Patriarchal Discomfort? The Representation of Women in the British Armed Forces in Civil and Military Discourses

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Abstract

The thesis explores the nexus of gender and war in modern society in the wake of the recent removal of the combat ban on women in the British Armed Forces. Building upon works on nontraditional bodies who transgress the normative boundaries of masculine/feminine, it investigates the 'inbetweenness' of female soldiers and the ambiguous spaces occupied by them. Setting as a focal point a sense of discomfort, it focuses on representations of women in the military, discourses through which their subject positions are constructed and rendered (un)intelligible. The thesis seeks to recover representations of female soldiers in the media and identifies a hermeneutical lacuna in the articulation of their existence and experiences. By conducting a discourse analysis of the media, the study also postulates that the incongruity between the perceived femininity of women and the masculine-coded profession of soldiering engenders a sense of discomfort, which, in consequence, coaxes women into '*their place*'. The thesis analyzes *Soldier* as well as four major British newspapers and argues that while women are now allowed to hold every role in the British Armed Forces and are ostensibly represented as equals to men in the military discourse, the sense of discomfort in recognizing women in military settings is manifested in subtle and nuanced manners in the civil discourse. 'Female soldier' is rendered an oxymoron as the social construct of 'woman' is not an appropriate subject of violence, and the representations of female soldiers in the media discourses continue to obscure the discursive structure of gender subordination.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This thesis explores the complex nexus between gender and militarism in modern society, focusing on the ambiguous subject positions of female soldiers and their representations in media discourses. There is a growing body of literature on gender and militarism which has deepened our understandings of the institutionalization and materialization of gender in warfare through gendered bodies. Scholars agree that the military, warfare, and security have long been considered 'men's business' in which women are still rarely seen. As noted by Pin-Fat and Stern, in the literature, "claims that war depends upon representations of gender and that representations of war inform articulations of masculinity and femininity have become almost commonplace."[1] Similarly, the idea of "Just Warriors and Beautiful Souls"[2] has become a familiar narrative: men are the defenders of the nation and its people, and women are beautiful souls. The term originated from Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind*, in which it is defined to be "great individual goodness and purity, yet beings cut-off and abstracted from the world of which they were a part."[3] The images of Just Warriors and Beautiful Souls have become powerful archetypes through which feminist scholarship has engaged and furthered knowledge of gender and warfare. The gendered division of labor in times of war (men as the defender and women as the defended) has also permeated society, and the social constructs of, and expectations for, 'man', 'woman', and 'soldier' became structurally established and firmly entrenched in our cognizance. Consequently, anyone who deviates from those roles causes cognitive incongruity; "the woman fighter is, for us, an identity *in extremis,* not an expectation."[4]

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[1] Pin-Fat, Véronique and Stern, Maria. "The Scripting of Private Jessica Lynch: Biopolitics, Gender, and the 'Feminization' of the U.S. Military." *Alternatives* 30 (2005): p. 28.
[2] Elshtain, Jean Bethke. *Women and War.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987. p. 4.
[3] Elshtain Jean Bethke. "On Beautiful Souls, Just Warriors and Feminist Consciousness." *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3-4 (1982): p. 341.
[4] Elshtain. *Women and War.* p. 173.

Although the images of Just Warriors and Beautiful Souls seem rather antiquated in the 21ˢᵗ century where women are becoming increasingly visible in roles which were previously held exclusively by men, including in the military, the rigid binary constructs of gender and their accompanying beliefs and expectations are still deeply ingrained in society. Not only is the distinction between the paradigmatic figures of defender/defended[5] ideologically foregrounded in the military, but it also defines and determines its raison d'être. Basham argues that "the privileging of whiteness, masculinity and heteronormativity are integral to the ways in which liberal democratic states like Britain define themselves and how they prepare for and wage war."[6] The articulation of war relies heavily on "very particular understandings of gender, race and sexuality"[7] such as men as the defender and women as the defended. An extensive body of research has explored the notion of military masculinities, a specific type of masculinity required to be a soldier and thought to be prevalent in the military.[8] Traditionally, traits such as aggression, toughness and stoicism are considered crucial for masculine warriors who defend their nations, and they continue to define a considerable part of military masculinity as well as stereotypical images of soldiers. Women in the military thus become "hypervisible … because of the social meanings that materialise through their bodies."[9]

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[5] The symbol '/' is used in this thesis to denote terms of 'binary oppositions', which are two terms that are opposite yet co-constitutive in their meanings.

[6] Basham, Victoria. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.* Routledge, 2013. p. 139.

[7] Ibid. p. 141.

[8] *Inter alia* Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence."; Belkin. *Bring Me Men: Military Masculinity and the Benign Façade of American Empire, 1898-2001.*; Higate. "'Soft Clerks' and 'Hard Civvies': Pluralizing Military Masculinities."; Hockey. "No More Heroes: Masculinity in the Infantry."; Kovitz. "The Roots of Military Masculinity."; Regan de Bere. "Masculinity in Work and Family Lives: Implications for Military Service and Resettlement."; Sasson-Levy. "Individual Bodies, Collective State Interests: The Case of Israeli Combat Soldiers."; Sharoni and Welland. "Introduction: revisiting the relationship between gender and war: reflections on theory, research, activism and policy."; Woodward. "Locating Military Masculinities: Space, Place, and the Formation of Gender Identity in the British Military."; Zalewski. "What's the problem with the concept of military masculinities?"

[9] Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.* p. 86.

In the wake of the recent removal of the combat ban on women in the British Armed Forces, the thesis seeks to identify the ways in which the subject positions of female soldiers are rendered intelligible in media discourses. As waging war and militarism depend on representations of gender, discursive formations of masculinity and femininity inform not only military gender norms but also societal gender norms. As such, the thesis focuses on representations of women in the military, discourses through which their subject positions are constructed and rendered (un)intelligible. It identifies the use of markers of femininity, a discursive practice with which the identities of female soldiers as women are highlighted rather than their professional identities as soldiers. By conducting a discourse analysis of the media both inside and outside the British Armed Forces, the study also postulates that the incongruity between the perceived femininity of women and the masculine-coded profession of soldiering engenders a sense of discomfort. It is consistent with Millar's analysis of the ways in which female soldiers' deaths are commemorated differently from deaths of male soldiers because of the ambiguous subject positions female soldiers hold. She argues that "female soldiers are grievable as both 'good soldiers' and 'good women', but not as 'good female soldiers'"[10] due to their contested identities. Inspired by such critical works, this research aims to shed light upon a blind spot in the literature and fill the hermeneutical lacuna—a gap in our cognizance about a social experience that is rendered obscured and unintelligible due to the lack of collective hermeneutical resources.[11] As it will be discussed in the analyses in the following chapters, the thesis finds the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered unintelligible due to discursive inaccuracy in their representations in the media. The markedness of female soldiers in the popular discourses signifies the embeddedness of gender norms based on essentialist and binary constructs of gender in society, as well as the inherent

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[10] Millar, Katharine M. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 4 (2015): p. 757.

[11] Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. p. 169.

tension in the representations of female soldiers. Their subject positions are intrinsically ambiguous and vulnerable because of the rigid boundaries within which what it is to be a soldier and what it is to be a woman are constructed. Female soldiers disrupt the boundaries of respectability[12] and societal expectations for women and soldiering, thereby bringing about what have been described as "disorientation"[13] and "an experience of breach."[14] It is argued that by highlighting the femininity of female soldiers and underplaying their professional identities simultaneously, popular discourses render female soldiers "out of place"[15] in their profession while coaxing them into *their place*, circumscribing where they should be.

Building on the notion of *patriarchal discomfort* introduced by Cynthia Enloe,[16] this research investigates the discursive implications of gender norms as social imaginaries informing the everyday articulations of masculinity and femininity both in the military and wider society. It explores the ambiguous spaces between these normative spheres by examining the representations of female soldiers in media discourses. As an example of *patriarchal confusion*, Enloe suggests the possibility where two opposing forces – maintenance of patriarchy on one side and resistance to it on the other – can exist simultaneously in the military. For instance, recruiting women and other nontraditional bodies may be a necessity in times of personnel shortage, yet their presence threatens to dilute the masculine identity of the institution.[17] *Patriarchal discomfort* or *confusio*n occurs when the normative and ideological boundaries of the military and nontraditional bodies such as women intersect. The analysis of gay and lesbian soldiers' participation in Pride marches by Bulmer reveals how military identities become

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[12] Skeggs, Beverly. *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable.* London: Sage Publication Ltd., 1997. Pp. 1-4.
[13] Ahmed, Sara. "A phenomenology of whiteness." *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2. (2007): p. 159.
[14] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 764.
[15] Ahmed. "A phenomenology of whiteness." p. 159.
[16] Enloe, Cynthia. *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. p. 94.
[17] Ibid. p. 97.

'confused' through the negotiations to make sense of these nontraditional bodies, whose presence and participation in Pride disrupt the singularity of masculine military identity. *Patriarchal confusion*, in this case, is a site in which an encounter of a resistance to and resilience of patriarchy in guises of gendered identities represented within the military engenders a sense of disorientation and signifies "the radically contingent nature" of military identity.[18]

Drawing upon these works of Enloe and Bulmer, the thesis employs the conception of *patriarchal discomfort* to explore a sense of discomfort female soldiers may induce due to the cognitive dissonance between the perceived femininity of their gender and their masculine-coded vocation. Female soldiers and their subject positions are critically ambivalent, placed between the normative boundaries of the military as an illustrious servant of patriotism and women as an ultimate embodiment of what states must defend. Female soldiers are positioned "between and *outside* the conflicting normative/ideological imperatives of patriotism and hetero-normative femininity" rendering them socially and politically unintelligible.[19] The thesis also pays particular attention to the 'inbetweenness'[20] of the bodies that occupy the ambiguous spaces between the oppositional yet co-constitutive spheres of military/civilian and masculine/feminine and examines their representations in media discourses. In exploring the workings of *patriarchal discomfort* female soldiers may induce, the thesis suggests that their ambivalent representations in the media are a means by which society confronts the disruption of the normative boundaries of military/civilian and masculine/feminine brought about by gender norm defying figures such as female soldiers.

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[18] Bulmer, Sarah. "Patriarchal Confusion? Making Sense of Gay and Lesbian Military Identity." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 15, no. 2 (2013) pp. 147, 150.

[19] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 760. Emphasis in original.

[20] Bulmer, Sarah and Eichler, Maya. "Unmaking militarized masculinity: veterans and the project of military-to-civilian transition." *Critical Military Studies* 3, no. 2 (2017): pp. 173-5.

1.1. Motivation for the Research

This research focuses on the media representations of women in the military both inside and outside the institution, as well as their discursive formations in which the norms of traditional heteronormativity and modern gender equality and diversity are contested. While many Western democratic countries have had women serving in their armed forces for decades, the numbers of them in most countries remain disproportionately low and soldiering remains to be considered a man's profession. Of interest is how gender norms and other social constructs about men and women inform the articulations of masculine/feminine in the military and society and are reflected in the ways in which female soldiers are represented and rendered (un)intelligible. The position the military occupies in society and the role it plays are often taken for granted, and social meanings attached to and expectations for it are constructed and embedded in the normative and ideological structure of state. Drawing on the notion of *patriarchal discomfort*[21] suggested by Enloe, this research investigates how women in the military are represented in media discourses and possible challenges the female bodies in the inherently masculine institution pose to the patriarchal and heteronormative system of society. This thesis argues that women's bodies in the military create a sense of discomfort since femininity and military violence conceptually contradict each other, and this sense of discomfort is what contains women in *their place*.

Despite the fact that every position in the British military is now open for all, women only constitute 10 percent in the Army which has the lowest representation of female personnel among the British Armed Forces.[22] As of 1 April 2022, women in the UK Regular Forces

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[21] Enloe. *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*. p. 81.

[22] Women constitute 10.3% in the Royal Navy, 10. % in the Army and 15.4% in the Royal Air Force. Future Reserves have higher numbers of women, at 15.8% in the Maritime Reserve, 14.7% in the Army Reserve, and 23% in the RAF Reserves. Ministry of Defence. "*UK Armed Forces Biannual Diversity Statistics 1 April 2022.*" 30 June 2022. Accessed 9 July 2022. p. 5.

compose 11.3 percent across three services.[23] Although it is expected to be a long-term increasing trend,[24] the number seems to contradict the official rhetoric about the inclusion of female personnel in the British military. In 2016, then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the ban on women serving in ground close combat roles was to be lifted and stated that the Armed Forces should "reflect the society we live in."[25] Women are now allowed to serve in all positions, yet the number of female personnel seems far from reflecting the British society. On the one hand, the change in policies which opens the military to everyone, not just to men, is seen as progressive and modern, and leaders in the British government as well as the military brass appear to be keen on promoting equal opportunity and gender equality in the institution. On the other hand, however, the presence of such nontraditional bodies in the traditionally masculine-coded profession remains controversial. According to some, these policies erode military's traditional masculine identity; some disagree with the inclusion of women based on the biological differences between men and women which may affect the latter's performance as soldiers; for some, the military is simply men's domain to which women do not belong. Each position represents a discourse about gender in which the social meanings of 'woman' and 'soldier' materialize, and the thesis seeks to examine the normative boundaries of military/civilian and masculine/feminine that are (re)constructed and reinforced through these discourses.

The thesis thus places these discourses under scrutiny to explore the 'inbetweenness' of female soldiers and their subject positions placed between the normative constructs and boundaries of military/civilian and masculine/feminine, in relation to the sense of discomfort. As such, it aims to answer the research question of how women in the military are represented in media

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid. p. 1. The female representation in the Regular Forces increased by 0.3% compared to the previous year (11%).

[25] GOV. UK "Ban on women in ground close combat roles lifted." 8 July 2016.

discourses, as their representations are sites in which the ambiguous subject positions of female soldiers are mediated and negotiated. The thesis therefore focuses on media representations of female soldiers in recent years including the pivotal period where the inclusion of women in the military was debated laboriously and the combat ban on women was finally lifted. While the thesis acknowledges that the change has been made relatively recently and it may be untimely to analyze and determine its full effects, it should be noted that women have formally been serving in the British Armed Forces for over 100 years[26] and most roles were already open to them prior to the historic decision.[27] The number of women in the services has grown incrementally over the years, but at a slow rate. In the last two decades since 2000, the number of women in the Regular Forces has increased by 3%. Although it is hoped to help with the recruitment shortage by extending options for women, those newly available roles are unlikely to contribute to an immediate growth in the number of female personnel due to their physically and psychologically demanding nature.

The thesis contributes to the literature by offering insights to societal anxiety about women in 'unwomanly' roles through the close reading and examination of representations of female soldiers in the media, while paying particular attention to a sense of discomfort. The issue is of political and social imperative as the government considers creating greater diversity in the Armed Forces as "mission critical"[28] and its social engagements in gender equality remain vital. Moreover, unpacking the sense of discomfort induced by nontraditional and queer bodies will become increasingly relevant and important as we slowly move away from the rigidity of heteronormativity to more fluid understandings of gender as society. The thesis aims to answer

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[26] House of Commons Defence Committee. "Protecting those who protect us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life." House of Commons. 12 July 2021. p. 9.
[27] According to the review paper by MoD published in December 2014, women were eligible to serve in 79% of roles in the Royal Navy, 70% in the Army and 94% in the Royal Air Forces. "Women in Ground Close Combat (GCC) Review Paper." Ministry of Defence. 1 December 2014. p. 1.
[28] House of Commons Defence Committee. "Protecting those who protect us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life." p. 10.

the research question by addressing the following questions: How do the two contesting norms of traditional heteronormativity and modern gender equality and diversity manifest themselves in discourse? How does society make sense of the 'inbetweenness' of the bodies and subject positions of female soldiers being positioned between military and civilian as well as masculine and feminine? Where do the normative and ideological boundaries of patriotism and patriarchal heteronormativity place the subject positions of female soldiers and what are the implications? The answers to these puzzles will hopefully add to the literature and prompt a further discussion in the field of gender and military studies.

Research on gender and militarism tends to focus on the military alone and its gendered culture without exploring the interrelations with society and mutual impacts between the two. Consequently, gender norms and identities in the military are understood as something specific and exceptionally unique to the organization, and disproportionate scholarly attention has been paid to the gendered culture and nature of the institution. The thesis argues that despite the normative boundaries between military/civilian, the two and their gender norms are intimately related. Furthermore, following some of the critical works which investigate the 'inbetweenness' of nontraditional bodies, it seeks to add to the literature by exploring the spaces between military/civilian and masculine/feminine as sites of investigation and engaging with the subject positions of the bodies that occupy these areas in relation to a sense of discomfort. The thesis aims to recover various representations of female soldiers, or "an identity *in extremis*," [29] discourses through which their subject positions are rendered intelligible in the military *and* society. The analyses rely on close reading of substantial empirical data retrieved from the official magazine of the British Army and the most widely

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[29] Elshtain. *Women and War.* p. 173.

circulated newspapers in the UK as well as a distinctive conceptual framework with various theories and conceptions.

