use of military force and unequal gender relations.

The position of female soldiering has drawn persistent academic attention of feminist scholars due to its ability to undermine the dichotomy of the just warriors/beautiful souls on which discourses of war depend heavily upon, where brave warriors go to battle to defend and fight for women (either metaphorically or literally, in terms of the "motherland"), backed by women staying home and supporting their husbands/sons on the field (Basham, 2016). Here, Schouten and Dunham (2012) state that the protector is the one who becomes conversant with the outside world and the protected is domesticated in the private domain. Patriarchy makes the protected feminised and the protector masculinised. The protected is expected to be nurturing and appreciative, while the protector is expected to be intelligent, strategic, and global. There are numerous distinct manifestations of patriarchy, allowing for the creation of patriarchies that are rather cosy. Enloe believes that the patriarchal system, as a significant way of ordering human life, would fail if many women weren't convinced that it was beneficial to them.

In spite of shifts in the gender composition of militaries during the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, there is still a strong relationship between men and militarism and women and pacifism. Instead of assuming that men and militarism are inextricably linked, feminist researchers encourage to investigate how masculinities and men become militarised (Enloe, 2000; Whitworth, 2004). Multiple factors contribute to the production of militarised masculinities, including the individual, for instance, through the beliefs and deeds of individual men and women; institutions, for instance, through the policies of states, public or private militaries and security companies (PMSCs), peacekeeping forces, or international organisations; and ideology, culture, and discourse, for instance, through social norms, media, or film (Connell, 1987). Furthermore, militarised masculinities influence and are influenced by not only military practices but also state policies, security discourses, educational programmes, media discussions, popular culture, personal relationships or identities (Eichler, 2014), and many other factors.

The military structure is constructed as a primary "masculinity maker" in many societies, mandatory military service is viewed as a rigorous *rite de passage* that transforms "boys into men" (Connell, 1995), where one may identify how masculinity is constructed, institutionalised, practiced, and maintained (Connell, 2005). As masculinity is defined by "emotional control, overt heterosexual desire, physical fitness, self-discipline, self-reliance,

the willingness to use aggression and physical violence, and risk-taking, qualities tightly aligned with the military." Military training serves as a vehicle for the creation and imposition of military masculinities on the body of a soldier (Hinojosa, 2010). Institutions and training programmes are important contexts for the development of hegemonic conception of masculinity and the metaphorical (and historical) rejection of femininity. The development of this masculine identity plays a crucial role in transitioning the citizen into a soldier able to employ violence to carry out military operations (Basham, 2016).

Majority of armed forces and state leaders involved in war around the world consists of men. However, this does not imply that men are inherently militaristic by nature and that women are inherently peaceful, according to feminist scholars of international relations. State and military authorities rely on and reproduce militarised masculinity to demonstrate strength using military force. They recruit male citizens by appealing to their masculine identity (Enloe, 2000; Tickner, 1992; Whitworth, 2004). A majority of men also aspire to military iconography. Here, to demystify the above argument, Enloe (2000) and Whitworth (2004) argue that militarised masculinities must be conceptualised in the context of gendered relations of power as well as in all its varied and evolving forms. As Connell (1987) states, it is constructed and variedly manifested within and outside the military.

