CHAPTER 25

Gender and the Military

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1. INTRODUCTION

The military is an important social institution, with effects on other institutions and on people's lives, both directly and indirectly. Despite this, the military is a relatively neglected area of study within sociology. Further, though the military has a gender-defining tradition and gender is endemic in the institution, central works on the sociology of gender usually omit analysis of gender in the military. This neglect of study on armed forces is partly due to anti-military views of many sociologists, especially feminists, and to lack of knowledge of military organization (the latter despite the role of the military in the development of organizational theories, including centrality in the work of Max Weber, 1968). This chapter may help to fill this gap and integrate the study of gender in the military into the larger field.

This chapter describes and analyzes the literature on gender in the military. Of special interest from a macrosociological perspective are historical and current trends in women's participation in the armed forces of the United States and other nations and the factors that affect them. At the micro-level, the emphasis is on the integration of women in armed forces and the social construction of gender in interpersonal interactions. While the literature, and therefore this chapter, focus on women in the military, other related topics are considered. The central role of gender in the military—and the role of the military in defining gender in the larger society—have implications for men's behaviors and for men's and women's views regarding policies on women's military roles and on

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homosexuality in the armed forces. The construction of gender in military family issues is also discussed. One can study nearly every topic of previous chapters in this volume within the context of the military and in public discourse about the military. One can apply concepts from those areas to the study of gender and the military—as sociologists working on these issues in the military have done.

2. WOMEN IN THE MILITARY AS AN AREA OF STUDY

Until the 1970s, there was almost no scholarly work on women in the military (other than Treadwell, 1954). Research and public policy attention has increased dramatically over the past 20 years. Part of the reason for this increase has been an expansion of women's military roles in the United States and most European nations (as described later).

The literature and the "invisible college" tend to be interdisciplinary, with the major research and/or writing being done by political scientists (such as Enloe, 1983, 1993; Stiehm, 1981, 1989, 1996), historians (including Campbell, 1992, 1993; De Pauw, 1981), anthropologists (such as Rosen of Rosen, Durand, Bliese, Halverson, Rothberg, & Harrison, 1996), psychologists (including Thomas, 1986), journalists (e.g., Rogan, 1981) and military personnel with various backgrounds and generally without social science training who write about their personal experiences (e.g., Barkalow, 1990; Earley, 1989). One of the most comprehensive works on women in the U.S. armed forces that provides a detailed history of policy changes was written by Holm (1992), the first American woman to attain two-star flag rank (as a Major General in the Air Force).

The number of sociologists doing research on women in the military (and on gender in the armed forces more generally) has been increasing, to include Devilbiss (1985) on gender integration and group cohesion, Firestone and Harris (1994) on sexual harassment, Miller (1997) on gender harassment, and Moore (1991, 1996, 1997) on African-American and Japanese-American women in the military. Some of our knowledge comes from sociologists who have written dissertations on the military that they have later published as books. Examples are Rustad's (1982) work on the integration of women into an Army signal unit in the late 1970s and Williams' (1989) book on women marines and male nurses.

There is increasing coverage in our journals and in book chapters of women in the armed forces of other nations (e.g., Cherpak, 1993; Chinchilla, 1990; Cock, 1994; Dandeker & Segal, 1996; Seitz, Lobao, & Treadway, 1993). However, this work tends to cover just one nation at a time and therefore not to be truly comparative. Theory building using a multinational perspective has just begun (Segal, 1995). (Except where indicated, analysis in this chapter refers to the United States.)

3. THE MILITARY AS A GENDER-DEFINING INSTITUTION

Current events have created a media frenzy of coverage and attention to problems of gender integration, such as the recent sexual assault and harassment scandal at Aberdeen Proving Ground or the earlier Tailhook scandal. Such coverage leads to the false impression that the problems revealed (such as sexual harassment) are new or newly known. Despite this impression, these issues have been present in daily interactions of military personnel for some time; they have just now been brought to the public's attention by

intense media pressure. This pressure has also created organizational responses that exceed responses to previous indications of widespread sexual harassment (such as revealed by surveys conducted by the Department of Defense in 1988 and 1995).

To understand these dynamics, as well as women's past, current, and future military roles, requires an understanding of the role of gender in the military and of the role of the military in cultural constructions of gender.

Some literature analyzes the military as a gender-defining institution and socializing agent. The older literature in this tradition emphasizes the role of the military in creating or reifying masculinity among men through their processing by the organization. Serving in the military historically has been a rite of passage from boyhood to manhood. The importance of "masculinity" in this transition is especially apparent in the culture of basic training, where new recruits are exhorted to try harder or be labeled "girls" or "sissies" (Arkin & Dobrofsky, 1978; Faris, 1976; Williams, 1989).