1.2. Researching the Gendered Systems of Warfare, Militarism, and Nationalism

Militarism, waging wars and maintaining militaries all necessitate normative and ideological discursive formations of certain narratives about nationalism patriotism as well as gender. They also highlight the dichotomous distinctions between social actors and subjectivities such as the state/society, public/private and soldier/citizen. Warfare is a fundamentally social phenomenon, "that war makes states, societies and individuals, as much as states make war"[30] with similarly profound social effects and implications. The responsibility the state bears to preserve its nationhood by protecting its society and citizens underscores the state/society division. War then creates what Weber calls "pathos and feeling of community"[31] on which the state relies when its security is threatened, and this sense of nationalism makes it possible that a person is "to be protected, yet required to risk his life to protect the community."[32] The discursive formation of nationalism transforms "the inevitability of death into a sacrifice for a specific, noble cause"[33] and the sacrifice to be glorified and romanticized. At this point, a clear distinction between the solider/citizen as defender/defended emerges, which is already highly gendered – the normative construction of soldier who stands in the public, military sphere is held by a man, and the role of the citizen in the private sphere is assumed by a woman.

The interconnection between war and the normative constructions of gender and gender roles, prescriptive assumptions, and expectations of how genders are performed, has been identified

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[30] Malešević, 2010 in Basham, Victoria. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence." In Sharoni, Simona, Welland, Julia, Steiner, Linda, and Pedersen, Jennifer eds. *Handbook on Gender and War*. 29-46. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2016. p. 29.
[31] Malešević, Siniša. *The Sociology of War and Violence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. p. 26.
[32] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 761.
[33] Ibid. pp. 26-7.

by many researchers. Malešević argues that warfare and the gender stratification to exclude women from combat appeared simultaneously in history.[34] He points out that with expansion of civilization and proliferation of warfare, gendered division of labor in war and exclusion of women from combat started as a necessity to secure reproduction of new soldiers and labor rather than discrimination against women. It started as a social organizational apparatus to meet the needs of reproduction and soldiering respectively in earlier societies and it has gradually evolved into a more rigid gender stratification.[35] Gender became institutionalized in warfare, and it has determined "who fights, who dies and in defense of whom."[36] The roles of 'the protected, the protector, and the defender' are assigned to men and women simply based on their biological sex with each assigned gender roles,[37] and not only has this allocation been systematized in the militaries, it has also been assimilated in societies and has reified the normative boundaries of masculine/feminine. Militaries are thus a site in which the defender/defended and soldier/citizen distinctions are most clearly highlighted. Scholars agree that it is a unique organization, distinct from others with its capacity to exercise state-sanctioned violence and as "the most prototypically masculine of all social institutions,"[38] still maintaining and (re)producing the original gendered division of labor from its earlier form. Enloe has argued that a certain mode of masculinity, which is understood to be military masculinities, is essential for waging wars and for the military to function,[39] and Basham claims that the masculine culture in the military persists because it is how it identifies itself,

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[34] Malešević. *The Sociology of War and Violence*. p. 296.

[35] Ibid. p. 297.

[36] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence." p. 29.

[37] Stiehm, Judith H. "The Protected, the Protector, the Defender." *Women's Studies International Forum* 5, no. 3-4 (1982): 367-376.

[38] Segal Mady W. "Women's Military Roles Cross-Nationally: Past, Present, and Future." *Gender & Society* 9, no. 6 (1995): 757-775. p. 758.

[39] Enloe, Cynthia. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 2014. p. 149-150.

and because preserving its identity requires the institution to be seen as masculine. [40] Masculinity is believed to be a vital part of military's identity and "the ability and willingness to perpetrate violence thus became a requirement of masculine citizenship,"[41] reinforcing the association between militarism and masculinity.

As such, the dominant discourse that associates warfare with masculinity defines the normative boundaries between the military and civilian society and serves as a foundation upon which the raison d'être of the institution is constructed. The gendered division of labor in warfare dictates the masculine subject to assume the former role of the public/private, soldier/citizen, and protector/protected. Women, the feminine subject, are assigned to the passive roles of the latter. Such rigid normative and ideological divisions are challenged when these gendered boundaries are 'breached'. The use of violence is legitimized by the state and military casualties are considered sad and unfortunate but admirable and somewhat inevitable, so long as the subject who is injured or died as the 'protector' is a man. Violent death of women, the subject to be protected, however, is "radically unjust" and seems like "an atrocity"[42] for it calls into question the normative boundaries and constructs of soldier/civilian and defender/defended. The anxiety of (potential) death of women as well as violence committed by women in warfare renders the subject positions of female soldiers ambiguous and contested. It has been exhibited by Millar in her illuminating analysis of commemorations and obituaries of female soldiers in which she argues that they are not grievable as "good female soldiers" as such a category does not exist in the current "normative structures of nationalism and patriarchal gender," which is paradoxically threatened by the uncategorizable existence of female soldiers.[43] Depictions and

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[40] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence.". p. 30.
[41] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 761.
[42] Ibid. pp. 761-2.
[43] Ibid. p. 776.

representations of female soldiers in the media often denote what Berger and Naaman call "re-positioning [of] the women in civil and hetero-normative realms"[44] in which their subject positions are made unintelligible. It ultimately reflects the ambivalence and discomfort in society towards women whose behaviors or professions challenge the traditional notion of 'woman', whose subject positions belong to the realms of the feminine, defended, and civilian. The representations of female soldiers are thus investigated in the thesis to build on such critical research and to further our understandings of, or the lack thereof, their ambiguous subject positions as well as their political and social implications.

1.3. History of Nontraditional Bodies in the British Military

1.3.1. Women in the Armed Forces

Women are now allowed in all positions in the UK Armed Forces including combat roles, yet they merely consist around 11% across the services. Although the full integration of women into combat roles is a relatively recent event, they have been a part of British military for over 100 years. In Britain, women began to participate in the Armed Forces as aides during the First World War at first on trial basis and were defined as auxiliaries. They were to assist the male servicemen, not to participate in active combat. The number of women serving for the military increased amid the World War II, during which women were officially conscripted and granted their military status in the Armed Forces.[45] The motivation of the British government in permitting women to the military, however, was not for a promotion of feminism or gender equality. Rather, it was an attempt to free up more men to fight on the front lines, and to make the most of the limited human resources.[46]

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[44] Berger, Eva and Naaman, Dorit. "Combat cuties: photographs of Israeli women soldiers in the press since the 2006 Lebanon War." *Media, War & Conflict* 4, no. 3 (2011): p. 272.
[45] Summerfield and Peniston-Bird (2003); Woodward and Winter (2004).
[46] Campbell, D'Ann. "Women in Combat: The World War II Experience in the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union." *The Journal of Military History* 57, no. 2 (1993): p. 302, p. 312; Noakes, Lucy. *Women in the British Army: War and the Gentle Sex, 1907-1948.* Oxon: Routledge, 2006. p. 62.

In 1941, women were officially permitted in the Anti-Aircraft (AA) units and mixed batteries typically consisted of 189 men and 299 women were formed shortly after.[47] Although it remained voluntary for women, over 60,000 women served for the AA units over time.[48] Women in the AA batteries were so enthusiastic, keen and rigorous that Lieutenant Colonel J.W. Naylor who was a commander of a mixed unit confessed that he resented the idea of leading a mixed regiment at first, but he was very pleased with his unit in the end and stated that his "men and girls were great."[49] General Sir Fredrick Pile noted that "the girls lived like men, fought … like men, and, alas, some of them died like men."[50] Yet, women in the AA batteries never belonged to the Royal Artillery and were never regarded as active combatants. There were strict regulations which prohibited women from firing weapons or pulling the trigger, even though they engaged in a variety of jobs from searching for and spotting targets, loading the guns to helping aim the gun, right next to men who then fired the guns. However absurd the logic was, because women never pulled the trigger, they never committed killing, therefore "no moral threshold had been crossed."[51] The mixed AA batteries were dissolved quietly after the war and the military status quo was restored. DeGroot argues that both the British military and society either pretended or genuinely believed that the taboo of sending women into combat was never challenged, despite the fact that 60,000 women participated in combat operations.[52]

Although the officials agreed after the war that "the Army is very unlikely in the future to provide a permanent career for women,"[53] the Women's Royal Army Corps (WRAC) which

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[47] Women outnumbered men in AA Command by 1944. DeGroot, Gerard J. "Whose Finger on the Trigger?: Mixed Anti-Aircraft Batteries in the Female Combat Taboo." *War in History* 4, no. 4 (1997): p. 436.
[48] Campbell. "Women in Combat: The World War II Experience in the United States, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union.". p. 306.
[49] Campbell (1993) p. 312; DeGroot (1997) p. 441.
[50] DeGroot. "Whose Finger on the Trigger?: Mixed Anti-Aircraft Batteries in the Female Combat Taboo." p. 441.
[51] Ibid.
[52] Ibid. p. 450-3.
[53] Markham Committee Report in DeGroot. p. 450.

later became one of the British Army's officer training academies was founded in 1949. However, the jobs available for women were mostly administrative and women only constituted around 2.5 % until 1979. Throughout the 1980s, the WRAC underwent several policy changes such as introduction of weapons training, gender-free physical selection and equal opportunities for career advancement, which pushed women from the periphery to being a more integral part of the Armed Forces.[54] While presence of women became more and more visible in the 1990s – they constituted 2.8% of the British forces in the Gulf War – yet they were not allowed to close with and kill the enemy.[55] Nevertheless, the changes made regarding women serving the Armed Forces were significant.

The debates on women's participation in the military in the scholarship have generally evolved around two discourses which are "women's rights to serve and their capacity to serve."[56] The 'right to serve' was a much-debated issue among liberal feminists in the Cold War period. Considering the roles women played in the two World Wars, feminists held that the exclusion of women from the military and security sectors was unfair. They argued against claims which maintained women's physical and emotional incapability to be a soldier, as well as that women would disrupt unit morale and cohesion.[57] The second set of arguments about women's physicality and their capacity to serve is related to the concerns about operational effectiveness and unit cohesion. Women's bodies are typically regarded as weak and leaky; lack of upper body strength, menstruation, and pregnancy are considered problematic and therefore inherently incompatible with military services.[58] Some claim that women could disrupt unit

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[54] Ibid. p. 32.
[55] Ibid. p. 32-3.
[56] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence." 2016. p. 33.
[57] Kennedy-Pipe, Caroline. "Liberal Feminists, Militaries and War." p. 24-25. In Woodward, Rachel and Duncanson, Claire, eds. *The Palgrave International Handbook of Gender and the Military.* 23-37. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
[58] Cohn, Carol. "Gays in the Military: Texts and Subtexts." In Zalewski, Marysia, and Parpart, Jane. *The "Man" Question in International Relations.* Colorado: Westview Press, 1998. p. 135.

cohesion because some heterosexual men may find it harder to work with opposite sex; "[m]en will be demoralized by seeing women injured or taken prisoner; men will go out of their way to protect women, doing things that will unnecessarily tax or endanger themselves; they will sexually harass women …; and fraternization will undermine unit cohesion."[59] This argument concerns heterosexual men's possible responses to the presence of women rather than women's competency as soldiers, similarly to the reasoning found in the military's opposition against homosexual personnel, which is explored in the next section.

The reservations about women's participation in the military, especially in combat roles seem to remain in the institution. Despite the combat ban on women being lifted, the hyper-masculine nature and culture of the military continue to define the ways personnel experience their service; as Basham notes, the experiences differ considerably between men and women, "on the basis of salient assumptions about gender …particularly in relation to the perpetration of (organized) violence."[60] The normative constructs and boundaries of masculine/feminine and defender/defended have practically defined the identity of the military, where the resistance and sexist attitudes to women as warriors continue to be reproduced and renewed.[61] The extent of resistance to and qualms about the presence of women seems to become increasingly palpable as their positions advance further in what Higate calls the masculinity hierarchy in the military, where infantry men earn the utmost respect while administrative roles are considered to be on the lower tier.[62] Scholars have pointed out that the presence of women is easier to be justified and military's "collective sense of self as a masculine institution" remains

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[59] Ibid.
[60] Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces*. p. 49.
[61] Ibid. p. 62.
[62] Higate, Paul. "'Soft Clerks' and 'Hard Civvies': Pluralizing Military Masculinities." In Higate *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*. p. 27.

unthreatened when they hold 'appropriate' or 'gender-conforming' roles.[63] The sense of unease induced by women who assume highly masculine or violent roles as well as the struggles faced by female soldiers to be 'fully' integrated in such a masculine institution are explored more in depth in the next chapter.

1.3.2. Sexual Minorities in the Armed Forces

The debate about women's right to fight, to some, was redolent of the similar deliberations over the right to fight for sexual minorities as well as racial minorities.[64] Indeed, the equality and diversity policies in the British military were endowed on the basis of concerns about racism rather than concerns about gender equity.[65] In the US, it was a legitimate concern of the government that the inclusion of racial minorities in the military might potentially cause disturbance in units.[66] It was not until 1999 when the European Court of Human Rights ruled against the policy to exclude homosexuals in the military in the United Kingdom which compelled the government to lift the ban.[67] Similarly to how it constituted women as disruption in units, the British military perceived sexual minorities as a threat to operational effectiveness. Official report stated that homosexuality was "'incompatible' with service in the Armed Forces because homosexual behavior could 'polarise relationships, induce ill-discipline, and, as a consequence, damage morale and unit effectiveness'."[68] Up until 2000 when the ban was lifted, gay personnel were customarily discharged once their sexuality was discovered.[69] Although official policy states that the British Armed Forces do not tolerate any harassment and

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[63] Woodward and Winter, 2004 cited in Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces*. p. 60.
[64] Kennedy-Pipe. "Liberal Feminists, Militaries and War." p. 25.
[65] Woodward, Rachel and Winter, Patricia. "Gender and the Limits to Diversity in the Contemporary British Army." *Gender, Work & Organization* 13, no. 1 (2006): p. 49.
[66] Kennedy-Pipe. "Liberal Feminists, Militaries and War." p. 25.
[67] Oxford University Public Interest Law Submission. "The Legal Treatment of Homosexuals in the Armed Forces of Europe."
[68] Ministry of Defence, 1996 in Bulmer. "Patriarchal Confusion? Making Sense of Gay and Lesbian Military Identity." p. 141.
[69] Ibid.

discrimination, homophobic rituals and hazing were prevalent and even seemed to be accepted as a part of social activities for soldiers to "let off steam" and to bond together.[70] Skidmore points out that the ban was maintained based on "a discourse of prejudice," suggesting that the MoD relied on its prejudice rather than evidence to justify its policy.[71]

In January 1981, the US Department of Defense officially affirmed that homosexuals are prohibited from serving in the military because "homosexuality is incompatible with military service."[72] Bill Clinton vowed to revoke the ban on homosexuals in the military during his 1992 presidential campaign and faced an intense resistance from the military and the republicans in the Congress.[73] After many debates and congressional hearings, they reached a compromise which is known as 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell, Don't Pursue', passed by the Congress in November 1993. Under this policy, gays and lesbians are allowed to serve in the military and would not be discharged for their sexual orientation, but they must keep their sexuality private.[74] In 2011, President Obama announced the repeal of the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy in the US military.[75] Both in the United Kingdom and the United States, the ban on homosexuals in the military services and the its repeal are relatively recent events. Cohn points out that before homosexuals were banned, there were a number of gay personnel serving in both UK and US Armed Forces even when sodomy was regarded as a criminal act.[76] She suggests that what troubled the military "is not homosexuals in the military but having people who are *openly* gay in the military – having the military appear as anything other than a strictly

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[70] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence." 2016. p. 39.

[71] Skidmore, Paul. "Sexuality and the UK armed forces: Judicial review of the ban on homosexuality." In Carver, Terrell and Mottier, Véronique eds. *Politics of Sexuality: Identity, gender, citizenship*. London: Routledge, 1998. pp. 49-55.

[72] Cohn. "Gays in the Military: Texts and Subtexts." 1998. p. 130.

[73] Kier, Elizabeth. "Homosexuals in the US Military: Open Integration and Combat Effectiveness." *International Security* 23, no. 2 (1998) p. 5.

[74] Cohn (1998); Kier (1998).

[75] Bumiller, Elizabeth. "Obama Ends 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy." *The New York Times.* 22 July, 2011.

[76] Cohn. "Gays in the Military: Texts and Subtexts." 1998. p. 129

heterosexual institution."[77] In other words, it was the *visibility* that was unsettling for the institution, not the *presence* of homosexual personnel.[78] The Don't Ask, Don't Tell policy is indicative of their concern about the visibility, because the premise was to allow presence of gay personnel while rendering them invisible. Through her analysis of the congressional hearings, Cohn argues that the resistance to having (openly) gay personnel which typically claimed that homosexuals were unfit in the Armed Forces, and they would disturb morale and unit cohesion stemmed from suppositions about gays that have no evidence to support, and heterosexual men's anxiety. For example, the recurring arguments in the hearings were that gay personnel would undermine morale, discipline and unit cohesion, and that heterosexual men may feel uncomfortable around them. Cohn dismisses them arguing that what the military is concerned is how heterosexual men would feel and react should gay personnel be officially allowed to serve with them, which may potentially lead to disturbance in morale and unit cohesion, not gay personnel's competency to serve.[79] One of the concerns repeatedly brought up in the hearings was a sense of discomfort heterosexual personnel may feel when sharing showers and quarters with gay men, although heterosexual and homosexual personnel had shared those facilities before the ban. What was unacceptable for straight men was being feminized, "imagining of themselves in the female subject position – being the object of the male gaze, being desired, being powerless before the gaze, instead of being the gazer."[80] Similarly, the military's concern was to preserve its heterosexual masculine identity, which might be threatened by the presence of homosexual personnel.