The relationship between military and masculinity may be the most prominent and cross-culturally consistent component of gendered politics, and state militaries are perhaps the place where this idea of war as a man's game is most deeply ingrained. Only recently has the preservation of the military as a primarily male-only domain been contested. By promoting particular beliefs about manhood, machismo and military service, the majority of state armed forces continue to marginalise women. Who fights, who dies, and for whom continue to depend on gender (Basham, 2016). According to Tickner (1996), men's persistent inherent eagerness, patriotic fervour to serve their country, and defend their female kin is expressed by the military. The gendered dichotomy between the masculine protector and the feminine protected is reproduced by aligning military with a significant idea of males to reflect hegemonic masculinity.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity is formed against various other subordinated masculinities as well as femininities (Kronsell, 2006). It is the perpetuation of practices that "institutionalise men's dominance over women" (Connell, 1987). Thus, it is a gender practice maintained by related cultural norms, institutional representations of power and includes hierarchical social orders; exemplified by the frequent subordination of ethnic minority masculinities to ethnic majority ones (Connell, 1995). It is prevalent, however, there will be a small number of men who achieve and practice it. Hegemonic masculinity may be more idealised than real, many men will nonetheless benefit from its dissemination since it supports male privilege (Connell, 1987). Militarised masculinity is a type of hegemonic masculinity, which maintains militarism within security discourse and lends legitimacy to the use of violence by nations. This leads to a skewed perspective of men, who are perceived as either defenders or offenders but are seldom viewed as victims of assault in the violence and conflict discourses.

Furthermore, when masculinity is successfully militarised, viz. that when a male is intimately linked to the military, militarism and masculinism strengthen one another (Hooper, 1998). Thus, the military enables the patriarchal structure to be maintained by upholding the dichotomy. The concepts of militarism and patriarchy complement each other, through which man becomes synonymous with power, ferocity, and a desire to dominate. The woman then becomes synonymous with frailty, passivity, and the need to nourish and affirm others' lives. This is not to say that women are not complicit in maintaining militarism.

WOMEN AND COMBAT

Feminists have repeatedly argued that the links between war and manhood are possibly the most prominent example of how gender shapes and is expressed in political phenomena and social activities (Tickner, 1992; Goldstein, 2001). Gender roles and roles in conflict are inexorably linked, and gender relations are socially produced and situational (Goldstein, 2001). During wars, Enloe (2000) states that usually women have been persuaded to encourage the men who wage it by serving as witnesses, nurses, mothers and lovers, while men have been lured into conflict through the cultural association of manhood with strength and valour in the battlefield, alongside various other factors. Goldstein (2001) draws attention to the historical linkage of the military with manhood to counter soldiers' aversion to combat. It is not in the nature of either gender to kill in a battle, and committing violent acts does not come inherently to men. In terms of how ubiquitous violence and wars are, there has been a significant impact of history on gender norms.

Women's mobilisation has typically been inclusion in time of need and exclusion or restrictions rest of the time. Women in most of the western militaries didn't start taking more combat-related duties until the late 1980s, though they cared for the injured during wars in the nineteenth-century, drove and handled vehicles in the First and Second World Wars (Woodward & Winter, 2007). Their bodies are widely perceived as being weak, leaky, and having reproductive issues (Miller, 1997; Höpfl, 2003). It reinforces the notion that women are not built for military service whereas males are, as militaries are physically demanding and women are not physically or emotionally strong enough to do the required duties.

Thus, the militaries have historically been based on the division of femininity and masculinity and exclusion of women from combat roles (Elshtain, 1987). It has a crucial role in defining politically and symbolically what it means to be a real man (Hooper, 2001). The perception of "men as warriors and of women as worriers" is taken as one of the most prominent characteristics of conflict (Yuval-Davis, 1997). There have been two apparently distinct yet essentially connected issues: "women's rights to serve and their capacity to serve". Combat continues to be the principal yardstick for assessing women's talents (Kovitz, 2003). Women who choose close combat related roles are considered gender non-conformists, and as a result, they frequently experience discrimination and humiliation in the form of stereotypical jokes in daily interactions (Basham, 2013). Conservative critics frequently claim that the presence of women endangers the masculine privilege which encourages men to combat (Gat, 2000; Van Creveld, 2000). Thus, masculinity is achieved by the rejection of what is feminine.