This gender-defining function of military service has been undergoing change as the proportion of women in uniform has risen and as more jobs, including many combat and combat support specialties, have been opened to women. But strong resistance to integrating women in the military institution can be seen in public policy discourse and in the everyday interactions of military personnel (as I explore in depth later in this chapter). One source of this resistance is the traditional role of the military in defining masculinity. Recognizing this role is important to analyzing the current situation for gender in armed forces. Recent works on the masculine military culture focus on the problematic nature of this culture for women's integration (e.g., Katzenstein & Reppy, 1999).

Despite institutional resistance and the prototypical male nature of the institution, women have participated in the armed forces of the United States and many other nations through history and their roles have been expanding. I turn now to a cross-national analysis of women's military participation. Then I will look at women's military history and contemporary role in the United States.

4. WOMEN'S MILITARY PARTICIPATION CROSS-NATIONALLY AND THE FACTORS THAT AFFECT IT

The cross-national study of women in the military is in its infancy. There are large gaps in our knowledge. However, there are some generalizations that appear warranted by the available literature, especially about the conditions under which women's military roles expand or contract. Military variables affecting the nature and extent of women's participation include characteristics of the nation's security situation and certain aspects of military organization and activity. Social structural factors include aspects of women's civilian roles and more general civilian social structural variables that affect women's roles. Cultural processes, such as the social construction of gender and family roles, also influence women's participation in armed forces. (For a thorough description of these variables, see Segal, 1995.)

4.1. Military Situation

Of major importance in determining women's military roles in a society is the security situation of the society. When there are shortages of qualified men, especially during

times of national emergency, most nations have increased (and will increase) women's military roles. Under some conditions, women have participated in combat; more often, their noncombat military functions increase. Many nations currently conscript men, but few require women to serve in the military; furthermore, where women are drafted, the conditions of their obligation often differ from those of men. Women have been conscripted in the past during wartime—and are likely to be again in the future. Examples of conscription during the World War II era (including actual conscription and laws allowing conscription) can be found in France, Greece, Norway, Germany, and the United Kingdom (Goldman,1982; Stanley & Segal, 1988; Treadwell, 1954). In the United States had the war in Europe not ended, civilian nurses would have been drafted (Holm, 1992; Treadwell, 1954).

Whether or not they conscripted women, nations have greatly increased their participation (in terms of both numbers and roles) during wartime: marked examples of this in many nations were evident during World War II. Although women were still concentrated in a few job classifications, wartime necessity opened other jobs to them (e.g., Binkin & Bach, 1977; Holm, 1992; Treadwell, 1954).

A common pattern is the active involvement of women in revolutionary movements. Women have been in partisan and guerilla operations, including as combatants, in, for example, Algeria, China, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Rhodesia, Russia, Vietnam, Yugoslavia, and the U.S. Revolutionary War; however, after the guerrillas have overthrown the government and formed a new one with a more conventionally organized armed force, women return to more traditional social roles and leave the military—voluntarily or not (Cherpak, 1993; De Pauw, 1981; Enloe, 1980; Goldman, 1982; Isaksson, 1988; Randall, 1981, 1994; Segal, Li, & Segal, 1992; Seitz, Lobao, & Treadway, 1993; Stanley & Segal, 1992).

Similarly, the end of World War II saw a return to limitations on women's military jobs. In the United States, laws passed in 1948 placed restrictions on military women. When women are no longer needed, their military activity is reduced. Women have served as a reserve labor force, both civilian and military (Campbell, 1984; Enloe, 1980; Gluck, 1987).

Women's military roles are socially constructed; public policy, norms, and women's behavior are shaped, at least in part, by public discourse. What has happened in the past in many nations is that when the armed forces need women, their prior military history is recalled to demonstrate that they can perform effectively in various positions. Subsequently, there is a process of cultural amnesia of the contributions women made during emergency situations. In the aftermath of war, women's military activities are reconstructed as minor (or even nonexistent), allowing the culture to maintain the myth "of men in arms and women at home" (Cooke, 1993, p. 178). When a new emergency arises, history is rediscovered.

Women's involvement in armed forces (even as combatants) tends to be high when there is grave threat to the society, regardless of cultural values about gender. There are times when women's military involvement may be seen as an extension of women's roles as mothers protecting their children; such may be the case in partisan activities of women drawn from the ranks of the poor, especially during times of severe oppression (Chinchilla, 1990; Li, 1993, 1995; Montgomery, 1995; Randall, 1981).

In societies with low threats to national security but with cultural values supporting gender equality, women's military participation also increases. Contemporary examples include Canada and Sweden, which allow women to volunteer for combat jobs (Segal &

Segal, 1989; Stanley & Segal, 1992; Törnquist, 1982). In Canada, even ground combat positions are open to women.

The extent of women's participation in combat jobs seems to be minimized when there is a medium threat, that is, when the society is not threatened with imminent extinction or invasion by superior military forces, but there is a moderate to high probability of military action on its soil in the near future. This description has been applicable to Israel, where until recently women were excluded from serving in combat.