These discussions on women and sexual minorities in the military and how they have come to be permitted to be a part of the institution illustrate the anxiety their nontraditional bodies have

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[77] Ibid. p. 130. Emphasis in original.
[78] Ibid. p. 139. Emphasis in original.
[79] Ibid. p. 135.
[80] Ibid. p. 144.

engendered in the traditionally masculine and heteronormative space. The military's reactions to their presence are strikingly similar; the nontraditional bodies were feared to disrupt morale and unit cohesion and how heterosexual male soldiers would potentially react to them was more serious concern than the ability and competency of the nontraditional personnel. They are great examples of marked bodies which, in the oppositional relations with the unmarked, are "the more narrowly specified and delimited" subjects whose presence stand out as an opposition, against the background of the unmarked. [81] The marked bodies and their 'inbetweenness' induce a sense of breach, disruption, and discomfort in a space full of unmarked bodies. The thesis takes as a focal point a sense of discomfort in the analysis of representations of female soldiers and explores the effects and implications of such nontraditional bodies in the masculine space.

1.4. Theoretical Approach

The thesis draws on and is informed by theories which illuminate the complex constructions of gender, militarism, masculinities, and their reproductions through and within discourses. This thesis is critical in nature and takes as a starting point the view that society is socially (re)constructed continuously through language and discourse. As such, the ontological position which underpins the research is that of constructivism and interpretivism, for the thesis adopts the perspective that there are multiple 'truths' and 'realities', which are constantly reproduced and negotiated by social actors and their interactions, as opposed to the positivist ontology which assumes that there is a single and absolute truth and knowledge which can be objectively studied and verified.[82] It draws on the hermeneutical ontology as its aim is to "understand and interpret the world of meaningful social practices from the 'inside', that is, rather than viewing

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[81] Waugh, Linda R. "Marked and unmarked: A choice between unequals in semiotic structure." *Semiotica* 38, no. ¾ (1982): pp. 309-10, 315-6.

[82] Grix, Jonathan. "Introducing Students to the Generic Terminology of Social Research." *Politics* 22, no. 3 (2002): p. 177.

'objective reality' as a 'disengaged spectator', hermeneuticists always find themselves within a world of constructed meanings and practices, and seek to make this world more intelligible."[83] The thesis also takes as a starting point the view that social realities are discursively (re)produced and rendered intelligible through discourses, within which social meanings are produced. Discourses are understood as "forms of knowledge or powerful sets of assumptions, expectations and explanations, governing mainstream social and cultural practices"[84] which discursively inform various power relations. The thesis also recognizes the importance of self-reflexivity, for researchers are embedded in social realities which makes it impossible to make purely unbiased observations, and because of this must always take into account their own subjectivity. [85] As such, it draws its ontological and epistemological foundations on poststructuralism and discourse theory. In this view, what are perceived as 'truths' or 'reality' are in fact ostensibly uncontested hegemonic discourses among "plural and competing discourses constituting power relations within any field of knowledge or given context."[86] Crucially and somewhat contentiously, material and social realities do not exist outside discourse; discourses are, in Foucault's words, "'practices that systematically form the objects of which we speak'"[87] through which social meanings and knowledge are formed, within which subject positions of social actors are placed, our experiences are mediated,[88] and power relations can be shifted. Accordingly, the thesis will investigate the "(re)production … and (re)legitimization"[89] of representations of female soldiers, discourses in which their subject positions are rendered (un)intelligible while paying particular attention to a sense of discomfort.

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[83] Howarth, David. *Discourse*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 2000. p. 127.

[84] Baxter, Judith. *Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. p. 7.

[85] Hopf, Ted. "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory." *International Security* 23, no. 1 (1998): p. 184.

[86] Baxter. *Positioning Gender in Discourse: A Feminist Methodology*. p. 8.

[87] Howarth. *Discourse*. pp. 7, 77.

[88] Baxter, Judith. "Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis: A New Theoretical and Methodological Approach?" In Eds. Harrington, Kate, Lia Litosseliti, Helen Sauntson, and Jane Sunderland. *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. p. 248.

[89] Shepherd, Laura J. *Gender, Violence and Security: Discourse as Practice*. Zed Books (2008): p. 18.

Things which seem to be natural, inherent or inevitable such as gender norms and gender roles (e.g., associating women with pacifism and men with militarism) may in fact have been (re)produced and (re)legitimized through hegemonic discourses.[90] By addressing how certain understandings came to be legitimate and hegemonic knowledge, poststructuralism underlines the relationship between knowledge and power.[91] Thus, the questions of how women in the military are represented in media discourses will be addressed in relation to the embeddedness of discourses about heteronormative gender norms in society such as Just Warriors and Beautiful Souls. It is hoped that the result will be a better understanding of *patriarchal discomfort* which reveals patriarchal and heteronormative nature of society and the challenges that femininity in the masculine institution poses to such society. The research is eclectic[92] in that it draws on multiple theories and concepts in different disciplines, such as critical military studies, social psychology, philosophy, communication and media studies, and discourse theory.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of ten chapters. The first chapter has introduced key concepts such as military masculinities and *patriarchal discomfort*, presented a brief context of nontraditional bodies in the British military and laid out the rationale, problematization and research questions. Chapter two is devoted to reviewing and organizing the extant literature. The discussions include media representations of violent women, a sense of discomfort, and the role of media in the dissemination of discourses through which social reality is constructed. Chapter three delineates the methodology the thesis deploys. It describes the theory and approaches of discourse analysis as well as the method in which the empirical data were collected and

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[90] Enloe. *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*. p. 12.
[91] Foucault, Michel. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*. Pantheon, 1980. pp. 81-83.
[92] Sil, Rudra and Katzenstein, Peter J. "Analytic Eclecticism in the Study of World Politics: Reconfiguring Problems and Mechanisms across Research Traditions." *Perspectives om Politics* 8, no. 2 (2010): p. 412.

analyzed. It also provides a unique conceptual framework employed in the analysis which can be useful in similar research on gender norms, representations of gendered bodies, and appropriate modes of masculinity/femininity. Chapter four through eight offer analyses of discourses and representations of female soldiers in the military and civilian media. Chapter four examines the official magazine of the British Army, *Soldier*, between 1980 to 2018. Chapter five and six provide the analysis of the tabloid newspapers, the *Sun* and the *Mirror* respectively. Chapter seven and eight correspondingly examine the broadsheet newspapers, the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian*. Summarizing the findings from the previous four chapters, Chapter nine offers the interpretations and discussion. Chapter ten returns to the research question and concludes with a discussion on future research avenues.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter examines the extant literature on media representations of women in the military in relation to the anxiety in society when female bodies assume roles that are violent or 'unwomanly', influences of the media in society, as well as a sense of discomfort nontraditional bodies in the military may induce. While the literature reviewed in this chapter has informed and guided the thesis and its puzzle, the aim is to problematize[93] the extant literature by identifying a lacuna, adding to it through answering the research question and offering an insight into *patriarchal discomfort* felt not only in the military but also in society. In doing so, the thesis composes and utilizes a conceptual framework compounded of key concepts and theories with which it further advances the discussions in the literature. The literature is selected to contextualize the aim of the thesis to recover the media representations of female soldiers in relation to the sense of discomfort in a broader area of research upon which the thesis draws and build.

The first section reviews a body of literature which explores the normative and ideological struggles of integrating women into the exceptionally masculine organization. Scholars point out that the markedness of female soldiers and gender stereotypes attached to them necessarily hinder the integration process. Female soldiers are thus reduced to familiar subject positions as 'women' rather than soldiers, for a subject position of 'good female soldiers' is impossible within the current patriarchal gendered order.[94] The following section explores the literature which focuses on and examines the contested relationship between women and violence. It is argued that violent women are sensationalized and even pathologized in the media as the social construct of 'woman' is inherently incompatible with and incapable of violence. The next

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[93] Howarth. *Discourse*. p. 140.
[94] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 757.

section examines the literature that focuses on the cognitive incongruity that people may experience when seeing women in the military, the life-taking roles instead of the life-giving role designated to them, which leads us to a discussion of media's influence on our perceptions of gender norms and women in the military. It will then move onto a brief discussion on operational effectiveness, which was long relied upon to oppose women's integration in the military. Finally, works on the techniques and tactics the media deploy to disseminate information and how biases and stereotypes can be reproduced and reinforced in the process are discussed. There seems to be a lack of attention in research to the effects of gender and militarism in relation to gender norms informing the articulations of masculinity and femininity *beyond* the military since much of literature has focused on the dynamics *within* the institution. Furthermore, it is an increasingly productive and significant avenue of research in gender and militarism to explore the ambiguous spaces between the oppositional yet co-constitutive spheres such as military/civilian and masculine/feminine, to which the present thesis seeks to contribute. The chapter aims to evaluate the extant literature not only to draw the analysis of the empirical chapters on but also to identify the area to which the thesis contributes by further advancing their claims.

2.1. Women in the military

Although women have been increasingly integrated into many state militaries including combat roles on the front line, many scholars point out that the change is only superficial. It is often argued that fundamental culture and identity of the institution hardly change even when women gain access to positions which were occupied exclusively by men such as special forces and infantry as well as higher ranking officers in the armed forces. As Cockburn puts it, "that women have the same jobs as men in the American military does not mean that the organization

is somehow gender-equal or gender-neutral."[95] Sjoberg and Gentry similarly predicate that "a woman in a man's job is a 'woman who can make it as a man' not because the masculine values required to do that job have been questioned or valued, but because she adopts those values, qualifying as masculine despite her womanhood."[96] Rather than the military and its culture adapting to women as nontraditional bodies, women must adapt to the environment and become 'one of the lads'. In examining the accounts of female soldiers of the Israeli Defence Force, Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Takoah argue that "the broadening of conscription to women did not necessarily broaden the notion of what is considered to be a 'fit body' or a different 'military masculinity'," and that "by focusing on the experiences generated by women 'struggling' in institutions of hegemonic masculinity, we can learn new things about gendered practices."[97] They maintain that even with women formally integrated, the gendered hierarchy and power relations are palpable in the institution. Pin-Fat and Stern argue that "the markings of masculinity and femininity make possible the workings of the military only if they are maintained as seemingly distinct and, indeed, dichotomous."[98]

Holland describes the process through which female soldiers are Othered in the military; "first, the norm of female otherness posits the 'naturalness' of female femininity and disciplines female masculinity through exclusive practices, thus defining women as second-class soldiers. Second, the norm of female victimization categorizes women as non-soldiers and domestics who desire and need male protection."[99] She explicates how gender norms and stereotypes dissociate women from the military and what the institution symbolizes. Holland notes that

[95] Cockburn, 1991 cited in Sjoberg, Laura. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9, no. 1 (2007): p. 92.
[96] Sjoberg, Laura and Gentry, Caron E. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2007. p. 10.
[97] Harel-Shalev, Ayelet and Daphna-Tekoah, Shir. "The Double-Battle: women combatants and their embodies experiences in war zones." *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 9, no. 2 (2016): p. 322.
[98] Pin-Fat and Stern. "The Scripting of Private Jessica Lynch: Biopolitics, Gender, and the 'Feminization' of the U.S. Military." p. 33.
[99] Holland, Shannon L. "The Dangers of Playing Dress-up: Popular Representations of Jessica Lynch and the Controversy Regarding Women in Combat." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 1 (2006): p. 31.

"when the marked female body is articulated in relationship to a context historically and ideologically associated with masculinity (and maleness), normative gender assignments become more 'rigidly binding'."[100] In addition to male masculinity as the norm in the institution which Others women and hinders their inclusion and advancement, the deeply entrenched notion of men as the protector and women as the protected (e.g., Just Warriors and Beautiful Souls) in society victimizes women and subordinates them in the domestic, supportive roles. As Holland points out, female soldiers and their bodies are already marked female even before they enter the military.[101] Bridges and Wadham similarly suggest that "within military culture women are seen to violate traditional gender norms and gender roles, challenging social constructs regarding who women are, and what roles they should perform in the world."[102] Scholars have maintained that the recent changes in diversity and inclusion policies which allowed nontraditional bodies such as women in the military have done little in bringing more fundamental changes in attitudes and culture in the institution.[103]

Sjoberg and Gentry argue that "though women are technically included, the inclusion process has paid little attention to the discursive and performative elements of gender subordination."[104] That is, even though the military has officially opened itself to everyone it does not necessarily mean that the masculine nature and culture of the institution capitulates to the new norm of gender equality and neutrality. As Zarzycka notes, "women soldiers continue to be depicted as physically weak, indecisive, and lacking emotional resilience, or as compassionate and incapable of violence. Rather than combatants waging war, women are

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[100] Ibid. p. 30.
[101] Ibid. p. 32.
[102] Bridges, Donna and Wadham, Ben. "Gender under fire: portrayals of military women in the Australian print media." *Feminist Media Studies* 20, no. 2 (2020): p. 223.
[103] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence."; Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*.; Sjoberg. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq."
[104] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. p. 10.

represented as advocates for peace and reconciliation."[105] Not only are female soldiers Othered in the military, their representations in the media suggest that they are also Othered and differentiated from their male counterparts in society. Analyzing media representations of female soldiers reveals the ways in which their subject positions are influenced and manipulated by the societal expectations for women. Examining a photograph of three female American soldiers taken in Afghanistan in 2013, Zarzycka argues that "this photograph, like other images of women soldiers, mediates their participation in war, encouraging a turning away from potentially violent action, towards (a more gratifying) identification with nationalism, security, and safety."[106] The photograph in question depicts three young female soldiers posing in uniform with weapons in their hands. The photograph is very clearly staged as two of them leaning sideways to the one standing between them, facing the front, as if they are posing on a poster of a film.[107] Zarzycka points out that the photograph offers a gaze through which an audience can access and consume the distant war, just like "historical postcards produced to be sent by soldiers from colonial outposts or during the First World War" as well as touristic postcards sent from holiday destinations.[108] Images taken through such a gaze demonstrates disparate ways in which male and female soldiers are depicted. Zarzycka notes that "while portrayals of male soldiers often underline their achievements in combat, images of women soldiers are shaped not by their professional roles, but by markers of gender."[109]

As also illuminated by the analysis of media representations of female soldiers in the thesis, the bodies of female soldiers are highlighted with the markers of femininity, which emphasizes

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[105] Zarzycka, Marta. *Gendered Tropes in War Photography: Mothers, Mourners, Soldiers*. New York: Routledge, 2019. p. 110.
[106] Ibid. p. 112.
[107] Ibid.
[108] Ibid. pp. 115-7.
[109] Ibid. pp. 117-8.

their gender and womanhood and differentiates them from male soldiers. "The body of a female soldier is ideally homogeneous, contained, and virtuous,"[110] symbolizing the idealized image of a female soldier, detached from reality of waging wars. Zarzycka argues that "this image of female soldiers may reassure distant spectators and soothe contemporary concerns about war as an all-encompassing site of carnage, violence, and death."[111] By representing female soldiers as women, first and foremost, brave and patriotic, yet not violent and out of harm's way, such sterilized images allow the social construct of 'woman', which conforms to the traditional gender norms, to be maintained. Denying their agency and not recognizing their capacity to commit violence is one of the ways to preserve the patriarchal gendered order in which "gender stereotypes about women, their role in war and their role in society more generally" remain intact.[112] Sjoberg argues that "the institutional exclusion of women from the United States military may be waning, but the discursive structures of gender subordination that plague the military and extend to its targets are not disappearing but evolving in the face of that change."[113]

As it will be discussed further in the chapters on the media representations of female soldiers, when they are not reduced to the idealized notion of a feminine and virtuous woman, they are often sexualized and objectified. Holland argues that "the reiteration of female otherness insulates male-dominated arenas through the devaluation of the female body."[114] That is, the already marked bodies of female soldiers become hyper-visible by being sexualized and objectified, which then highlights their otherness breaching the masculine space. One of the ways in which society copes with the sense of discomfort of acknowledging women's capability to commit violence and participate in wars is to fetishize them by reducing them to

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[110] Ibid. p. 121.
[111] Ibid. p. 122.
[112] Gentry, Caron E. and Sjoberg, Laura. *Beyond Mothers Monsters Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics*. London: Zed Books, 2015. p. 13.
[113] Sjoberg, Laura. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9, no. 1 (2007): pp. 98-9.
[114] Holland. "The Dangers of Playing Dress-up: Popular Representations of Jessica Lynch and the Controversy Regarding Women in Combat." p. 31.

objects, depicting them through a certain gaze. Oliver defines as "a pornographic way of looking" such a gaze through which someone is objectified or sexualized. It "takes the object of its gaze for its own pleasure or as a spectacle for its own enjoyment without regard for the subjectivity or subject position of those looked at", reflecting and reifying the unequal power relationship between the looker and the looked-at.[115] Sjoberg and Gentry point out that "women's integration into spheres of power and violence threatens patriarchy, until those women are dehumanized through sexualization."[116] As such, the subject positions of female soldiers are obscured by dominant discourses in media that confine their existence and experiences to the familiar gender stereotypes. As Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Takoah argue, "new narratives about war cannot be heard 'from identities that have been enveloped and hidden by the dominant discourse'."[117] In other words, simply 'adding women and stirring' in the military hardly changes the (sometimes toxic) masculine attitudes and culture of the institution. As Zarzycka reminds us, "even as the presence of women in the military and paramilitary organizations seems to signal their emancipation from patriarchal traditions, the rhetoric surrounding their involvement lags behind." Although women's increasing integration in the military indeed has been a milestone, there is much work left to unpack the sense of discomfort, as well as the evolving form of gender subordination, surrounding the two seemingly irreconcilable notions of 'woman' and 'soldier'.