Others have criticised women serving in the military on the basis that it militarises them (Klein, 2002), or infringes their gentle nature (Ruddick, 1989). Thus, masculine military culture is perpetuated. These viewpoints have been critiqued for ignoring women's militarism and brutality (Sjoberg & Gentry, 2007), men's peacefulness and conscientious objection to wars (Bibbings, 2003) or male victimhood, among other things. Here, it is crucial to recognise that in reality, even if the ideal of militarised masculinity is described in contrast to femininity, soldiering still has elements that are considered feminine or "unmasculine", such as the emphasis on compliance or care for other soldiers (Mathers, 2013). Moreover, male soldiers display "characteristics more conventionally associated with the feminine than with the masculine" in the quintessential masculine space, viz. wars. For instance, they weep or experience emotional pain as a result of their own acts of violence (Morgan, 1994). Similarly, even though men fundamentally and interpersonally rule most domains in most of the cultures, they experience both privileges and hardships as a result of overlapping hierarchies of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and other factors (Miller, 1997). Even among males who belong to the same ascriptive groups and hold related social positions, such hierarchies nonetheless exist (Basham, 2016). Therefore, there are numerous and intricate ways in which

different arrangements of manhood maintain the dominance of men as a social group in both militaries and civil life.

The analysis of militarised masculinities demands consideration of both men and masculinities as well as women, femininities, and gendered power relations (Mathers, 2013; Morgan, 1994). Hooks (1995) contends that women are frequently regarded as perpetuating their passive image. Therefore, demystifying women's roles is insufficient and a closer examination of women's influence in the preservation of dominant structures is required.

As King (2016) discovers that women military members, notably those performing combat duties, reproduce the gender order by developing masculine mannerisms (for instance, body posture and appearance, etc.) and purposefully copying influential males to achieve "honorary male" status. It naturalises unequal gendered conduct and reinforces hegemonic masculinity. The reason of this reproduction of gender order is found in Gilder's (2019) study which prominently reveals that the conventional notion of gender and discursive practices in the military environment mix heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity by positioning the feminine others (women and non-heterosexual men) as a threat to military effectiveness. To characterise a soldier, the linguistic choice to employ "balls" as a sign of bravery advances a hegemonic conception of masculinity which connects strength/courage with maleness. Here, hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are intertwined because it appears that resistance to women in the military is motivated by a concern that masculine system would become feminised.

Crucially, as women (and non-heterosexual men) are not viewed as embodying hegemonic masculinity, they negotiate their own identities in the traditional masculine environment which further reproduces heterosexual and hegemonic masculinity. They work both within and against the prevailing discourse to assert themselves as effective soldiers through two significant ways: (1) integrating themselves with the masculine warrior spirit, and (2) challenging gender/sexuality hierarchies by praising femininity rather than demonising it, rejecting the idea that women are unable to sustain the same duties as men, and campaigning against prevailing discourses that prioritise men over women (Gilder 2019). The second practice, though used less frequently, is a crucial tactic for challenging hegemonic masculinity discourses and making room for change.

Essentially, feminist IR studies strive for lessening the relevance of dichotomous hierarchical gender norms inside militaries in order to dissociate soldiering from hegemonic concept of masculinity, and de-link the connection between military and masculinity (Duncanson, 2013). In the examination of British soldiers in Afghanistan, Duncanson (2013) contends that militarised masculinity can change in some circumstances. For instance, "'peace-builder masculinity' being constructed through relations of empathy, equality, and mutual respect." Such masculinity can present a "challenge to gendered dichotomies, to the structure of hierarchical dichotomies, as well as the substantive content of what counts as masculinity in the military context."

Even though the military continues to be a male-dominated institution, the correlation between masculinity and the military is eroding in nations all over the world due to shifting masculinity (and femininity) norms. The evolution of militarised masculinity is influenced by a number of variables, including shifting gender norms, the inclusion of women in the military, financial incentives, and the changed nature of military operations (Eichler, 2014). The U.S., Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Israel, and other Western military services have lately lifted long-standing restrictions on women participating in close combat roles. However, this involvement in close combat continues to remain limited and liminal or still prohibited in many countries because of worries about how women's presence would affect

male bonding and unit cohesiveness. Women have generally been seen as possible disruptors of male bonding, distraction, bringing sexual tensions and cultural otherness into exclusively male units (Woodward & Winter, 2004; Basham, 2009), who are believed to respond more emotionally in the event of a woman soldier's injury or death than that of a man.