The nature of military missions also affects the degree of women's participation. The greater the relative importance of actual war fighting (especially ground combat), the less the participation of women. Women's participation is greater when military forces are engaged in peacekeeping operations or disaster relief activities, as well as in operations that resemble domestic police functions (such as drug interdiction and quelling civil disturbances). The recent rise in frequency of these types of operations may bring increased representation of women in uniform. Women can also be expected to be increasingly involved in military aviation—even in war fighting, as evidenced by the opening of fighter pilot positions to women in several nations (e.g., Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States) (Dandeker & Segal, 1996; Dorn, 1994; Segal & Segal, 1989; Stanley & Segal, 1988).

In general, modern nations that have voluntary systems of recruitment of military personnel (notably Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States) have been increasing women's military roles more rapidly than those with conscription. Demographic patterns also play a role here when combined with voluntary accession. Israel conscripts both men and women, but places strong limitations on women's military positions; contrary to popular mythology, Israeli women have not been allowed to participate in combat (Bloom, 1982; Gal, 1986) until very recently, and then only as the result of a lawsuit.

4.2. Social Structure

4.2.1. Demographic Patterns. Demographic patterns shape women's roles in various ways. They affect women's use as a reserve source of labor (Campbell, 1984; Gluck, 1987; Kessler-Harris, 1982). When the supply of men does not meet the demand for military labor, women are drawn into service. Thus, when small birth cohorts reach military age, unless there is a concomitant decrease in demand for military personnel, opportunities for women in the armed forces seem to increase. This impact has been evident in most of the NATO nations in the past 20 years, including the United States in the 1970s (Segal & Segal, 1983) and the United Kingdom in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Dandeker & Segal, 1996).

4.2.2. Labor Force Characteristics. Various labor force characteristics affect women's military roles. As the proportion of women employed has increased in many nations, their representation in the armed forces has also increased. This occurs partly because the same factors affect both activities (such as a shortage of male labor) and partly because women's greater involvement in the workplace brings structural and cultural changes in the society that make military service more compatible with women's roles—and makes excluding them from military service less justifiable. Such changes have been evident in, for example, the Scandinavian countries and the United States over the past 20 years (e.g., Stanley & Segal, 1988; United Nations, 1991). Women's labor force participation

in France has also been increasing and so have movements toward increasing their representation in the armed forces (Boulègue, 1991; Hantrais, 1990). The percentage of women in the labor force in the United Kingdom has been relatively lower and their military roles have been limited; both are now increasing (Dandeker & Segal, 1996).

The degree of gender segregation in the civilian occupational structure also affects women's military participation, although the relationship is not linear. When sex segregation is extremely high, the military must rely on women to perform military functions that are dominated by women in the civilian workplace. This is why the United States recruited women civilian telephone operators in World War I (Holm, 1992; Schneider & Schneider, 1991). Nursing is another job that tends to be sex typed as a woman's job, which has led the militaries in many countries to allow women to serve; indeed, nursing has often been the first military job to open to women in substantial numbers. In general, however, sex segregation in the civilian labor market is negatively related to women's military participation. A more gender *integrated* occupational structure is indicative of more gender equality in the culture, which in turn leads to greater acceptance of women in military roles. Further, if women's civilian occupations are similar to men's, then women are more likely to have skills required for military jobs.

4.2.3. Economic Factors. The state of the civilian economy affects women's civilian and military employment. In periods of economic expansion, women are drawn into employment. In contracting economies, women tend to leave the workforce. High unemployment rates (especially among young men) are associated with a ready supply of men to serve in the armed forces and relatively low opportunities for women in the military. Periods of low male unemployment, especially with volunteer militaries, sometimes lead to expanded military roles for women (and women more motivated to join, especially if they are relatively disadvantaged in the civilian economy). In the United States, major growth in the representation of women in the military occurred in the late 1970s, when unemployment declined. When unemployment rose in the early 1980s, the expansion stalled (Segal & Segal, 1983).

4.2.4 Family Roles. Family roles affect women's military participation in two ways. First, there is a strong tendency in most cultures for women's roles generally to be intricately linked to family values and norms. Second, the nature of military activity is socially constructed in many cultures as negatively related to family roles (M. Segal, 1986, 1989).

There are several family structural variables that affect women's military roles. Women's participation in the military is positively associated with later age at first marriage, later age at birth of first child, and fewer children. The average age at onset of family responsibilities is even more important for women's military roles than for civilian employment because of the emphasis on youth for military personnel. In those nations where there has been a delaying of family formation there has also been an increase in women's representation in the military (examples are Canada and the United States in the 1970s and 1980s) (Stanley & Segal, 1988).

4.3. Culture

4.3.1. Social Values about Gender. The meaning of gender is socially constructed. The degree to which people are assigned to social roles on the basis of gender, and the

particular roles that are seen as appropriate to each gender, are socially determined—far beyond the impact of biologically based determinants (Lorber, 1993). A division of labor based on sex may have been functional for the society in earlier times, but is clearly less so now (e.g., Marwell, 1975). To the extent that individual traits for which there are large average differences by sex are important for the organization of activities, a sex-based division of labor may be functional. Technology has diminished the importance of two types of physically based traits, namely physical strength and reproduction.