As these studies suggest, female soldiers and their perceived femininity hold highly contentious (subject) positions in the military, which are reflected in their struggles to be recognized as 'soldiers' rather than as 'women' as well as the tension they inevitably create in the fundamentally masculine space. Pin-Fat and Stern argue that "attempts at sustaining boundaries between the military and civilian life, men and women, war and peace, and so on reveal how

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[115] Oliver. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. p. 2.
[116] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 45.
[117] Ibid. Hoogensen and Rottem 2004 cited in Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Takoah. p. 325.

these boundaries rely on clear coding of masculinity and femininity and how the taken-for-granted identity of military and the boundaries upon which it rests are unsettled by the inclusion of the feminine."[118] The anecdotes of soldiers and the observations by the scholars point to the distinctly masculine and gendered nature, culture and norms of the military as a strong contributing factor in explaining the issues faced by female soldiers. The analysis of the military discourse in chapter four also concurs with such claims and identifies various ways in which female soldiers are differentiated from their male counterparts in their representations. The analysis also finds acts of Othering of female soldiers by sexualizing and objectifying them. In addition to corroborating the findings by others, the thesis contributes to the literature by examining the representations of female soldiers in both military and civilian media discourses and exploring the relation between the sense of discomfort as well as the ambiguous spaces and boundaries between these two normative spheres.

2.2. Violent Women in the Media

Women in the military, especially in combat roles, who are trained to be ready to be violent transgress the boundaries of respectable femininity and the idealized notion of women in society. Media representations of female soldiers therefore signify the sense of discomfort felt in society when the societal imaginaries of, and expectations for, 'women' and 'soldier' are disrupted. More broadly, feminist scholars have found that female violence in general is seen as deviant, irrational, dangerous, and evil, and often framed as such in media discourses. Although men do not have a monopoly on violence and women have assumed violent roles such as soldiers and committed in violent crimes such as murders throughout history, violent women tend to be relegated to an aberrant and marginal category of women. According to historian Natalie Zemon Davis, "by the late eighteenth century absolute distinctions between

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[118] Pin-Fat and Stern. "The Scripting of Private Jessica Lynch: Biopolitics, Gender, and the 'Feminization' of the U.S. Military." p. 34.

men and women in regard to violence had come to prevail. Male violence could be ordered and rule-governed in warfare. Female was invariably construed as anarchic and disorderly."[119] As Sjoberg and Gentry note, the societal construct of women as peaceful, passive and nurturing, marginalizes or pathologizes violent women, and thus "women's violence falls outside of these ideal-typical understandings of what it means to be a woman."[120] This section examines the extant literature on how violence by women is perceived and penalized in society, and the implications of certain narratives in which violent women are represented in the media, as the popular portrayals of violent women are acutely relevant to the sense of discomfort.

2.2.1. Systematic Discomfort towards Violent Women

Keitner discusses from a criminological point of view the implications of the societal sense of discomfort toward violent women, illuminating the fact that the very structure of society (re)produces and reinforces the norms which dictate our behaviors and judgements. She points out that women who do not conform to the idealized notion of femininity may face harsher punishment when charged with crimes. She argues that "the condemnation of women who, in addition to committing criminal acts, also transgress other sex-role stereotypes, reinforces ideas of deviance and normalcy that can confine women to traditional roles of passivity and helplessness."[121] Keitner analyzes the media representations of four women who were on Florida's death row in August 2000 and finds that women criminals, especially those who have committed violent crimes and thus transgressed the boundaries of respectable femininity, are demonized in media discourses. She notes that "the 'othering' of convicted women, and especially of women sentenced to death, exhibits a narrative feature not available in

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[119] Elshtain, Jean Bethke. "Women and War: Ten Years On." *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 4 (1998): p. 453.
[120] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. p. 2.
[121] Keitner, Chimène L. "Victim or Vamp? Images of Violent Women in the Criminal Justice System." *Columbia Journal of Gender and Law* 11 no. 1 (2002): p. 38.

justifications for executing men."[122] She also finds that these women convicts are represented in the media in ways that emphasize not only their alleged crimes but also their violation of gender roles and stereotypes and argues that such an emphasis on their 'double transgression' reinforces "a familiar normative framework in which society prohibits the use of violence by women in a range of ordinary and extraordinary situations."[123] Indeed, Sjoberg and Gentry also note the media's enthusiasm over the 'double transgression' and subsequent scrutiny and questioning of their womanhood.[124]

Keitner points out that the implications of social gender norms and gendered beliefs in the criminal justice system is understudied, due to "the widespread association of criminality – and especially violence – with men, … as the naturalization of 'male' and 'female' insulates certain gender-related disparities from scrutiny."[125] She demonstrates how gendered stereotypes and assumptions are embedded in the criminal justice system and "used by lawyers, judges, and journalists to portray violence by women as particularly threatening to the social order, and thus particularly deserving of censure."[126] This is especially problematic because the criminal justice system not only judges and punishes certain behaviors but also installs the boundaries between appropriate and deviant behaviors and actions. As Keitner argues, "criminal trials can be viewed as a boundary-maintaining devices in which society establishes and enforces general patterns of behavior, not only by sanctioning particular violations, but also by sending implicit and explicit signals about the social acceptability of certain types of conduct." [127] If the powerful system in which (in)appropriate behaviors are determined and punished itself is rife with gendered stereotypes and assumptions, then its social implications and ramifications are

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[122] Ibid. p. 40.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 15.
[125] Keitner. "Victim or Vamp? Images of Violent Women in the Criminal Justice System." p. 39.
[126] Ibid. p. 41.
[127] Ibid. p. 84.

quite significant and need to be investigated. Preserving the idealized construct of woman as feminine, peaceful and in need of protection by dissociating violence from 'normal' womanhood, Keitner illustrates, can lead to pathologizing and overpunishing violent women as well as restricting "women's ability to use physical force," thus reinforcing the gender subordination.[128]

The thesis investigates the effects and implications of social gender norms, including gender stereotyping, in the ways in which female soldiers are represented in the media discourses. Whilst there is a body of literature on this subject, which has produced constructive and critical analyses and insights, some of the fundamental concepts such as gender stereotypes as well as theoretical explanations of *how* such gender norms operate and affect our behaviors and perceptions of reality are often overlooked or presumed. The present thesis seeks to provide a rigorous analysis of media representations of female soldiers, not only by offering scrupulous examinations of substantial empirical data, but also by furnishing them with robust theoretical underpinnings. The unique conceptual framework, presented in detail in the next chapter, supplies the thesis with the necessary instrument with which the research aims to better explain *how* and *why* female soldiers are represented in the media discourses the way they are. The conceptual framework thus aids the thesis to identify and characterize various narratives and patterns in the texts and to understand them by drawing on the concepts and theories which constitute the framework.

2.2.2. Media Representations of Violent Women: Female Soldiers

Although women have been allowed in many state militaries, they still seem to provoke and induce certain senses – curiosity, uneasiness, discomfort, wariness – senses their male counterparts would not engender. It may evoke questions about her motivation when a woman

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[128] Ibid. p. 82.

becomes a combat soldier, whereas her male counterparts are unlikely to face any question as to why they have chosen the profession. The perceived femininity of women and the masculine role of soldier seem incongruous as the familiarized constructs of 'woman' and 'soldier' in society do not occupy the same normative space. These highly constructed labels, as Naaman argues, "represent ideological expectations of performance rather than reflect actual actions or natural (maybe even essential) states of being in the world."[129] These ideological expectations include who performs certain roles and acts; when they are performed by bodies that are not 'natural' 'real' or 'right', the performance becomes transgressive, and the impersonator evokes the sense of discomfort. 'Woman' is constructed as feminine, peaceful, nurturing and in need of protection (Beautiful Souls), while 'soldier' signifies a masculine protector who is both physically and mentally tough and capable of violence (Just Warriors). Female soldiers thus transgress the boundaries of both 'woman' and 'soldier', disrupting the ostensible naturalness of these constructs.

Feminist scholars have noted that there are discernible patterns in which female soldiers are represented in the media. Oliver argues that analyzing media representations is a way to tap into how we perceive and discern ourselves as well as others, and "critically reading the media can teach us about the deep-seated fears and desires that motivate our thinking and our behavior."[130] Alongside the recent debates over the inclusion of women in combat roles, the cases of Jessica Lynch and the female soldiers at Abu Ghraib are the most renowned and analyzed examples. The capture and rescue of Private First Class Jessica Lynch garnered considerable media attention in the early stage of the Iraq War, and contributed to the justification of the war as well as the formation of the public opinion on female soldiers. Lynch

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[129] Naaman, Dorit. "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance I the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 4 (2007): p. 934.
[130] Oliver, Kelly. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007. p. 4.

was initially depicted in the media as a brave heroine who fought until her ammunition ran out, but this narrative has been dismissed by Lynch herself who was knocked unconscious when her convoy was ambushed before being taken prisoner by the Iraqi soldiers. Nevertheless, the narrative in which Lynch was rendered a damsel in distress whose need to be rescued was fulfilled by the masculine special forces soldiers became a propaganda to justify the war.

In both the initial media reporting of the incident as well as the subsequent production of interviews, a movie, and a biography, rigorous attention is paid to Lynch's femininity which creates stark contrast to her masculine profession as a soldier. The 'real' identity of Lynch as "a young, naïve country girl"[131] seems fundamentally irreconcilable with her performance of a masculine soldier, despite her claim that she indeed is a soldier. In her biography the writer describes Lynch, illustrating her in basic training, that "she looked like a child who has sneaked into her daddy's closet and tried on a uniform to *play* soldier."[132] Holland points out how Lynch's marked body is not only feminized but also infantilized, highlighting the impossibility of her gendered body to perform masculinity of a soldier. She argues that "the framing of Lynch as an exclusively gendered body not only suggests that Lynch's innate femininity prohibited her effective performance in combat but also reifies an essentialist definition of the category 'women'."[133] Moreover, as Khalid points out, "the femininity of Lynch becomes a symbol of the superiority of US civilisation (through US women's performance of femininity) and the barbarity of the 'Other' (through the 'Other' woman who is oppressed and brutalised.)"[134] The media deliberately evaded discussing the male casualties and POWs in the same incident by solely focusing on Lynch, her femininity, her helplessness, and her glorious rescue; "the

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[131] Holland, Shannon L. "The Dangers of Playing Dress-up: Popular Representations of Jessica Lynch and the Controversy Regarding Women in Combat." *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92, no. 1 (2006): p. 34.
[132] Ibid. Emphasis in original.
[133] Ibid. p. 39
[134] Khalid, Maryam. "Gender, orientalism and representations of the 'Other' in the War on Terror." *Global Change, Peace & Security* 23, no. 1 (2011): p. 16.

reification of the protector/protected categories is facilitated by Lynch's embodiment of the Woman/Child."[135] Holland points out that not only did the media discourse reduces Lynch to an embodiment of traditional notion of femininity, thus "the ideal representative of 'woman'" and "the iconic representative of American casualties" justifying the war, but also completely disregards issues of race and class.[136] Indeed, little attention was paid to Specialist Shoshana Johnson who was captured and held prisoner along with Lynch and four male soldiers, as well as Private First Class Lori Piestewa who died of her injuries sustained in the same incident. Johnson was the first black female POW, and Piestewa was the first Native American woman to die in combat in the history of US military. The media representations of Lynch, as Holland suggests, reaffirm the notion of ideal white femininity as well as the "divisions between male and female inherent to military culture, thus stabilizing the gender matrix upon which military masculinity relies."[137]

Cohler suggests that "representations of female soldiers illustrate both the shifts in US conceptions of femininity and militarism, but also the intractable dilemma of women's relation to nationalism. When the symbol of the nation seeks to be its protector, ideological boundaries are both reinforced and transgressed."[138] As women became more integrated in the military, there needed to be a new narrative for such nontraditional bodies to be assimilated and made intelligible in the inherently masculine institution as well as society. Sjoberg suggests that a new notion of militarized femininity was constructed to accommodate female soldiers as disruptive figures in the traditionally male-dominated space. She delineates the ideal type of female soldier as "tough, but not violent; brave, but still in need of defense; adept, but still

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[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid. pp. 39-40.
[137] Ibid. p. 46.
[138] Cohler, Deborah. "Keeping the Home Front Burning: Renegotiating gender and sexuality in US mass media after September 11." *Feminist Media Studies* 6 no. 3 (2006): p. 250.

beautiful; a soldier, but still innocent."[139] It is the precise mould in which Lynch was made to fit in the discursive spectacle of her capture and rescue. Cohler adds that the newly constructed militarized femininity "is a patriot and embodies many of the qualities critical to nineteenth-century ideologies of "true womanhood: whiteness, loyalty, femininity, and purity." [140] Furthermore, as Pin-Fat and Stern note, "it is a specific masculine notion of soldiering that is being privileged here and against which Lynch is being measured."[141] The narrative of ideal militarized femininity simultaneously reinforces and maintains the notion of idealized military masculinity. It is only by containing the transgressive performance of masculine soldiers by female bodies in narratives which do not contradict the patriarchal gendered order, the female soldiers are made intelligible in the popular media discourses. However, they are denied agency in any decision-making and their individual subjectivity and experiences are obfuscated.

Torture and abuse of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq is another example in which the involvement of female soldiers was sensationalized, and their gender was heavily emphasized in the media. The details of physical and sexual torture and abuse which came to light were extremely disturbing and the US Army and the CIA were condemned both domestically and internationally. Perhaps what shocked people the most is that the perpetrators of the abhorrent acts of human rights violations and war crimes included three female soldiers. Although 17 officers and soldiers were removed and eleven of them were convicted, the face and name of Private First Class Lynndie England became attached to this notorious incident. The photographs of England holding a leash on a naked prisoner, and her posing in front of naked prisoners, smirking, with a cigarette in her mouth were circulated in the media which

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[139] Sjoberg, Laura. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 9, no. 1 (2007): p. 98.
[140] Cohler. "Keeping the Home Front Burning: Renegotiating gender and sexuality in US mass media after September 11." p. 253.
[141] Pin-Fat, Véronique and Stern, Maria. "The Scripting of Private Jessica Lynch: Biopolitics, Gender, and the 'Feminization' of the U.S. Military." p. 27.

attracted public attention, mixed with repulsion and curiosity. Oliver describes this mixed reaction as a response to the abject – "both terrifying and repulsive and at the same time fascinating and captivating."[142] According to Kristeva, the abject is "something that calls into question borders; it threatens by means of an ambiguity that cannot be categorized. Yet it is precisely this ominous ambiguity that draws us to the abject."[143] England's acts at Abu Ghraib disrupt not just the borders of femininity but of humanity and challenge the idealized notions of woman and soldier.

Oliver calls the images of female soldiers torturing prisoners of Abu Ghraib as *uncanny*, as "they conjure both the strange and the familiar, or perhaps here we could say the familiar within the strange."[144] She argues that the familiarity comes from the association of women and their sexuality with danger. Horney wrote in 1932 that "men attempt to free themselves from their dread of women by objectifying their fear. She writes: 'It is not', he says 'that I dread her; it is that she herself is malignant, capable of any crime, a beast of prey, a vampire, a witch, insatiable in her desires. She is the very personification of what is sinister'."[145] Oliver adds that women's sex is constructed as dangerous by nature "within our cultural imaginary"; it can be wielded by women to seduce and manipulate men, "to control and even destroy men."[146] The cultural construct of women as dangerous and not to be trusted is prominent in historical and mythical figures such as Medusa and Delilah. As characterized by Glick and Fiske, such a construction of women's sex as a threat which ought to be tamed and dominated by men is also a form of sexism.[147] Oliver suggests that "what makes women's involvement in war – from

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[142] Oliver. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. p. 25.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Ibid. pp. 20-1. Emphasis in original.
[145] Horney, 1932 cited in Malvern, Sue and Koureas, Gabriel. "Terrorist Transgressions: Exploring the Gendered Representations of the Terrorist." *Historical Social Research* 39, mo. 3 (2014): p. 77.
[146] Oliver. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. pp. 31-2.
[147] Connor, Rachel A., Glick, Peter, and Fiske, Susan T. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." In Sibley, Chris G. and Barlow, Fiona Kate. Ed. *The Cambridge Handbook of the Psychology of Prejudice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.; Glick, Peter and Fiske, Susan T. "The Ambivalent Sexism

Abu Ghraib and Guantánamo Bay to Palestinian suicide bombings – uncanny is a continued ambivalence toward women and female sexuality."[148] Women committing violent acts evoke contradicting images of the familiar notion of woman as peaceful and nurturing as well as the cultural imaginary of dangerous women.