Therefore, despite increased calls for a broader inclusion of all citizens, the military remains the most masculine of all organisations, this is how it perceives itself and how the majority of its male members desire to be perceived. And in spite of substantial evidence that the presence of women has no perceivable detrimental effect on military bonding and performance, and that soldiers are not required to form social bonds to go to combat, gendered norms remain influential on how militaries arrange themselves and prepare for combat (Farrell, 1998). It has repeatedly been argued by the proponents of exclusionary policies, which have forbidden women from serving in some combat duties, that homogeneous combat units are the most effective in accomplishing combat effectiveness and cohesion. These exclusionary practices have played a crucial role in maintaining dominant social structures, which reinforce male dominance (Prividera & Howard, 2006) and heterosexual pattern. According to Duncanson (2016), hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are being reinforced by dominant discourses in the military. Therefore, individuals who do not conform to the image of the "masculine warrior" remain excluded from this cultural context despite claims of a new and more inclusive military. For instance, the media depicted Canadian women soldiers in Afghanistan as "equal" combatants while also highlighting the use of "feminine" skills in their soldiering. Such a contradictory creation of militarised femininity promotes masculinity as the standard of soldiering: that is, female soldiers are viewed as equal to, or distinct from, male soldiers rather than as soldiers in their own right (Eichler, 2013). They still tend to serve in noncombat capacities, are underrepresented in the combat arms, and struggle to uphold the standard of masculinised militarisation. Contention regarding equality between women and men keep highlighting the problematic nature of the female body. The conventional military settings have changed a little, but there is still a need to fit in and to acquire a status of masculinity implied by military training. Masculine ideals do not change with the women's entry, rather, they are introduced into the cult of masculinity. And because of their sexist experiences, women recruits have a different motivating perspective which drives them to succeed in a patriarchal setting. The breaking of the connection between the masculine ideal and the male body is the most striking shift (Pears, 2022). However, the military masculinity is now attributed to female bodies.

Meanwhile, the modest number of women participating in militaries does not correspond to the proportion of the overall women population, despite the fact that many militaries have established numerous equal opportunity employment rules in an attempt to recruit and retain women (Goldstein, 2001; Basham, 2009). Only raising the percentage of women in the military won't result in an inclusive military structure. Recruiting more women without challenging policies and practices will only achieve liberal feminist aspiration of raising the ratio of women (in evidently unsustainable manners), without criticising the military as a masculinised institution. Thus, the military appears to be gender-equitable, however, the path to full membership involves being a hegemonic masculine warrior. Those who achieve it are more inclined to follow this ideal than to dispute it (Taber, 2011). Although some women have achieved immense success in the military, militarised masculinity is still "constructed through feminised others" (Duncanson, 2009) and the heterosexual male warrior continues to be idealised for being a valorous fighter (Basham 2009). Taber (2009) analyses how unless a woman is operating in a typical female's role, nothing less than full dedication as a masculine warrior is acceptable.

Therefore, cultural significance of the image of soldiers as a symbol of masculinity continues (Pears, 2022). By including women, the military separates the super soldier's military masculinity from the masculine body. The hegemonic ideal remains the same, but the number of possible candidates in which it might be realised grows (Jester, 2019). If they are willing to strive, sweat, and suffer enough, certain (rare) women can be as powerful as men, and attain a (even rarer) status (Pears, 2022). Interestingly, military masculinity persists.