What is important for this chapter is the way in which the culture deals with gender differences. A culture can exaggerate or minimize the importance of sex differences (in physical or psychological traits) and thereby justify or reject a gender-based division of social roles. Thus, I am concerned not with what is "correct" in any objective or evidential sense. Rather, I look at the discourse about gender, the importance attached to gender differences, and the implications for women's roles (including in the armed forces) of the cultural interpretation of gender. Cultures can stress gender equality or differences between the genders and this has strong impacts on women's military roles. The greater the emphasis on ascription by gender (and therefore the less the emphasis on individual differences), the more limited women's military role.

Each society can go through cultural changes in gender roles and such changes are not always linear, but are often cyclical. The causal direction of the link between culture and structure is not always clear. Sometimes cultural change drives structural change. At other times, structural changes (such as women moving into predominantly male jobs) are caused by other factors (such as war) and then the culture changes to justify structural changes (Anderson, 1981; Campbell, 1984; Kessler-Harris, 1982). When the structure changes again, so can the culture (as happens after a war).

Analysis of women's military roles benefits from examination of this process of the social construction of gender—and the analysis of the social construction of women's military roles adds to our knowledge of the social construction of gender in general. For example, one can analyze the public discourse about women's military roles for the underlying constructions of gender and rationales for policy positions (Segal & Hansen, 1992). (Similar analysis can be done on public discourse about the relationship to military service of other characteristics, such as race or sexual orientation.) Chafetz points out in Chapter 1 of this volume that "virtually all macro-level feminist theories agree that cultural or ideological definitions of masculinity/femininity and of gender 'appropriate' behaviors, responsibilities and privileges, are fundamental components of systems of gender inequality." Such cultural definitions can be seen very clearly in policy discourse about gender in the military (as well as in gender interactions in military organizations, as we shall see later in this chapter).

There are some interesting examples from World War II of the social construction of women's military roles, including several of women performing functions that are considered military in other societies but are labeled civilian. Germany conscripted women into what were labeled as civilian jobs; although many women wore uniforms, were under military authority, and performed functions considered military in other nations, they were called civilians (Tuten, 1982). In the United Kingdom, even uniformed women were defined as noncombatants. The definition of the line between combatant and noncombatant involved the firing of weapons. Women performed all tasks associated with the firing of anti-aircraft weapons except the actual firing: they moved ammunition and even loaded the weapons, but, to continue to view them as noncombatants, they were not allowed to fire the weapons they had loaded (they had to get a man to do it!) (Campbell, 1993). In

the United States, the WASPs (Women's Airforce Service Pilots) ferried military planes—and 38 were killed in the line of duty—but were treated as civilians. Congress granted them military veterans benefits in 1977 (Holm, 1992), an example of reconstruction of social status.

The cultural contradictions and ideological ambivalence involved in women's military participation can be seen in the reactions of both those who favor maintenance of patriarchal values and radical feminists (Chapkis, 1981; Elshtain, & Tobias, 1990; Enloe, 1980). Those at both ends of the ideological spectrum on gender roles oppose having women serve in armed forces. Having large numbers of military women causes public resistance because it challenges notions of masculinity and femininity (Enloe, 1993).

The more egalitarian the social values about gender, the greater women's representation in the military. On the other side, cultures that support traditional divisions of labor based on gender tend to exclude women from the military or limit their roles substantially. As social values have become more egalitarian in societies, women's military roles have expanded. The citizenship revolution has been expanding to previously disenfranchised social groups. During this century, many nations have enfranchised women in the political system—and cultures increasingly have supported their participation in other social institutions (such as the economy). A driving force toward increasing women's representation in the military has been laws prohibiting discrimination based on gender (which sometimes apply to the military). For example, Canada's Human Rights Law has been directly responsible for breaking down some barriers to women's full participation in the armed forces (Park, 1986; Segal & Segal, 1989; Stanley & Segal, 1988). The European Community is undergoing some similar effects of gender discrimination laws (Dandeker & Segal, 1996).

It is not yet clear how far social values will go toward full gender equality. Given the traditionally masculine nature of the military institution, it is one of the last bastions of male domination and there are forces resistant to gender integration. Substantial segments of many societies' populations remain more traditional. One force for traditional gender roles that limit women's representation in the military may be religious fundamentalism or conservatism, with tenets that place men and women in separate spheres of life (and confine women to the family) (Hawley, 1994).

4.3.2. Social Values about Family. The social construction of family also needs to be considered because women's social roles are affected by anything having to do with the family. Women's historically primary societal function has been associated with reproduction and child rearing. The extent to which a culture continues to assign women this primary role affects women's military roles. Cultures often see the mothering role as antithetical to the warrior role; giving life in childbirth is seen as the opposite of taking life in war. In addition, the long dependence of young children on adult caretakers (traditionally mothers) has precluded those caretakers from participating in activities that take them away or require their uninterrupted attention (such as hunting or war).