Sjoberg points out that the female soldiers in Abu Ghraib embody what the new construct of ideal militarized femininity deems inappropriate and undesirable: sexual, perverse, and violent. It "allows women to participate in war-making and war-fighting, but denies them agency in unwomanly decisions, like those to sexually torture prisoners at Abu Ghraib."[149] She argues that the female soldiers at Abu Ghraib disrupt and challenge our understandings about women's roles in general as well as roles of female soldiers. The disruption is so uncomfortable that "when [Americans] hear about the abuse at Abu Ghraib at all, they have to hear it in a way that denies the agency of the women involved."[150] Sjoberg argues that the images of female POW in the Iraq War and female abusers of Abu Ghraib "demonstrate the increasing sophistication of the ideal-type of the woman soldier, the addition of the gendered enemy into narratives of militarized femininity and the struggle over the tension between ideal femininity and women's violence."[151] It has been pointed out by feminist scholars that differentiating female soldiers from their male colleagues by reducing them to certain discourses within the patriarchal gendered order is a mechanism by which society copes with the inherent tension between 'woman' and 'soldier'.[152] As female soldiers hold such an ambivalent subject position in between military/civilian and masculine/feminine, the popular discourses in which they are represented attempt to fit them into certain moulds. The construct of 'new' militarized

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Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 70, no. 3 (1996).
[148] Oliver. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. pp. 22-3.
[149] Sjoberg. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq." p. 98.
[150] Ibid. p. 96.
[151] Ibid. p. 85.
[152] Ette. "Gendered frontlines: British press coverage of women soldiers killed in Iraq."; Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures."

femininity "expects a woman soldier to be as capable as a male soldier, but as vulnerable as a civilian woman."[153] Female soldiers who conform to this construct, like Lynch, are accepted and even praised, but those who do not, like England at Abu Ghraib, are condemned and marginalized. It is, as Sjoberg suggests, "a twenty-first century reformulation of the traditional understanding of women as the innocent who need to be protected by a war."[154]

2.2.3. Media Representations of Violent Women: Female Suicide Bombers

In a similar vein, there emerge certain patterns in which women who commit proscribed violence are represented in popular discourses; drawing a strange parallel from female soldiers and their representations in media are female suicide bombers. Although it may be contentious to discuss female soldiers and female suicide bombers on the same level or in a single context, there seem to be similarities between them in the ways they are represented in media. As Naaman points out, the label terrorist is highly loaded with nationalist and political ideologies and bias; a suicide bomber in Western media is a terrorist while s/he may be a freedom fighter or martyr on the other side of the conflict. She also shows "the constructed nature of the label *terrorist*, especially as it stands in stark contrast to the highly coded and constructed label *woman*," and how female suicide bombers are portrayed in media when the two seemingly contradictory labels of terrorist and woman are enacted together.[155] As such, the discussion in this section is intended to focus on the ways in which women who are capable of committing violence, whether as soldiers of a state military or as militant members of an extremist organization, are represented in media discourses, rather than the (il)legitimacy of their beliefs and actions. They are both, in different yet not dissimilar ways, denied their agency and

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[153] Sjoberg. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq." p. 93.
[154] Ibid. p. 92.
[155] Naaman. "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." p. 934. Emphasis in original.

decisions in participating in their actions for breaching the boundaries of respectable femininity and womanhood.

Feminist scholars analyzing media representations of Palestinian female suicide bombers argue that they are portrayed significantly differently from their male counterparts, in both Western and Arab media. Naaman points out that "while dozens of male suicide bombers' identities and life stories are hardly ever delved into, their reasons are assumed to be clear and grounded in both political and religious ideology. In contrast, a woman as a suicide bomber seems so oxymoronic that an individualized psychological explanation for the deviation must be found."[156] Ponzanesi similarly argues that "whereas male suicide bombing is often framed as gender neutral and related to extreme techniques of warfare, female suicide bombings get framed in gendered terms and provoke a need for a deeper understanding of how women not only engage in militant action, but decide to die for it."[157] Their observations demonstrate that there is a tendency to take for granted acts of violence by men as actions based on rational choices guided by their political or religious beliefs, regardless of how malevolent and severe the implications may be, whilst the same acts by women are received with a shock and confusion as to why and how women could possibly commit such actions. The social construct of, and expectations for, 'woman' seem to prevent us from registering female suicide bombers and their reasons for their acts in the same way as male suicide bombers; they are *female* suicide bombers, and their motivations and transgression must be explained. As Naaman notes, "when women partake in such operations, their performance of violence and political agency – so

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[156] Ibid. p. 936.
[157] Ponzanesi, Sandra. "Female Suicide Bombers and the Politics of Gendered Militancy." In Ponzanesi, Sandra. Ed. *Gender, Globalization, and Violence: Postcolonial Conflict Zones*. New York: Routledge, 2014. p. 82.

drastically different from that of typical female roles in both news and entertainment media – enhances the sense of perplexity, fear, and aversion to the perpetrators of the acts."[158]

In the West, when suicide bombings are carried out by men, the media rarely report their names, photographs/videos, or their background stories. Yet when it is revealed that a terrorist act was performed by a woman, her gender becomes the sole focus of news stories by highlighting her name and photographs. Such emphasis on the fact that she is a woman "creates an unbridgeable gap whereby the Western viewer cannot reconcile the image of the young beautiful woman with her fundamentalist, terrorist dark side."[159] Furthermore, the Western media tend to seek the reasons and motivations of female suicide bombers in a domestic and personal sphere rather than political and religious one, such that they "cannot get a husband, illiterate, infertile, handicapped or mentally ill, or in search of vengeance for a killed family member or to clear up their honor after an illicit love relationship."[160] Their actions may be praised as martyrdom in the Arab media, while the Western media view them as senseless acts of suicide; as noted by Ponzanesi, "martyrdom is, therefore, not understood as a sacrifice for the nation, but reduced to the narrow constrictions of the Western definition of suicide, which is only individually based."[161] Thus, the Western media discourse routinely paints female suicide bombers as women, first and foremost, whose womanhood has gone wrong for reasons that are personal, domestic and feminine, and denies them agency in their decisions to participate in acts of violence. As discussed in the next section, female suicide bombers are often portrayed in the 'mother, monster and whore' narratives in which it is insinuated that there is something wrong with these women, clearly Othered in the Western media.

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[158] Naaman. "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." p. 935.
[159] Ibid. p. 942.; Conway, Maura and McInerney, Lisa. "What's love got to do with it? Framing 'JihadJane' in the US press." *Media, War & Conflict* 5, no. 1 (2012): 6-21.
[160] Ponzanesi. "Female Suicide Bombers and the Politics of Gendered Militancy." pp. 99-100.
[161] Ibid. p. 91.

In the Arab media, on the other hand, female suicide bombers are framed slightly differently. As Hasso and Naaman note, "support for the women militants is consistent with Arab support for Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation"[162] and women's participation in suicide bombing is "not simply hailed but actually debated – pragmatically, morally, and, most notably, religiously."[163] Nevertheless, multiple discourses surrounding these women are available: ones in which the female suicide bombers are constructed as a legitimate political actors and their actions as a challenge to patriarchy as well as the Israeli occupation, which are absent in the Western media, and ones that silence them and (re)produce them in gendered narratives. Some of the female suicide bombers left video messages in which they made clear their nationalist and political ideology and their identities as legitimate militant actors. Hasso points out that they "claimed and demonstrated their right to sacrifice themselves, concurrently deploying and challenging gendered-sexualized norms of duty and responsibility with respect to who protects the community and who is protected within it."[164] The fundamentally gendered belief in "who fights, who dies and in defense of whom"[165] seems to underlie the reaction to violent women in each society. Their messages and actions inspired and resonated with some women and their photographs are held at protests and demonstrations. Yet their narratives are often silenced by gendered discourses in which their heroism is attributed to their fragile femininity and beauty, characterized by tropes such as angels, brides, and mother of martyrs. Naaman argues that "the Arab public sphere (political, media, and local) tied these women into heteronormative narratives as mothers and brides, narratives that affirmed the gender status quo. Whether discussing mythic brides or monsters, the discourse in both the Arab world and the West

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[162] Hasso, Frances S. "Discursive and political deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian women suicide bombers/martyrs." *Feminist Review* 81 (2005): p. 35.

[163] Naaman. "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." p. 933.

[164] Hasso. "Discursive and political deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian women suicide bombers/martyrs." p. 30.

[165] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence." p. 29.

generally avoids uncomfortable questions of subjectivity, agency, and aggression, all qualities that are not befitting women according to patriarchal norms."[166] Female suicide bombers, similarly to Western female soldiers, disrupt the boundaries of respectable femininity and destabilize the patriarchal gendered order of society.

For instance, Hasso shows how two different photographs of Wafa Idris, the first female suicide bomber in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, are used to construct disparate narratives. One of the photographs is of younger Idris wearing a Palestinian kuffiyeh as a headband and no makeup, which appeared in her memorial service and the refugee camp where she lived. In stark contrast to this first photograph which evokes an image of young nationalist and aspiring freedom fighter, the other photograph of her which was predominantly circulated in the media shows a much more secular image of her in floral clothing, wearing makeup, and without a headcover. Hasso argues that the second photograph of her created a narrative of "gendered heroism and sacrifice with heterosexual romance and desire."[167] She further suggests that the discourses of the female suicide bombers highlighted "marriageable beauty, feminine weakness, or womanly sacrifice" thus "'restored' a gendered order in which 'real' men defended the community and family, and kept women under control, while women remained in their 'natural' place as the protected and obedient."[168] Naaman adds that "those representations deny women agency and instead represent them as monsters or brides in a hegemonic framework that enables readers and viewers to maintain both the comfortable gender status quo and their preconceived notions about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict."[169] The female suicide bombers are reduced to familiar subject positions of mothers, daughters, sisters, wives and brides of the nation, as well as to "a

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[166] Naaman. "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." p. 946.
[167] Hasso. "Discursive and political deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian women suicide bombers/martyrs." p. 40.
[168] Ibid. p. 42, pp. 37-8.
[169] Naaman. "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." pp. 951-2.

'designated agency', an agency by invitation only, becoming 'weapons of a male arsenal',"
and the audience is reassured that "they are just women after all."[170]

2.2.4. Violent Women in the 'Mothers, Monsters, Whores' Narratives

Narratives, according to Gentry and Sjoberg, "often in the form of stories or metaphors, 'frame' complicated events to fit into discrete categories, allowing people to process large amounts of information with limited cognitive capacity."[171] The media representations of female soldiers and female suicide bombers discussed in the previous sections demonstrate the processes through which these gender norm defying figures are rendered intelligible by being reduced to familiar subject positions that are feminine and less threatening. In other words, their unique existence, experiences and agency become invisible at the expense of society's inability to comprehend the fact that some women are in fact capable of committing violence and having violent or political intents; they are thus impelled to fit into certain narratives that would not challenge and disrupt the traditional gender norms and roles. Sjoberg and Gentry argue that "women engaged in proscribed violence are often portrayed either as 'mothers', women who are fulfilling their biological destinies; as 'monsters', women who are pathologically damaged and are therefore drawn to violence; or as 'whores', women whose violence is inspired by sexual dependence and depravity."[172] They suggest that in "gendered discourses, deviant women are set up in opposition to idealized gender stereotypes."[173] Keitner also notes the names the media gave to female convicts which dissociate them from 'normal' womanhood, such as "monster," "the embodiment of evil," "hated men," and "Damsel of Death."[174] Although these narratives do not apply to female soldiers of state militaries as their focus is on

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[170] Ponzanesi. "Female Suicide Bombers and the Politics of Gendered Militancy." p. 89, p. 103.
[171] Gentry and Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers Monsters Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 139.
[172] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 12.
[173] Ibid. p. 7.
[174] Keitner. "Victim or Vamp? Images of Violent Women in the Criminal Justice System." p. 47, 48, 55, 57.

women who commit proscribed violence "in defiance of their governments and international law,"[175] their observation of the ways in which women whose roles defy the traditional notion of femininity are represented in the media is highly relevant to the present thesis.

Sjoberg and Gentry remind us that the increasing visibility of women in roles that are long associated with men such as soldiers, criminals and terrorists should not be mistaken with gender equality; for they are always perceived as *women soldiers*, *women criminals*, and *women terrorists*.[176] Because their roles transgress the gender roles assigned to women, they cannot be recognized the same way as men in exact same positions; conversely, as Sjoberg and Gentry points out, we do not say "women ballerinas, women housekeepers, or women flight attendants" for these are considered 'appropriate' roles for women.[177] Such discourses are, according to them, an evolved form of gender subordination, which "tells stories about gender liberation while maintaining the discursive and material structures of gender subordination."[178] Oliver similarly points out that "even as the presence of women in the military seems to signal their 'liberation' from patriarchal traditions, the rhetoric surrounding their involvement betrays the lingering association between women, sexuality, and death."[179] The new militarized femininity discussed in the previous section is precisely such a constructed narrative of ideal female soldiers which delimits their subject positions within the current patriarchal gender norms in disguise of equality and inclusion.

Moreover, Sjoberg and Gentry argue that "the narratives of monster, mother and whore have fully othered violent women," effectively rendering our perception of 'real women' pacifying and gentle, which conforms to gender norms and stereotypes. They point out that so long as

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[175] Ibid. p. 11.
[176] Ibid. p. 9.
[177] Ibid.
[178] Ibid. p. 26.
[179] Oliver. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. p. 19.

violent women "can be discredited *as women* and seen as 'bad women' or 'femininity taken to an irrational extreme', then they can exist in a world that holds intact the stereotype of women's fragility and purity."[180] In other words, violent women ought to be Othered from nonviolent women, or 'real' woman, for they disrupt the gender order in which women are assigned feminine, peaceful and nurturing role. Female soldiers breach the boundaries of appropriate femininity and the sense of discomfort induced by their transgression needs to be mitigated by representing them as women, intrinsically feminine, rather than as soldiers. In a similar vein, the sense of discomfort brought about by violent women is alleviated by pathologizing and Othering them. Oliver also notes an ambivalence in media discourses toward violent women.[181] Many feminist scholars have observed the tendency that "a woman's sex is the primary lens through which any of her actions are digested: this cognitive priority trumps contradictions within the representations it produces."[182] Gentry and Sjoberg further point out that women's sex and identity as women tend to be focused when women commit violence; they are seen "as not only *bad* but as *bad women*," with an implication that "their violence makes them bad at *being women*."[183] Keitner's observation of female convicts as well as the discussion on female suicide bombers in the previous section demonstrate the ways in which women who commit proscribed violence are pathologized and demonized, and their womanhood questioned in media reports. As Sjoberg and Gentry argue, "the tellers and consumers of these gendered narratives are, consciously or unconsciously, invested in a certain image of what women are"[184] and these narratives and representations of violent women reflect the pervasiveness of gender stereotypes and subordination in society.

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[180] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. p. 13. Emphasis in original.
[181] Oliver. *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex, and the Media*. p. 19.
[182] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 36.
[183] Gentry. and Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers Monsters Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 3. Emphasis in original.
[184] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.* p. 22.

Although it should be noted that female soldiers of state militaries significantly differ from female suicide bombers and criminals as they do not commit proscribed violence, there are some striking similarities in the ways in which these women are represented in the media. The social construct of 'woman' reflects an idealized image that conforms to traditional gender norms and stereotypes and is far removed from reality. Yet this idealized notion of 'woman' and its femininity, fragility, and peacefulness are so deeply entrenched in society both structurally and perceptually that women who dare to breach the boundaries of respectable femininity are often alienated and sometimes punished. The reactions to such women are gendered for male soldiers, male criminals and male terrorists are the norm and never sensationalized for their gender in the media. One commonality in the representations of female soldiers, female terrorists and female criminals is the narrative which denies their agency and autonomy in their decision-making and actions. Sjoberg and Gentry suggest that "the tendency to deny women any agency in their decisions to commit violence" reflects "discomfort with the idea that women can choose to commit violence" as well as "the stereotype of women as innocent and incapable of violence."[185] As discussed in this section, scholars have observed a deep sense of discomfort in society toward women who are just as capable of committing violence as men, whether as a soldier, a criminal, or a terrorist. It has also been suggested that there is often the irresistible urge to find out what may be wrong with them, in order to alleviate the sense of discomfort by giving explanations to their actions. Women who disrupt the hegemonic social constructions of woman are reduced to certain narratives which conveniently fit within the patriarchal gendered order so that the idealized notion of woman remains intact.