When women are recruited for military positions, they are generally labelled as being distinct from men. To illustrate, Sjoberg (2007) focused on the ambiguity in which US military women were portrayed in relation to the Iraq war. She looked at how "militarised femininity is represented in the gendered accounts" of Jessica Lynch (a prisoner of war who was freed amid considerable fanfare and media attention), Janis Karpinski (the general in charge of the military prison of Abu Ghraib) and three female prison staff who participated in the maltreatment of male inmates at Abu Ghraib. Karpinksi was portrayed by some news pieces in a maternal role, upon her appointment, "who 'loves' her soldiers like her children." Following the maltreatment of male inmates at Abu Ghraib, Karpinski was described in the news as reacting to the "'scandal' like a woman" and "whining, making excuses, and complaining that it's not her fault". These instances in Sjoberg's work showed how women are perceived in the military in complex ways and how this leads to contradicting ideas of masculinity and femininity.

Though, militaries require belligerence, they are instruments of security rather than of conflict. Militaries, for citizens in democracies, are what we construct of them. Both the military and security are social constructs with the potential for change (Woodward & Duncanson, 2017). However, as Eichler (2014) contends, scepticism regarding the military's ability to change is understandable because militaries have historically fostered and relied on aggressive conception of masculinity. Even the involvement of women in combat roles does not always challenge the masculinised norm of soldiering. Therefore, a true redefinition of masculinity in the military should necessitate developing new techniques for training and recruiting soldiers that do not denigrate femininity and elevate masculinity as a norm of soldiering.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is argued that despite shifts in the gender composition of militaries, a strong relationship between men and militarism, and women and pacifism persists. The construction of masculinity/militarised masculinity reinforces an unequal gendered power dynamic which privileges the masculine norms and continues to marginalise women by devaluing the feminine in both, the military institutions, and the state security discourse. Thus, the notion of war as a man's sport remains most deeply ingrained in the militaries because of the inexorable link between gender roles and roles in conflict.

Women are perceived in the military in complex ways due to the exclusionary policies that find homogeneous combat units the most efficacious in accomplishing combat effectiveness and cohesion. These result in the discursive practices in the military environment which connect heteronormativity and hegemonic masculinity by positioning women as a threat to military effectiveness as they are not perceived as embodying hegemonic masculinity. Consequently, women military members start reproducing the prevalent gender order by copying masculine warrior spirit to assert themselves as effective soldiers. They negotiate their own identities in the traditional masculine environment which further reproduces heterosexual and hegemonic masculinity.

Penultimate point is that women serving in the military are criticised because they get militarised. Here, the present paper has emphasised on how crucial it is to recognise that soldiering still has elements which are considered feminine, such as care. Committing violent acts does not come inherently to men, men too weep or experience emotional pain. However, they are rarely viewed as victims of assault in the conflict discourses, either perceived as defenders or offenders.

The conclusion is that women's involvement in close combat continues to remain limited and liminal or still prohibited. The modest number of women in the military does not represent the overall women population, and just raising the percentage won't result in more inclusive military structures. With the change in conventional military settings, the military appears to be gender-equitable. However, the hegemonic ideals continue to be the same, and dominant discourses in the military keep reinforcing masculinity and heteronormativity. The cultural image of soldiers as a symbol of masculinity continues, as heterosexual male warriors are still considered valorous fighters. Contention regarding equality between women and men keep highlighting the problematic nature of the female bodies as weak and having reproductive issues, which reinforces the notion that women are not built for the military services. Particularly, combat remains an essential yardstick for assessing women's talents. By including women, the military separates the ideal soldier's military masculinity from the masculine body. However, there is still a need to fit in and to acquire a status of masculinity implied by military training. Women's inclusion does not alter the masculine ideals, rather, they are introduced into the cult of masculinity. Therefore, given the idealised notion of militarised masculinity and heterosexuality, individuals who do not conform to the image of the masculine warrior remain marginalised or excluded within the military organizational context despite claims of a more inclusive military. Consequently, masculine military culture perpetuates.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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