As conceptions about family and the structures of families have changed, so have cultural expectations about women's devotion to family—and their inclusion in wider social roles increases. Social values about family in many societies have been supportive of family forms that differ from traditional structures. The greater the cultural acceptance of various family structures, the less everyone is expected to fit one pattern, and the less gender determines social roles.

The greater the movement away from certain traditional family forms, especially

those based on the nuclear family, the greater the representation of women in the military. This does not mean the demise of family values, but a transformation in the structures that support such values. Indeed, included here can be government-sponsored parental leave and/or community supported child care that enables parents to be involved in their societies without neglecting children. Extended families of various kinds are also more compatible with women serving in the military (and in civilian employment separated from family) than are isolated nuclear families. To the extent that societies support diverse family forms, women are more likely to participate in the military.

4.3.3. Intersections of Race and Gender. Connections between race or ethnicity and gender play a role in determining social policy with regard to the military in some countries (Enloe, 1980). For example, women gained representation in the white South African Defense Force owing to political aims of the white elite (Cock, 1994). In the United States, comparisons are often made between racial integration of the armed forces and gender integration (D. Segal, 1989); however, there are historical eras in which white women and African-Americans were alternative sources of military labor, such as when civilian nurses were about to be drafted because of a shortage of military nurses, while black nurses were subject to quotas and were prohibited from treating white service members (Hine, 1989).

The current percentage of military women who are African-American is extraordinarily high. While African-American men are overrepresented among enlisted personnel (compared to their percentage in the population), the overrepresentation of African-American women is even higher among enlisted women and among officers is almost double the percentage of male officers who are African-American. The percentage of enlisted women who are black is especially high in the Army: 47% (compared to 27% of enlisted men) (Department of the Army, 1997). This overrepresentation is due primarily to the relative advantages in pay and benefits of military service compared to opportunities in the civilian labor market.

5. WOMEN IN THE ARMED FORCES OF THE UNITED STATES: PAST AND PRESENT

5.1. History

Women's involvement in American wars dates back to the revolution (De Pauw, 1981). In the twentieth century, in response to the demands of World War I, women were employed by military forces in both nursing and non-nursing capacities in unprecedented numbers. The U.S. Navy and Marine Corps established women's units in 1917 and 1918, respectively. The uniformed women were granted military status and were assigned to jobs women normally held in civilian society, such as telephone operator and clerk; some were stationed overseas (Holm, 1992; Schneider & Schneider, 1991). Since these units were established to meet specific personnel needs to free men for combat, the units were temporary and the women were demobilized after the war.

In World War II a major shift occurred in the nature of women's military participation. Not only did they serve in large numbers, but their roles expanded. Large numbers of women were employed in civilian industry essential to the war effort, as well as in uniformed military service (Campbell, 1984; Gluck, 1987; Holm, 1982; Treadwell, 1954).

Women's organizations were formed for all services, with their original designations implying their intended temporary nature (e.g., Women's Army Auxiliary Corps). Although women were mainly assigned to traditional fields, as the war progressed women's activities expanded beyond the usual roles women play (health care, administration, and communications) to include technical and combat support jobs. Small numbers served in almost every specialty, excluding direct combat, including as airplane mechanics, parachute riggers, and weapons instructors.

American women were prohibited from serving as offensive combat personnel, but they were deployed to foreign theaters and were involved in espionage and sabotage activities. They were thus exposed to danger. Nurses stationed in the Philippines and Guam were taken prisoner by the Japanese, and others were captured by the Germans.

Had the war not ended in 1945, civilian nurses in the United States would have been drafted. The bill to conscript nurses had been passed by the House and had cleared the Senate committee (in March 1945). The termination of the war in Europe in May 1945 reversed the shortage of military nurses that had led to the need for conscription.

As in other nations after World War II and other wars, the end of the war saw a return to limitations on women's military roles. Legislation passed in 1947 and 1948 provided for continuing women's armed services but severely limited military women's numbers and activities. As in other areas of social life in the United States following World War II, women were expected to return to more traditional statuses and roles (Campbell, 1984). Despite some modification of these laws in the 1960s and 1970s, American women's military roles were constrained by exclusions prescribed by this legislation for more than 40 years. These laws prohibited women in the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps from being assigned to duty on aircraft or combat ships engaged in combat missions. There were exceptions to these exclusions for physicians, nurses, chaplains, and attorneys. The Army had no statutory prohibition against women in combat, but a policy was developed and modified over the years to prevent women from being assigned to units or jobs in which they would routinely be engaged in close combat. These exclusions, however, did not protect women from the risk of exposure to combat. Women in the Air Force were prohibited from flying fighter planes but were permitted to fly tankers, which would be targets in the event of war. Navy women served on support vessels, such as supply ships, which are also likely targets. Women in the Army served in military police, mechanical repair, transportation, intelligence, signal, and other support specialties that would bring them into battle.