These works illustrate the common thread in the representations of female soldiers, female criminals, and female suicide bombers in which they are reduced to the familiar narratives of

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[185] Ibid. p. 17.

'woman' that do not disrupt the patriarchal gendered social order. The analyses and observations of these women suggest the societal inability to acknowledge and accept the fact that some women are capable of committing violence. Faced with such inconvenient reality that challenges the traditional notion of 'woman', society has long responded by consigning those who breached the boundaries of respectable femininity to the narratives that affirm the extant gender norms. Such defensive reactions to women who assumes 'unwomanly' roles signifies the deep-seated sense of discomfort in society. Building on these extant works, the thesis adds to the literature by exploring the representations of female soldiers in both military and civil discourses with a particular focus on the sense of discomfort.

2.3. A Sense of Discomfort in Having Nontraditional Bodies in the Military

Following Enloe and her remarks on 'patriarchal discomfort/confusion', scholars have approached from various perspectives and pointed to this particular form of resistance against women in the military manifested through varying forms of Othering including their representations in the media. Of great interest to this research is the investigation of the sense of discomfort, confusion, or unease, caused by nontraditional bodies in the military, the institution considered essentially masculine. It is a reasonable reaction of human beings to feel uncomfortable upon encountering something unfamiliar, and then to try to make sense of it based on what they already know or what is considered normal or natural in their society. Moscovici explains how newly encountered objects, persons and events are conventionalized in our cognition, in order for us to apprehend each of them.[186] We perceive and understand things according to these conventions:

> Nobody's mind is free from the effects of the prior conditioning which is imposed by his
> representations, language and culture. We think, by means of a language; we organize our
> thoughts, in accordance with a system which is conditioned, both by our representations

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[186] Moscovici, Serge. "The phenomenon of social representations." In Farr, Robert M. and Moscovici, Serge ed. *Social Representations.* London: Cambridge University Press, 1984. p. 7.

and by our culture. We see only that which underlying conventions allow us to see, and we remain unaware of these conventions.[187]

Thus, we are inclined to process new information with a familiar language and a familiar form, "by making unfamiliar familiar."[188] And the reason why we recognize something is familiar or unfamiliar is because "human beings divide the world into categories"[189] in order to make sense of their experiences. In every culture and society humans assign meaning to things by categorizing and labeling them, thereby creating order and simplifying the complex world around them. Anthropologists agree that such a classification system is found in all human cultures.[190] It is a universal way for humans to organize and navigate through the complexity and uncertainty of the world.

Åhäll examines the borders that are cultural, not material or geographical, in our society which determine "what is deemed culturally appropriate for some bodies to do, or be, but not for others" in terms of the slight discomfort induced by the idea of 'woman as killer'.[191] She considers the borders as fluid and contingent, and as imaginary and real, for they are just ideas rather than facts, but with great significance in our social reality. Through her analysis of the 2009/2010 review reports on the ban on women from combat roles after which the officials agreed that the ban should remain unchanged, despite the evidence that women have no negative impact on operational effectiveness, Åhäll argues that the decision not to change or lift the ban was made so that women's bodies would not close with and kill the enemy, thus

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[187] Moscovici. "The phenomenon of social representations." p. 8.

[188] Hopf. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999.* p. 6.

[189] Russell, James A. "Culture and the Categorization of Emotions." *Psychological Bulletin* 110, no. 3 (1992): p. 426.

[190] Eastman, Caroline M. and Carter, Robin M. "Anthropological Perspectives on Classification Systems." 5th ASIS SIG/CR Classification Research Workshop. p. 69.

[191] Åhäll, Linda. "On the imagination of 'Woman' as killer in war." In Sharoni, Welland, Steiner, and Pedersen. *Handbook on Gender and War.*

the border, or "the moral threshold,"[192] would not be crossed. She points out that the idea of woman as killer "destabilizes and ultimately threatens broader ideas about what women and men should or should not be doing," and the symbolic notion of men as life-takers and women as life-givers.[193] The "unease and confusion" highlights the imaginary borders, bodies, and what the bodies can and cannot do. As discussed in the section on violent women, "women who are violent are highlighted, exploited and fetishized."[194] 'Women as killer' tends to be sensationalized by the media and the contrast between the perceived femininity and the atrocity committed is heavily highlighted. Women committing such crimes and taking lives seem shocking and unfeasible when the idea of women is constructed in a dichotomous way in which women are what men are not. As Snider points out, "accepting women's participation in violent crime corrupts a widely held image of women as both individually and collectively innocent."[195]

In a similar vein, Ette and Millar both point out the ways in which deaths of female soldiers are constructed and presented differently from that of male soldiers. Ette's analysis of press coverage of British female soldiers who were killed in Iraq reveals how female personnel are portrayed as women or girls rather than soldiers, not so covertly. Ette argues that the media tend to emphasize 'female' soldiers by adding their gender, while their male counterparts are rarely referred to as 'male' soldiers, reinforcing the assumption that soldiers are usually male.[196] Moreover, there is a stark contrast in descriptions between male and female soldiers in the reports of their deaths; while for the male soldiers the emphasis is on their

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[192] DeGroot. "Whose Finger on the Trigger?: Mixed Anti-Aircraft Batteries in the Female Combat Taboo." p. 441.
[193] Åhäll. "On the imagination of 'Woman' as killer in war." p. 61.
[194] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics*. p. 46.
[195] Gentry and Sjoberg. *Beyond Mothers Monsters Whores: Thinking about Women's Violence in Global Politics*. p. 14.
[196] Ette, Mercy. "Gendered frontlines: British press coverage of women soldiers killed in Iraq." *Media, War & Conflict* 6, no. 3 (2013): p. 249.

professionalism, their competency and accomplishments, the media almost always focus on their personalities and private lives when the subject is female.

> While the men were recognized as 'ultimate professionals', 'vastly experienced', 'true professionals' who 'loved marine life', and 'led from the front', the women were 'loving daughter', 'caring friend', 'girl who went to war', 'girl soldier', 'cheeky', 'really lovely, a smashing girl and so bubbly', 'army girl' and 'a brave action girl', 'a pretty, pint-sized tomboy who wanted to be a fighting soldier'.[197]

The list of terms used to describe female soldiers goes on. What is evident is that none of the language depicts professionalism and accomplishments of the female soldiers. As Ette points out, it "strip[s] them of their identity as soldiers" and "alienate[s] and distance[s] them from the battlefield."[198] It seems disrespectful not to give to the female soldiers the same recognition as their male colleagues, trivializing their soldier identity and professional competency, when they served and died where their "gender identity is not a shield against the dangers of soldiering."[199] The media seem almost compelled to portray female soldiers' military service as temporary and imply that their bodies do not belong to the battlefield, soldiering, and the military. This media narrative, Ette argues, reproduces and reinforces "the femininity and masculinity dichotomy associated with the military,"[200] thus effectively continues to affect public opinion about women's participation in the military.

Millar similarly argues that in the obituaries of American female soldiers killed in Afghanistan and Iraq, their identities as women are more emphasized than their professional identities.[201] Drawing on Butler's concept of 'grievability', Millar suggests that female soldiers pose a challenge to the society in which only male soldiers are naturalized and their deaths praised

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[197] Ibid. p. 256.
[198] Ibid. pp. 249-250.
[199] Ibid. p. 259.
[200] Ibid. p. 249.
[201] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 773.

and mourned. As discussed elsewhere, the traditional gendered division of labor renders war, military, and soldiering a masculine reserve, exclusive for men. To be a soldier is the ultimate display of heroism, nationalism, and patriotism. When female bodies take up that role, they induce a sense of discomfort. Death is a potential consequence of soldiering, but within the current discourse of war where only men are "the legitimate agents and casualties of violence"[202] whose deaths the state and public are willing to sacrifice, women's deaths are difficult to be acknowledged in the same way as that of men. Millar argues that "when the potential of death, under particular, state-sanctioned circumstances, and in relation to the appropriate male subject, is internalized as a normal aspect of social life, it may function to reinforce, rather than threaten, the social order."[203] In other words, with the state unwilling to risk women's lives in war, as the media describes female soldiers as 'girls' 'women', while society consumes the information, perhaps, we, as society, are seeking to maintain that natural social (gendered) order.

In her article "A phenomenology of whiteness," Ahmed notes how marked bodies are immediately exposed and noticed in a place full of unmarked bodies.[204] Though her example is white bodies and non-white bodies, the subjects can easily be applied to and understood as male bodies and non-male bodies (female bodies) as well. Millar similarly points out that "[i]f the unmarked 'soldier' is male, the disruption of this unified, familiar subject position by the intersection of gender (and, of course, race, class, queer/trans gender identities, sexual orientation and other, important, marked, apparently particularistic facets of identity that are bracketed, to an extent, in this study) works to produce an experience of breach."[205] The experience of breach can be discerned as a sense of discomfort brought about by unfamiliar

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[202] Ibid. p. 762.
[203] Ibid. p. 764.
[204] Ahmed, Sara. "A phenomenology of whiteness." *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2. (2007): 149-168.
[205] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." (2015) p. 764.

bodies to the place, or the institution, in which things are kept in place – placement characterized as a sense of comfort.[206] As Ahmed suggests that "[w]hiteness is only invisible for those who inhabit it, or those who get so used to its inhabitance that they learn not to see it, when they are not it," when the society is so used to see the military as a masculine organization exclusively with male bodies, it is the arrival of non-male bodies that is exposed and visible, rather than the 'maleness' of the place.[207] She argues that "[t]he fact that we notice such arrivals tells us more about what is already in place than it does about 'who' arrives."[208] Female bodies confirms the 'maleness' of the place. So, what does it tell us about the military and society when we notice the presence of female bodies in the military, which contradict the traditional heteronormative gender roles, and when those bodies cause a sense of breach, unease, or discomfort? Is it the culture and identity of the military such as military masculinity, or society that resists to recognize the nontraditional female bodies in the traditionally very masculine profession?

Both Ette and Millar's analyses show the reactions to deaths of female soldiers – in the news, obituaries, and tributes paid to them – which reflect the sense of discomfort and unease. Such reactions can be viewed as a coping mechanism which facilitates comprehension of the unfamiliar – women in the military – by associating them with their femininity and their private lives rather than their professional identities, and by desperately categorizing them as *women* rather than soldiers. In the longstanding culture and practices of preserving the war and military business to men, nontraditional bodies stand out, and their (potential) deaths and capability to commit violence accentuate the stark contrast between the lifegiving feminine figure in the life-taking nature of war and violence, which are radically incompatible. This is precisely why portrayals of female soldiers as essentially and predominantly *women* rather than professionals

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[206] Ahmed. "A phenomenology of whiteness." (2007) p. 158.
[207] Ibid. p. 157.
[208] Ibid.

continue to circulate in the media, concealing their soldier identities and therefore distancing women *in general* from the battleground. By stressing that they are *women* after all, "caring, maternal, and sufficiently feminine so as to fit into a conventional heteronormative kinship structure," we try to find a relief, distinguishing 'soldier' and 'woman' as inherently different subject positions.[209] Eichler points out that even in Canada, where women have been fully integrated to the military since 1989, women are still represented as 'equal but different'.[210] Chapman and Eichler argue that in Canada, media coverage of female combat soldiers represent contradicting 'equality and difference' in which women in combat roles are presented as "the ultimate proof" of successful integration of women in the military while they are still constructed as *women* and their gender and femininity are emphasized.[211] Scholars have observed a similar discourse in the US and the UK, where "female combat soldiers [a]re thus paradoxically constructed as both equal to, and different from, male soldiers."[212]

This section has reviewed the relevant literature on a sense of discomfort induced by marked bodies. Although these works focus on the contrast between female bodies and male bodies, the discussion on sexual minorities in the military is also relevant and similarly demonstrates the ways in which the anxiety and sense of discomfort are concealed in the rhetoric of morale and unit cohesion. The rhetoric of operational effectiveness was relied on heavily by the government and military in the discussion of whether women should be allowed in ground close combat roles. The next section examines works on operational effectiveness, which question the legitimacy of the once popular rhetoric and reveal its inextricable link with the

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[209] Ibid. pp. 775-777.
[210] Eichler, Maya. "Militarized Masculinities in International Relations." *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (2014): p. 87.
[211] Chapman, Krystel, and Eichler, Maya. "Engendering two solitudes? Media representations of women in combat in Quebec and the rest of Canada." *International Journal* 69, no. 4 (2014): p. 605; Eichler, Maya. "Women and combat in Canada: continuing tensions between 'difference' and 'equality'." *Critical Studies on Security* 1, no. 2 (2013): 257-259.
[212] Chapman and Eichler. "Engendering two solitudes? Media representations of women in combat in Quebec and the rest of Canada." p. 605.

'boys' club' culture and mentality, which were believed to be essential in building the comradeship between soldiers and unit cohesion.

2.4. Operational Effectiveness[213] and Gender Stereotypes

Operational effectiveness is defined by the Ministry of Defence as "the ability of a unit, formation/ship/weapon system or equipment to carry out its assigned mission, role or function,"[214] a discourse on which the opponents of women's integration in the military routinely relied. Presence of nontraditional bodies such as women and gay people in the military was debated often in relation to operational effectiveness of the military, as it was claimed by some that they may pose a risk to performance of the forces.[215] It was long maintained that women might disrupt operational effectiveness, even after the MoD's own study had showed that a small number of women are indeed capable of passing the tests for infantry training, and they contribute to effectiveness in mixed-sex teams.[216] It is "the very presence of women which disrupts,"[217] because the claim that unit cohesion is disrupted by women is based on assumptions that a unit and its effectiveness are constituted by male bodies. Cohn suggests that this type of claims often came from the suppositions of military officials, who had "themselves been socialized by the military to believe"[218] certain sets of beliefs about what is and what is not appropriate in the institution. Woodward and Winter point to the language in official documents that denotes women as "immutable," marking their gender fundamentally different.[219] As pointed out by Woodward, Winter and Basham, women are excluded "culturally rather than biologically,"[220] and gender difference is deemed to be

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[213] Operational effectiveness, combat effectiveness, and military effectiveness are used interchangeably in official documents as well as in literature.
[214] Ministry of Defence. *Women in the Armed Forces.* May 2002.
[215] Goldstein, Joshua, S. *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. pp. 194-5.
[216] Basham (2009b); Woodward and Winter (2004).
[217] Woodward and Winter (2004). p. 291.
[218] Cohn. "Gays in the Military: Texts and Subtexts." 1998. p. 134-5.
[219] Woodward and Winter (2006) p. 56.
[220] Woodward and Winter (2004). P. 296.

"essential rather than social in origin."[221] In other words, women were rejected in some roles in the military not because their ability or lack thereof, but because there was a strong assumption that women and their gendered bodies could disrupt the ecosystem of the institution.[222]

While ensuring combat effectiveness/readiness is critical as strong unit cohesion lessens risks during combat, many scholars have suggested the way cohesion is encouraged and achieved in the Armed Forces is problematic. The social cohesion model was a widely accepted concept by scholars and military officials after World War II according to which "intimate interpersonal relationships" between soldiers were key to military readiness.[223] The task cohesion model is a more dominant concept in scholarship in recent years which suggests that "shared commitment among members to achieving a goal that requires the collective efforts of the group" is the crucial determinant of military readiness.[224] Despite the evidence that indicates military performance depends on task cohesion rather than social cohesion, according to Basham, the British military continues to prioritize social cohesion. This is problematic, she argues, because the "genuine comradeship" social cohesion encourages implies social exclusiveness, which "sees difference as a problem."[225] Harrison also points out the exclusivity culture is achieved by "dehumanizing members of so-called socially subordinate groups" and works to bond the members of the unit.[226] Not surprisingly, women and their feminine bodies tend to be seen as 'different' in the military, a space which has traditionally been occupied by male bodies and masculine identities. Harrison argues that "the military uses its socially constructed polarity between masculine and feminine in order to use masculinity as the

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[221] Woodward and Winter (2006) p. 57.
[222] Basham (2009a); Noakes (2006); Woodward and Winter (2004).
[223] Ibid. p. 732.
[224] Ibid.
[225] Ibid. p. 738.
[226] Harrison, Deborah. "Violence in the Military Community." In Higate. *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*. p. 75.

cementing principle that unites 'real' military men that distinguish them from non-masculine men and women."[227] The social cohesion model is essentially based on military's traditional, masculine and heteronormative assumptions according to which servicewomen are inherently ineffective in the military and destabilize its exclusivity culture that is essential for unit cohesion. Under this model, diversifying the forces only leads to rendering minority groups hyper-visible which may facilitate discrimination and harassment against them. Basham concludes that the prioritization of social cohesion model demonstrates that what the British military seeks to preserve is its heteronormative and masculine culture and argues that it undermines the overall military performance.[228]

Furthermore, Basham suggests that not only does the military reinforce heteronormative masculinity but also approves, if not encourages, some behaviors by servicemen which would certainly be considered as sexist or homophobic outside the military.[229] The 'boys will be boys' attitude normalizes and justifies sexual violence by servicemen as necessary outlets for their sexual needs. Again, such an attitude which views servicewomen as sexualized, disruptive bodies is nothing but harmful for the institution itself and its operational effectiveness.[230] The discourse of operational effectiveness therefore was a façade which legitimized the male exclusivity in the military by concealing the toxic masculine culture and attitudes in the institution that renounce femininity. It has undoubtedly been a contributing factor to the discursive and ideological struggles of 'fully' integrating women into the military. Such a discourse further polarizes bodies into the legitimate male bodies and the illegitimate female bodies and reinforces the boundaries of appropriate masculinity and femininity. As argued by

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[227] Ibid.
[228] Basham. "Effecting Discrimination: Operational Effectiveness and Harassment in the British Armed Forces." p. 738.
[229] Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence." 2016. p. 35.
[230] Ibid.