Despite the combat restrictions and the lack of wartime necessity, the representation of women in the military increased dramatically in the 1970s. At the start of the All Volunteer Force (AVF) in 1973, there were shortages of qualified men. Congress had passed the Equal Rights Amendment in 1972 and there was anticipation that it would be ratified by the states. The combined effect of these two occurrences was to open job specialties to women from which they had been excluded previously and to increase the number of women recruited into the armed forces. In 1971 there were approximately 43,000 women in uniform (30,000 enlisted and 13,000 officers), constituting only 1.6% of total active-duty military personnel. By the end of 1980, 9 years later, there were about 173,000 women, or about 8.5 % of total active duty forces.

The expansions in women's military roles have led to greater likelihood that women would be involved in military engagements and in roles that are not "traditional" for women. In December 1989, women participated in the U.S. invasion of Panama during "Operation Just Cause." Approximately 800 of the 18,400 soldiers involved in the opera-

tion were women (Moskos, 1990). Their roles were varied and included piloting helicopters to ferry troops—some while under enemy fire from the ground.

The missions and experiences of some of the women soldiers involved in the Panamanian operation fueled a renewed debate about women in combat. For example, there was controversy surrounding whether a military police captain was in combat when she led her unit in attempting to capture a military dog kennel believed to be occupied by armed and firing members of the Panamanian Defense Forces.

However, attention to the participation of women in Operation Just Cause pales by comparison with media coverage and potential policy impact of the roles played by women in Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Approximately 41,000 women were deployed to the Persian Gulf between August, 1990 and February, 1991 (Eitelberg, 1991). Women made up about 7% of all military personnel deployed (including all ranks and active duty and reserve personnel combined). The Army accounted for the vast majority of these women.

One of the interesting aspects of women's representation in the Persian Gulf operations was the difference between active duty and reserve forces, especially among officers. While women were 5.6% of active enlisted personnel in the theater of operations, they were 12.2% of reserve enlisted forces. The contrast is even more marked among officers: 7.3% of active duty officers were women, compared to 21.3% of reserve officers.

The experiences of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm demonstrate that the policy excluding women from offensive combat roles does not provide complete protection from death or capture: 13 American women were among the 375 U.S. service members who died and two women were prisoners of war (Eitelberg, 1991).

The public attention to women's successful performance in their jobs in the Gulf War increased political pressure to remove barriers to women in combat. It clearly led directly to repeal by Congress (in 1992) of the 1948 law prohibiting women in combat aircraft and contributed to the opening of naval combat ships (in 1993).

5.2. Contemporary Representation

In the 1980s and 1990s, women's representation in the U.S. armed forces continued to rise, although at a slower rate than in the 1970s. Change was not linear: there were periodic reversals of policy, such as opening then closing of certain occupational specialties to women (see Stiehm, 1989 for a discussion of "backlash" in the early 1980s). By 1997, the approximately 196,000 women in the Department of Defense military services (and about 3000 in the Coast Guard, which is part of the Department of Transportation) were about 14% of active duty forces. Their representation was highest in the Air Force (17.8% of enlisted personnel and 16.2% of officers) and lowest in the Marine Corps (5.4% of enlisted personnel and 4.4% of officers) (WREI, 1998, using data from Defense Manpower Data Center).

Differences among the services in the proportion of women are due primarily to the differential occupational distributions in the services. Since women are excluded from some combat positions, the larger the number of such positions there are in a service, the fewer the number of women the service can admit. The absence of medical personnel in the Marines (which gets its medical support from the Navy) contributes to the smaller percentage of women in the Corps than in the other services.

As of 1994, 99.7% of all positions in the Air Force are open to women; those that

remain closed are those that collocate with direct ground combat positions that exclude women (Dorn, 1994; WREI, 1996, 1998). In the Navy, 94% of all positions (96% of occupations) are open to women; exclusions include submarines, SEAL (special forces) units, and support positions (such as medical and chaplain) that collocate with Marine Corps units from which women are barred. Women are permitted in 70% of Army positions (91% of occupations); they are barred from serving in the direct ground combat battalions and any support units that collocate with them; positions closed to women include infantry, armor, special forces, field artillery battalions, combat engineer companies, and forward area air defense artillery. Similarly, 62% of the positions in the Marine Corps (93% of occupations) are open to women; women are barred from positions in the infantry regiments and physically collocated support units and positions. (All positions in the Coast Guard are open to women.)

Although women do tend to serve in occupational areas that are traditional for women in the services, substantial numbers serve in other areas. About half of enlisted women serve in the two most traditional areas of support and administration (33.0%) and health care (15.6%); 46.5% of women officers serve in health care positions, while 14.9% are in administrative positions (WREI, 1998).

Examination of women's distribution among military ranks reveals that their representation in the junior and middle pay grades is roughly proportional to their concentration in each service. Women are substantially underrepresented in the senior ranks, especially among officers (WREI, 1996), but their proportion in the senior ranks has been increasing (WREI, 1998).

5.3. Contemporary Process of Gender Integration

As can be seen from all of the information given earlier, we know a great deal at the macro-level about women's participation in armed forces, including laws, policies, the policy development process; the literature on women's military history has been growing, both in the United States and other nations. When we get to the micro-level of interpersonal relations, our knowledge is less systematic. While there are some works that describe women's personal experiences in the military (e.g., Barkalow, 1990; Earley, 1989) and social scientific studies that document problems in gender integration (e.g., Miller, 1997; Rustad, 1982), there has not been as much theory building and testing concerning the conditions under which gender integration is more or less successful. Research does provide the basis for such theory development and one can learn much about gender processes in general from this research.

As women's roles in the U.S. military increased over the past two decades, and as women entered previously all-male jobs and situations, interpersonal processes of fundamental social change were evident in the attitudes and behaviors of the men and in the experiences of the women. Organizational resistance and interpersonal adjustments are still prevalent, although acceptance of women has increased in many military situations and is in some settings more routine and even routinized.

There is substantial documentation of the initial process of gender integration at the service academies: the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the Naval Academy, the Air Force Academy, and the Coast Guard Academy (e.g., Adams, 1984; DeFleur & Warner, 1987; Durning, 1978; Priest, Vitters, & Prince, 1978; Safilios-Rothschild, 1978; Stiehm, 1981). Women first entered the academies in 1976 (with women first graduating in the

class of 1980) as a result (except for the Coast Guard) of Congressional mandate. Male cadets and midshipmen, who tended to hold traditional rather than egalitarian sex role attitudes, were hostile to the admission of women—not unlike their contemporary counterparts at The Citadel and Virginia Military Institute (VMI), which have just begun gender integration following a court battle waged to keep their schools all-male. Research on West Point shows that upperclass cadets exerted a negative socialization influence on the attitudes of men in the first gender-integrated class (as well as in the previous year's class). Researchers at all the academies found that behavior toward the women was well described by Kanter's (1977) work on responses to "token" women. Such behavior is still a common experience for women at the academies, despite more than 20 years of integration and a rise in their representation (recent classes at West Point are approximately 16% women; at the Coast Academy, women are about one-third of recent entering classes). However, acceptance of women has improved and it now no longer makes the news when women hold top leadership positions.

In all military settings there is an active process of "doing gender" (West & Zimmerman, 1987); social construction and role negotiation around gender is common. Indeed, because women in many of these settings violate men's conceptions of gender-appropriate behavior (sometimes even by their mere presence), much attention is paid to gender. Women often constitute a small proportion of their work groups and experience the kind of behavior from the men that Kanter (1977) describes.

Despite the prevalence of reactions to the "token" women, not all research supports Kanter's notions about the effects of group proportions. Dunivin (1988), for example, studying Air Force officers, finds that while women's perceptions of the opportunity structure in their jobs are significantly different from men's, women's attitudes in the most skewed specialties (e.g., pilots and air traffic controllers) actually resembled their male peers' views more than did women in some specialties with relatively higher concentrations of women (e.g., administrators). There are other indications that reactions to women become more seriously negative when their proportions rise, their opportunities within the organization improve, and they constitute more of a threat to men's career advancement—in a manner similar to what Blalock (1967) described for acceptance of minority racial groups as a function of the size of the subgroup within the group.

5.3.1. Gender Harassment and Sexual Harassment. Women in the military are particularly vulnerable to sexual harassment owing to the skewed gender ratios, the fact that military personnel often live in close quarters together, and the power involved in the rank hierarchy. While sexual assault is rare (though present) (Morris, 1996), certain kinds of sexual harassment are quite common, especially behaviors such as sexually explicit comments and jokes and suggestive looks and gestures (Department of Defense, 1995; Firestone & Harris, 1994; Martindale, 1990).

Researchers are starting to pay attention to gender harassment and to distinguish it from sexual harassment. Miller (1997) shows that forms of gender harassment in the Army include resisting women's authority, constant scrutiny of women and using any mistakes as evidence of military women's inferiority, gossip and rumors, sabotage of women's work (such as their equipment), and indirect threats. Also quite common are sexist remarks, including statements that women do not belong in the military.

An important component of gender relations in the military has to do with perceptions of inequity. It is not clear whether these perceptions are the cause or the result of sexist attitudes, but the consequences of the perceptions are significant regardless of their

cause or even their veracity. One source of such perception of inequity in the Army is the physical fitness test that all soldiers must pass and which has different standards by age and sex. Since a woman can pass the test with a performance for which a man would fail, many male soldiers believe that women are given an unfair advantage. Interestingly, such concerns are rarely voiced with regard to differential standards by age.

Perceptions (by both men and women, military and civilian) that women are inferior to men physically lie at the base of opposition to women being allowed in some military jobs, especially ground combat. This is evident in public and private discourse about the issue (Miller, 1997; Segal & Hansen, 1992). But such opposition is also due to desires to maintain the gender-defining role of military service.