Basham and others, female soldiers are still Othered even after the combat ban on women was lifted and the narratives of operational effectiveness and social cohesion have become irrelevant. Discourses which discursively subordinate women change forms but remain pervasive.[231]

2.5. The Role of the Media

As the previous discussion on the sense of discomfort has examined, it is evident that the media play a significant role in conveying certain images and representations of what constitutes the social reality. It would thus be reasonable to assume that, to a certain extent at least, the media has an influence on how audiences perceive things. The thesis focuses on two types of media as research objects, one of which is published by and circulated within the military, and the other produced and consumed in society. This section reviews the different ways in which the media employs various strategies to manipulate information and guide the audience to certain directions, in relation to how female soldiers may be represented in news.

News media are generally expected to be objective and neutral, and to provide the public with unbiased information. However, contrary to a popular belief, and even to some journalists' confidence to be objective, scholars agree that it is not always the case. The pluralist model and elite model are often used to explain different claims about media's independence from power. The pluralist model presumes that power is relatively spread across society in which the media have an ability to convey news and information objectively, independent from government and policy makers' influences. The elite model, on the other hand, maintains that power is concentrated on few elites and the media are largely subservient to their authority, simply mirroring dominant narratives of the powerful.[232] There are several hypotheses that support the elite model, suggesting that "the extent to which audiences are able to consume

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[231] Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.*
[232] Robinson. "The role of media and public opinion." pp. 193-4.

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news and, in turn, form their own independent opinion is more limited than assumed by the pluralist model."[233] For example, Entman explains *framing* and *priming* as processes through which news slant and bias occur. Framing refers to "selecting a few aspects of a perceived reality and connecting them together in a narrative that promotes a particular interpretation,"[234] while priming is "the ability of media to prepare and direct publics to the issues by which they should judge their leaders."[235]

Scholars in communication theory have long pointed out the media's 'agenda setting' ability to "tell the public what to think about."[236] Framing and priming are generally considered as extensions of agenda setting, where "the issues that media deem salient will influence what the public in turn deems salient."[237] In other words, the media cognitively affect the attitudes, opinions, and understandings of the public by choosing certain topics/issues and constructing them in certain ways. In doing so, the media guide the audience to pay more attention to some news than others, and direct them to think about those particular issues, and, indeed, how to think about them. Entman argues that such processes as agenda setting and framing are means to affect people's behavior by influencing and shaping their perceptions, which is a much subtler version of coercion in order to exert power in a democracy.[238] The media also tends to "simplify and dramatize" in order to attract and keep the audience by providing them with "*stereotyped novelty* – new instances of culturally resonant symbols."[239] In other words, the audience prefers to receive information that they are able to comprehend based on their prior knowledge and thinking, and the media appeal to that tendency by offering them new information with resonances to familiar cultural and social norms. Moreover, the media have

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[233] Ibid. p. 194.
[234] Entman. "Media framing biases and political power: Explaining slant in news of Campaign 2008." p. 391.
[235] Robinson. "The role of media and public opinion." p. 195.
[236] Ghanem, Salma I., McCombs, Maxwell and Chernov, Gennadiy. "Agenda Setting and Framing." In Eadie, William F. *21st Century Communication: A Reference Handbook*. California: Sage Publications, 2009. p. 517.
[237] Ibid. p. 516. They point out that there is a controversy as to how framing and priming are to be understood.
[238] Entman. "Media framing biases and political power: Explaining slant in news of Campaign 2008." p. 392.
[239] Emphasis in original. Ibid. p. 394.

the tendency of favoring the popular and powerful when it comes to politicians, regardless of their political stance and actual manifesto. Thus, as Entman argues, slant, bias and framing in the media are more common than one might think.[240]

As Ette indicates, in general, women are "more easily associated with domestic issues and the emphasis on physical traits, appearance and relationships is central" in the media.[241] It is also true to women in other fields of professions than the military, especially where it is traditionally male dominated; a prime example would be female politicians and how they are represented in the media in comparison to their male counterparts. Ette maintains that the media and news industry are also inherently masculinist where gendered mediation is commonplace, further reinforcing the stereotypically gendered yet popular perceptions and rhetoric. Although "gendered mediation is driven by a subtle, taken-for-granted bias, … 'roles in areas such as politics, national security, the armed forces, and the home are associated with specific genders and are usually represented in media narratives by gendered symbolic systems'."[242] The media too are one of the places where maleness is invisible because it is the norm. Gendered mediation can be understood as a form of framing, which "shifts the focus from obvious stereotypes to subtle frames that emphasize popular conceptions of differences determined by gender," and highlights "a person's gender irrespective of its relevance to the context of the story."[243] The aforementioned 'equality and difference' in the representations of female soldiers in combat is a good example of gendered framing where the focus is on gender and femininity of female soldiers rather than their professionalism as soldiers. As discussed in a BBC Radio 4 programme,

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[240] Ibid.
[241] Lundell and Ekström (2008) in Ette. "Gendered frontlines: British press coverage of women soldiers killed in Iraq." pp. 252-253.
[242] Ette (2008) in ibid. p. 253.
[243] Ibid. p. 253.

> Chantelle Taylor has observed that women do not want to be treated differently when they die in a combat area because it is not 'more acceptable for a guy to be killed than for a woman to be killed on the battlefield'. Taylor, the first British woman known to have killed an enemy in combat, told a journalist that 'as a woman in the military, if I lost my life I much prefer to be treated as a soldier because I have earned the right. There is a certain honor in dying as a soldier'.[244]

Ette argues that by gendered framing, not only does media coverage of female soldiers deprive them of their professional identities, but it also denies the same honor and recognition as their male counterparts.[245] The analysis of the thesis demonstrates how popular representations of female soldiers in the media frame them as what Entman refers to as 'stereotyped novelty', in which they are portrayed as normal women with feminine traits, conforming to gender stereotypes and the audience's understanding of what a 'woman' is, while providing the audience with enough novelty of being a soldier.

2.6. Contribution

This chapter has explored key concepts and works in the relevant literature which have informed and guided the thesis and its analysis. Not only had there been a number of studies led by governments on the implications of women's inclusion in the military, but much scholarly research has also focused on and examined the effects of such a new policy. Scholars have argued that even as women have gained prominence in various roles and ranks in the military, the masculine culture and identity of the institution remain rampant and female soldiers are still Othered, both physically and discursively. As the thesis explores media representations of such nontraditional bodies in the traditionally masculine space, works on media representations of violent women are introduced and evaluated as they illuminate the deep-seated sense of discomfort in society when the boundaries of respectable femininity are

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[244] BBC Radio 4, 29 May 2012 in Ette.
[245] Ibid. pp. 258-9.

breached. The patriarchal gendered order dictates that the notion of 'woman' is fundamentally incompatible with violence, and when women take up roles that are violent and predominantly occupied by men, whether it be as soldiers, criminals or terrorists, their bodies disrupt the familiar and comfortable gender status-quo and evoke defensive reactions. One of the ways in which such reactions are manifested is another key conception reviewed in this chapter, a sense of discomfort. The sense of discomfort arises as the marked bodies destabilize the otherwise unmarked space, and when they disrupt the patriarchal and heteronormative gender norms, the sense of unease can be viewed as *patriarchal discomfort*. Finally, the literature on the various tactics deployed by the media to disseminate information and their implications demonstrates the crucial role the media play in (re)producing popular discourses and narratives about female soldiers, and thus contributing to the maintenance of patriarchal gender norms.

In conducting a discourse analysis of representations of female soldiers in the military and civilian media, my thesis identifies subtle manifestations of the sense of discomfort. Consistent with other works, it has been found that female bodies in a traditionally masculine space inevitably stand out, and the markedness of the female soldiers is often highlighted in their representations in the media. However, the thesis has also identified a gap in the literature, which can benefit from further investigation, namely that much research has focused on the normative and ideological struggles of female soldiers to be completely accepted and integrated into the military, which are often attributed to the military gender norms and gendered culture within the institution. The present research adds to the literature by examining the representations of female soldiers both within and beyond the military, whilst paying particular attention to the sense of discomfort induced by transgressions of gender norms, as well as the ambiguous spaces between the two normative domains. Its analysis offers an insight into the ambivalent and nuanced ways in which the existence and experiences of female soldiers are mediated and negotiated, placing precariously their subject positions in media discourses. The

thesis suggests that the sense of discomfort, or *patriarchal discomfort*, is demonstrated in the markers of femininity attached to the representations of female soldiers which emphasize their identities as women and trivialize their professional identities. These markers and narratives mitigate the sense of discomfort female soldiers induce, render their subject positions unintelligible and coax them into *their place*. The thesis identifies a hermeneutical lacuna in the articulation of the existence and experiences of female soldiers in its analyses of their representations in the media.

To further advance some of the discussions reviewed in this chapter, and to facilitate the contribution the thesis makes to the extant literature, the thesis composes and utilizes a conceptual framework consisting of key concepts and theories. While the literature offers invaluable insights into media representations of (violent) women and their social and political implications, their analyses and observations are often anecdotal or broad-brushed, lacking theoretical and conceptual explanations as to *how* and *why* their conclusions are reached. The thesis seeks to provide a finer-grained analysis of media representations of female soldiers scrutinizing why they are represented the way they are. To this end, it makes use of a micro approach to answer the research question of how women in the military are represented in the media discourses. Hence, the conceptual framework supplements discourse analysis in explicating the mechanisms by which certain discourses remain hegemonic and lead to social phenomena such as the societal alienation of violent women by pathologizing them and the imposition of traditional roles on women.

This conceptual framework resonates with the literature that has been reviewed in this chapter with respect to its theoretical and epistemological foundations, as well as its assumptions of feminist poststructuralist understanding of discourses that underlie gendered power relations. To reiterate the theoretical basis of the thesis discussed in the previous and next chapters, it

views discourses as "systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects,"[246] through which social meanings are (re)produced and the different subject positions of social actors are rendered intelligible. The thesis specifically focuses on the gendered character of discursive power relations and the implications of these forms of structuring, subscribing to the perspective that the patriarchal social order and gender subordination are pervasive because of the everyday operations of such gendered discourses. It explores the ambiguous 'in-between' spaces between the oppositional, yet co-constitutive spheres, including the military/civilian and masculine/feminine orders, where particular attention is paid to the sense of discomfort. The thesis finds that the sense of discomfort is manifested in the ways that the subject positions of female soldiers are rendered (un)intelligible, thus maintaining the familiar gender norms, such as the social construct of 'woman'.

Furthermore, the conceptual framework is employed as a means by which the analyses and observations put forward by the thesis are informed as well as theoretically underpinned. It acts as a lens through which the issues discussed in the literature and the empirical data are interpreted, while also supplying a theoretical underpinning on which the thesis sets forth its analyses and observations and advances some of the discussions in the literature. The literature reviewed in this chapter not only informs and guides the thesis and its analyses, but also assists in the problematization of the phenomena by identifying and bridging the gaps in the extant research. The conceptual framework thus enables the thesis to build upon the discussions and fill the lacuna in the literature by characterizing and explaining certain phenomena such as defensive and uneasy reactions to violent women in the media. It aids the thesis in theorizing and better understanding the nuanced ways in which female soldiers are represented in the media, while exploring the 'in-betweenness' of military/civilian and masculine/feminine.

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[246] Howarth, David and Stavrakakis, Yannis. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis." In Howarth, David., Norval, Aletta J. and Stavrakakis, Yannis. Eds. *Discourse theory and political analysis: Identities, hegemonies and social change.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000. pp. 3-4.

Presented in detail in the next chapter, the conceptual framework, along with its ontological and epistemological grounds, also enables the thesis to provide and develop original insights into the studies of gender and militarism, as well as the competing representations of gendered bodies.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Conceptual Framework

This chapter presents the methodology used in the thesis, its justification, as well as a discussion on the British press system and a mini case study which suggests that the relationships between newspapers and their contributing writers can be an indicator to denote what each paper seeks to convey to their audience and the political ideology it favors. The chapter also introduces a conceptual framework which has supplemented the analysis of the thesis. The thesis adopts a qualitative and interpretivist approach, and its analysis is empirically inductive and theoretically informed.[247] The chapter details the ways in which the texts for the analyses were collected from the official magazine of the British Army *Soldier* as well as four of the most widely read newspapers, the *Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, the *Mirror,* and the *Sun*. The justification for presenting graphs generated with a limited size of samples is also discussed. The British press system is discussed to illuminate the clear partisanship and divide among papers as well as to underscore the divergent characteristics of each paper catering towards its apt audience. The selection of these four papers is intended to encompass various groups of people from different socioeconomic and political backgrounds.

This research employs the method of discourse analysis to read and analyze texts from a magazine and newspapers in order to recover representations of female soldiers, discourses in which their subject positions are constructed and negotiated.[248] Its ontological assumptions and epistemological reasoning are grounded in that of discourse theory, according to which discourses are referred to as "systems of meaningful practices that form the identities of subjects and objects,"[249] and discourse analysis is the practice "to examine their historical and political construction and functioning."[250] While acknowledging the existence of material

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[247] Hopf, Ted. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999.* New York: Cornell University Press, 2002. p. 260.
[248] Kronsell. "Methods for studying silences: gender analysis in institutions of hegemonic masculinity." p. 109.
[249] Howarth and Stavrakakis. pp. 3-4.
[250] Howarth. *Discourse*. p. 5.

reality, "a world external to thought," [251] it is argued that "human beings are 'thrown into' a world of meaningful discourses and practices"[252] in which social meanings are (re)constructed and (re)produced, identities rendered intelligible, and objects are grasped.[253] As such, in the context of this thesis, representations of female soldiers are taken as discourses in which their subject positions are rendered (un)intelligible, which then construct the social reality. Discourse theory points out the exercise of power involved in the constructions of discourses as there are "the exclusion of certain possibilities and a consequent structuring of the relations between different social agents."[254] Fundamentally political in nature, there are contestations between discourses vying for constructing dominant meanings and thus fixing "the identities of objects and practices in a particular way."[255] The aim of the thesis is to carefully read and interpret various representations of female soldiers in the media and identify such variances among the discourses competing to construct social reality in certain ways and their implications.

The thesis also draws upon the interpretivist method of analyzing discursive formations of discourses Hopf utilizes in his book *Social Construction of International Politics*, in which he analyzes the most widely read texts of a certain period of time including popular newspapers, novels, textbooks, memoirs, in addition to official government documents and journals, in order to reconstruct "the identity topography."[256] In so doing, he shows how foreign policies are largely affected by domestic identities, and how officials and decision makers too are bound to their own society, its identity and discourses. Dominant discourses about identities, beliefs and practices can be understood as integral to what Hopf calls a social cognitive structure

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[251] Howarth and Stavrakakis. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis. p. 3
[252] Howarth. *Discourse*. p. 9.
[253] Ibid.; Howarth and Stavrakakis. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis. p. 3.; Baxter. "Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis: A New Theoretical and Methodological Approach?" p. 248.
[254] Howarth and Stavrakakis. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis. p. 4.
[255] Ibid. p. 3.
[256] Hopf. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999.* p. 20.

constituted by discursive formations through which individuals identify themselves, understand others, and make decisions.[257] As Hopf notes, "every society is bounded by a social cognitive structure within which some discursive formations dominate and compete. An individual's identities contribute to the creation and recreation of discourse and social cognitive structure; at the same time, those identities are constrained, shaped, and empowered by the very social products they have in hand in creating."[258] Thus, the (re)production of discourses which shapes identities of a society and its norms, and the identities, beliefs and values of individuals within the society are always relational and interconnected, influencing and constituting each other.