Perceptions of inequity and inequality in physical performance are reinforced by the nature of the physical fitness test and the application of standards by gender. The test was initially designed to measure men's physical fitness efficiently and with limited equipment; it consists of pushups, situps, and a timed run. Physical traits on which women, on average, would outperform men (such as measures of flexibility) are not included in the test. Women are being judged by traits on which average men score higher than average women. Military women sometimes judge themselves by the male standards (just as men judge them) and therefore feel less worthy.

Military women generally do not consider themselves "feminist" even when their beliefs are quite feminist. This is partly because they have been socialized by a male-dominated culture that views "feminism" as antithetical to military, just as "feminine" is antithetical to military. Some military women, especially enlisted women, want to maintain distinctions between men and women. For example, some Army enlisted women oppose opening ground combat roles to women because they want to be different from the men (that is, they do not want to be warriors) and they want to be seen as different from men; that is, they want to maintain their self-definitions as feminine despite being soldiers. Women officers are more likely to favor opening combat roles to women partly because they recognize that continued exclusion serves to maintain systematic gender inequality (Miller, 1995).

It seems that at the very time when the role of the military has been evolving, toward more operations other than war, such as peacekeeping and humanitarian missions, there are increasing pressures to reassert the masculinity of the service member. As the military changes in adaptation to its likely role in the twenty-first century, forces for tradition are resisting changes that they have defined as the "feminization" of the military." The pressures and resistance can be seen not only in interpersonal relations (including gender and sexual harassment), but also in the political arena—as evidenced by attempts in Congress to force basic military training to be gender segregated (Maze, 1997). This reassertion of masculinity may also be seen in policies and public discourse regarding homosexuality.

6. HOMOSEXUALITY IN THE MILITARY

Exclusion of homosexuals is another way to maintain the military as a province of heterosexual males with gender-defining characteristics. There appears to be a relationship between the degree to which a nation's policies allow homosexuals to serve in the military and the extent of gender integration in its armed forces (Segal, Segal, & Booth, 1999). The United States is an outlier in that it has a relatively high degree of gender integration, but excludes open homosexuals from serving. In 1993, newly elected Presi-

dent Clinton attempted to lift the ban. Instead, after much public debate, Congress adopted a "Don't ask, don't tell, don't pursue" policy with regard to homosexuality . Since then, the number of discharges for homosexuality has actually risen and women are disproportionately affected. The policy has been challenged in the courts and some cases are still being heard, which may take the issue to the Supreme Court. (For social scientific analyses of the issues involved, including comparisons with gender and racial integration, see Herek, Jobe, & Carney, 1996; Scott & Stanley, 1994.)

7. GENDER AND MILITARY FAMILY ISSUES IN THE UNITED STATES

Family issues often arise in public debates about women in the military because women are seen as the primary caretakers of children. Most research on military families focusses on male service members and their wives. This is not surprising, given the predominantly male composition of armed forces and the historical exclusion of women with children. Women with children were first allowed to remain in service in the 1970s. It is important for sociologists to examine all the ways that gender plays a role in family issues in the military: for military men, for military women, and for civilian spouses of both genders.

The "greedy" nature of military life creates demands on service members and their families. Civilian wives of military men have traditionally been expected to accommodate their lives to these demands. Changes in gender norms in the wider society have been affecting military families and military family policy. (For a full analysis of these changes, see M. W. Segal, 1986, 1989; Stanley, Segal, & Laughton, 1990.) Social definitions of gender affect marital expectations, interactions, and role negotiations. The rise in military wives' labor force participation has altered military families' adjustments to military lifestyle characteristics, such as frequent moving.

Military family patterns are now more diverse. The number of single parents and dual-service couples has grown in the past two decades and they have received both research and policy attention. There tends to be negative attention in policy debates, such as assumptions that they have more trouble than other personnel in meeting their military and family obligations, an assumption that tends not be supported by research (e.g., Segal & Harris, 1993). Civilian husbands of military women, although increasing in proportion of military spouses, have been neglected both in policy attention and in research. Bourg (1995) shows how their experiences reflect their token status.

8. GENDER AND THE MILITARY: THE FUTURE

There will be continued public debate and social change in the United States and other nations about gender in the military, including women's roles, policy with regard to homosexuality, and family issues. Public policy discourse still reflects pockets of resistance to change and a desire by some to go back to more limited military roles for women. This is evident, for example, in the recent attempt by some members of Congress to require the services to segregate the sexes in basic training. Although the attempt was not immediately successful, study groups were set up to examine the issue and report back.

Women's past military roles have not increased linearly, but rather have gone through cycles of expansion and contraction. Cultural ambivalence exists in the United States and

other nations; the issues are likely to continue to be the focus of political conflict. As in the past, women's military roles will be affected both by social definitions of gender and military needs. With the end of the Cold War, the nations of North America and Western and Eastern Europe are making dramatic changes in their military missions and force structures—with implications for gender. Sociologists will find interesting processes at both the macro- and micro-levels to study, which could help to fill the gaps in our knowledge about gender—both in the military and more generally.

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