The rationale for the method and data selection is inspired by Hopf's approach and its interpretivist epistemology in recovering identities of the nation by analyzing discourses and their discursive formations. He sampled a wide range of texts from the years of his focus and reconstructed the identities by "reading and relating texts; establishing these identities' intertextual meanings."[259] This thesis comparably sampled the magazine and newspapers for the periods between 1980 to 2018 and 2010 to 2019 respectively, followed by an inductive process of closely examining them so as to recover representations of female soldiers in the military as well as in wider civilian society. The thesis also follows Hopf's claims on reliability and validity of such an interpretivist method. The intention is not to make truth claims, but rather, to offer what he calls "a relative, working truth."[260] It recognizes the limits of the method and acknowledges criticisms such as that it is difficult to accurately 'read' public opinion/discourses by conducting a discourse analysis. Examining the media influence on public opinion and how media representations of a certain phenomenon may be conceived by

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257 Ibid. p. 22.
258 Ibid. p.1.
259 Ibid. p. 27.
260 Ibid. p. 24.

people is not an uncomplicated task, and there will always be ambiguity and variance to a certain extent.[261] As such, interpretivist practice admits that there is always additional evidence unaccounted for, which can affect the outcome of the analysis. It can only assert "tentative claims to validity" for it acknowledges the "endlessness of the task," that "there is no place to stop, no place we can claim that we have accounted for all that we must account for."[262]

On the other hand, however, interpretivist practice can offer potent claims to reliability, as "interpretivists expect other researchers using the same theoretical apparatus and collection of texts to reproduce their results, at least in principle." [263] In other words, while I must acknowledge that my reading and interpretations cannot offer robust claims to validity and generalizability due to the sheer volume of discourses there are, I can be fairly confident that other analysts would arrive at the similar understandings and interpretations given they read the same texts.[264] Considering our embeddedness in social reality, our observations cannot be separated from our own subjectivity and idiosyncrasies in conducting research. However, the reading and interpretations offered in the thesis are likely to share the similar general statements with other accounts, within the limited perimeter of working with the same texts as well as the conceptual lens through which the texts are read. This thesis thus deploys discourse analysis as a primary analytical tool to examine the discursive formations of the contested subject positions of female soldiers in relation to the 'inbetweenness' of military/civilian and masculine/feminine, as well as the ambiguous spaces between these oppositional yet co-constitutive domains by analyzing the representations of female soldiers in the media.

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[261] Robinson, Piers. "The role of media and public opinion." In Smith, Steve, Hadfield, Amelia, and Dunne, Tim. Ed. *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors, Cases*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016. p. 190.
[262] Hopf. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999.* pp. 29, 32.; Neumann, Iver B. *Russia and the Idea of Europe: A study in identity and international relations.* Oxon: Routledge, 2017. p. 4.
[263] Ibid. p. 29.
[264] Ibid. pp. 26, 29.

The thesis presents a few graphs showing the differences and similarities between the newspapers on different topics which are found in the analyses. It is thus crucial to clarify here the justification for how and why such a mixed method perspective is adopted in this qualitative study, and the data were collected and generated. For the analyses of four newspapers, each newspaper was sampled which presented some 10,000 articles in total which were then carefully read and analyzed. The thesis recognizes that these samples do not represent the entirety of the texts ever published by each newspaper, and as interpretivist practice admits, there are always discourses unaccounted for.[265] However, it is also important to note that, in discourse theory, empirical data "have to be evaluated as particular interpretations of the research objects," and (in)adequacy of the research "depends on its ability to engender plausible accounts of social phenomena."[266] In other words, unlike positivist and more quantitatively oriented research which seeks universal laws and causal accounts for social phenomena, interpretivist practice aims to understand and explain them by offering a 'working truth' or a 'plausible account'.[267] As such, the thesis does not make any claims to truth, validity, or generalizability, and instead it seeks to offer *an* account in which a possible relationship between the representations of female soldiers and a sense of discomfort is elucidated.

Similarly, the graphs generated with the data from the samples do not represent *all* of data but are intended to illustrate some of the discourses constitutive of the social reality. Although they do not contain all the data, the samples still show clear differences between papers as well as similarities and trends among them. The graphs are intended to demonstrate such variance among the papers, within the limited scope of the samples. In keeping with Hopf's argument on reliability in interpretivist research, the thesis only offers a modest claim to reliability, as

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[265] Hopf. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. pp. 29, 32.
[266] Howarth. *Discourse*. p. 130.
[267] Hopf. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. p. 24.

producing a testable, falsifiable and generalizable outcome is neither possible nor an aim of qualitative research. The graphs and the samples of texts in this research thus should be regarded as interpretations of particular sets of data within a limited scope of samples. The graphs are meant to visualize the trends and variance among papers rather than to represent the exact and accurate dispositions and nature of each newspaper. Moreover, the aim of the thesis is not to conduct a comparative analysis of these four papers, but to recover various representations of female soldiers from a wider range of newspapers catering toward divergent audience in order to retrieve common threads of discourses which are disseminated in society.

3.1. Soldier: Military Discourse

The British Army's official magazine *Soldier* is selected as a medium published by and circulated within the military. The first issue was published in 1945, and except for the period from October 1981 to September 1997 during which it was published fortnightly, the magazine has been produced monthly. All the previously published issues are available to view at the British Library in London. I went over each issue published between 1980 to 2018, total of 662 issues (excluding 2 missing issues, 1992 Part 18 and 1985 Part 22). The 1980s was a significant decade as the WRAC (the Women's Royal Army Corps, where all women in the Army belonged to until its disbandment in 1992 [268]) undertook several policy changes such as introduction of gender-free physical tests, firearm training and allowing women to carry guns. [269] As the primary focus and interest of this research lies in representations of women in the modern military, it should be adequate to go back to the 1980s to track the trends and tendencies in the discourses in which the Army has projected itself and especially its female members over the years. The magazine was selected to allow the thesis to tap into the official

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[268] National Army Museum. *Women's Royal Army Corps*. Available at https://www.nam.ac.uk/explore/womens-royal-army-corps

[269] Dandeker and Segal. "Gender Integration in Armed Forces: Recent Policy Developments in the United Kingdom." p. 32.; *Soldier*. "WRAC's sights on self defence." January 1981. pp. 5-7.

narratives of the MoD as well as to have a glimpse into the routines and experiences of soldiers which are not ordinarily visible to civilians. It is important to note, however, that the thesis does not view the discourses recovered from the magazine as the only true official discourse. Rather, they are treated as a unique medium from which a part of the official military discourse can be learned and be contrasted to the civilian discourse. As such, the thesis does not claim that the findings from the magazine alone wholly represent the official discourses of the British military.

As I scanned each issue, I looked for articles and photos that featured women, words such as women, female(s), lady(ies), girl(s), topics on LGBTQ+, equal opportunities, advertisements, as well as phrases and expressions which indicated common understandings of gender norms at the time. Because the magazine is only available in physical copies,[270] searching keywords or coding them digitally were not available. However, there are a few reasons I am confident that I was able to catch crucial information manually; for instance, there was a trend from the 1980s to the early 2000s to call female soldiers by their first names (e.g., "Bright Dawn"[271], "Sharon's first"[272], "Golden girl Debbie"[273], which will be discussed more in depth in Chapter 4, section 4) which could not have been detected by keyword searching. My focus is not only on female members of the Army but also on pin-up/glamour models/actresses who are featured in the magazine, and the ways in which they are presented, which again would have been difficult to be detected by a simple keyword search.

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[270] As of December 2021, August, September, October, November, and December issues of 2021 are available to view in the archive. https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/soldier-magazine/soldier-archive/
[271] *Soldier.* July 1994. Part 14. p. 10.
[272] *Soldier.* July 1993. Part 14. p. 13.
[273] *Soldier.* August 1993. Part 16. P. 12.

3.2. Newspapers: Civil Discourse

The newspaper titles chosen for the analysis in this thesis are the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph*, the *Mirror*, and the *Sun*, and all searches are done through the database LexisNexis. The selection includes two broadsheet papers and two tabloid papers, right leaning and left leaning in each category, and they are among the most widely circulated newspaper titles in the country.[274] The availability of newspaper titles on the database was also taken into consideration. The time frame for the analysis is 10 years between 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2019, a period during which the discussions regarding combat ban on women had become increasingly pivotal, and thus more visible in the media. This includes both print and digital editions of each newspaper title, with exceptions of the *Mirror* and the *Sun*, the digital versions of which are only available from 2013 and 2016 respectively on the database. As with other major British newspapers, the publishers of the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph*, the *Mirror* and the *Sun* also publish Sunday papers,[275] which are understood as sister papers of the daily papers. Although the contents of Sunday papers vary, Sunday papers usually contain more extensive stories, editorials, special interest stories, and advertisements and are often written some time in advance. This research focuses on the daily newspapers due to their higher circulation and volume compared to their Sunday sister papers.

According to the Ofcom report, the circulation of print newspapers has decreased significantly while reading news stories online has continued to be one of the most common ways for people to consume media.[276] The wide spread of the Internet changed considerably the ways people

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[274] Ofcom. "News Consumption in the UK: 2019." Published 24 July 2019. P. 37; Ofcom. "News consumption in the UK: 2020 report." 13 August 2020. p. 37.; Ofcom. "News Consumption in the UK: 2021." 27 July 2021. p. 36.

[275] The publishers of these daily newspapers also publish the Sunday papers, the Observer, the Sunday Telegraph, the Sunday Mirror, and the Sun on Sunday respectively.

[276] Ofcom. "News Consumption in the UK: 2019." pp. 34, 54, 66.; "News consumption in the UK: 2020 report." p. 33. "News Consumption in the UK: 2021." pp. 13-4, 16-7.

consume the media.[277] Moreover, there are differences in ways in which news stories are presented on print and digital editions;[278] for instance, there is a limitation for the space for print media, whereas there are virtually no such spatial limitations for digital version. Stories put online can be updated over and over, whereas that is not an option for a print newspaper. The analyses include both print and digital versions of newspapers to fully discern and interpret the discourses produced as well as their intentions and implications. The keywords used for each search are intended to generate results that contain any of the military related terms, specifically, military, army, armed forces, navy, marines, air force, airforce, RAF, soldier, and soldiers, as well as any of the following terms that denote the feminine gender, namely, woman, women, female, females, girl, and girls. Although there are other words that could be added to the search (such as troop, troops, infantry, or any of the ranks for officers in the forces), I am confident that the keywords listed above have generated an ample number for results for each newspaper and covered most of the relevant pieces. It should be noted that since the database does not provide visual images for the articles (if any), the analysis predominantly discusses the texts especially for the print edition; some images published for the digital edition are discussed when available. It is worth noting that even though the searches were limited to news stories published by British newspapers, the contents were not limited to the British Armed Forces. Although most of the articles are about the British Armed Forces, there are pieces discussing the U.S. Armed Forces and the Israeli Defence Forces. These were taken into equal consideration as the objective of the analyses is to examine the ways in which women in the military are portrayed in the media, and to unravel the motivations behind and the implications of these representations.

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[277] Winter, Patrick and Alpar, Paul. "On the relationship between print and mobile channels for newspapers." *Electron Markets*, 28 (2018): p. 79.

[278] d'Haenens, Leen, Jankowski, Nicholas, and Heuvelman, Ard. "News in online and print newspapers: differences in reader consumption and recall." *New media & society* 6, no. 3 (2004): p. 365.

As a consequence of the decline of mass armies based on conscription across Europe and other Western countries, fewer civilians take part in military activities and have direct and professional knowledge about them.[279] As Millar points out, the ways in which wars are fought have also shifted from clashes of large scale armies in battlefields which required an extensive number of soldiers who were often conscripted, to a combination of manpower on the frontline and new technologies such as drones that allow engagements in conflicts from distance. These changes have "altered the military-society relationship"[280] because wars and conflicts now seem somewhat distant and irrelevant in the lives of most people in the West, and the military as an institution is not regarded by them with great familiarity but rather as an abstract concept. In other words, many civilians have very limited knowledge about the military and what soldiering entails. Yet the facts that the military seems to be a quite popular and lucrative theme in popular culture, and that military-related activities, events, news, and scandals are regularly reported on various news sources, suggest there are certain interests in the institution among civilians. It is likely that the ideas and images that civilians have about the military are largely based on what they see, read, and hear from popular culture such as films, TV shows, videogames, and media outlets such as newspaper, online news, radio programs, and so on. Indeed, most Army officers reckon that civilians have "a 'very inaccurate view of what it takes to be a soldier/officer', due to inaccurate depictions in films and videogames. Officers believe that such misrepresentations have 'over-masculinised' the Army" in people's perceptions.[281]

It is not to suggest, however, that by examining what is circulated in the media one can accurately explain or predict its implications and how it influences people's opinions.[282] As it

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[279] Haltiner, Karl W. "The Decline of the European Mass Armies." In Caforio, Giuseppe, ed. *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*. 361-384. New York: Springer, 2006. p. 361.

[280] Millar, Katharine. "The plural of soldier is not troops: the politics of groups in legitimating militaristic violence." *LSE Research Online*. 2019. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/91772/ p. 2.

[281] House of Commons Defence Committee. "Protecting those who protect us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life." p. 11.

[282] Hansen, Anders, Cotte, Simon, Negrine, Ralph and Newbold, Chris. *Mass Communication Research Methods*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998. p. 95.

has been extensively discussed among those who study the media and its influences, the media are not exactly a precise reflection of our society, nor is society an exact reflection of the media. Instead, it is highly likely that it goes both ways – the media reflects some parts of society and vice versa.[283] Some of the most eminent sociologists of the last century had already shown their interests in "monitoring the 'cultural temperature' of society"[284] by systematically analyzing media and their influences in society in the early 1900s. Among the most notable is Max Weber, who proposed to conduct quite a large-scale, extensive, and rigorous study on the media – contemporary newspaper business and its influences in society – circa 1910.[285] Weber posited the Press/media as one of "the great cultural problems of the present" on two accounts; that "the Press as one of the means of moulding the *subjective* individuality of modern man" and that "the Press as a component of the *objective* individuality of modern *culture*."[286] Although the scale of this research is not comparable to that of Weber's ambitious project to extensively and thoroughly investigate the role and impacts of the media in society which was ultimately futile, there are shared interest and incentive to analyze the role the media in the production of social meanings and identities.

As discussed earlier, discourse analysis aims to "delineate the historically specific rules and conventions that structure the production of meanings"[287] and does so by analyzing and interpreting the intertextuality among texts and their discursive formations. The thesis takes various representations and rhetoric of female soldiers in the media as discourses which constitute the social reality in which people's identities and experiences are mediated and rendered intelligible. In other words, discourses found in the media are inextricably enmeshed

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[283] Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Reese, Stephen D. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content.* New York: Longman Publishers, 1996. p. 4.
[284] Hansen, Cottle, Negrine and Newbold. *Mass Communication Research Methods.* p. 92.
[285] Weber, Max. "Preliminary report on a proposed survey for a sociology of the press." *History of the Human Sciences* 11, no. 2 (1998): 111-120.
[286] Ibid. p. 111. Emphasis in original.
[287] Howarth. *Discourse.* p. 128.

in the ways in which individuals conceive of 'reality', identify themselves and others with certain subject positions, and social meanings are (re)produced and internalized. Therefore, analyzing media discourses about female soldiers is one of the ways to understand how their subject positions are represented and rendered intelligible.

3.3 The British Press System

The four newspapers are selected to cover a wide range of audience with diverse political views and socioeconomic backgrounds, as the aim of the thesis is to recover representations of female soldiers widely assimilated into society across the various classes and political ideologies. This research assumes that articles published by these newspapers often reflect each paper's ideologies, values, and political stance for the following reasons. First, it is important to note the key elements of the UK's media system in which these newspapers operate. Though changing at a fast pace due to the prominence of social and digital media platforms, the UK's media systems are characterized by broadcasters that are regulated to maintain political neutrality and a free press system where newspapers are highly partisan. In contrast to the broadcasters and their well-respected codes of conduct which ensure impartial and balanced reporting, the national newspapers are owned and often influenced by powerful corporations and their "voluntary self-regulation scheme has provided only a weak code of conduct and system of redress in the event of mistakes in reporting or commentary." [288] There is clear partisanship among major newspapers and the Conservative Party historically has enjoyed support by the majority of the press. The divisions and competition between the papers especially during election campaigns are so fierce Taylor notes that "the levels of political bias exhibited can also be strikingly unconstrained, verging into 'fake news' generation, with, for example, the front pages of the *Sun* and the *Daily Mail* both explicitly linking top opposition

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[288] Taylor, Ros. "How well does the UK's media system support democratic politics and represent citizens' interests?" *Democratic Audit UK.*

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politicians to terrorist threats."[289] Such examples suggest that not only do newspapers report and deliver news and facts, but they also customarily attempt to influence their readers.

Although not easily measurable, what news media represent and disseminate are informed by more than the influences of their owners. For example, "the size and complexity of national newspapers and broadcasters, and the competing professional values and political views of journalists, editors and producers"[290] contribute to the intricacy and uniqueness of the characters of each newspaper. The possibility that subjective and personal views of the journalists, reporters, and editors are also reflected in what they publish cannot be dismissed. However, unless an article is specifically noted that the opinion expressed does not reflect the opinion of the paper, which is rare, it is commonly understood that the piece, before being published, is written by a reporter, which then gets factchecked and approved by subeditors and the editor.[291] Even if the quality and tone of articles vary and are affected by idiosyncrasies of different writers, it would be safe to assume that the difference is within the range of what is accepted as the norm for the particular paper, and pieces that are deemed too 'out of line' would not be approved to be published.

Moreover, in terms of political posture, there was no big surprise in what the analysis of each paper found in the following chapters. That is, the political alignments as well as differences expressed in each paper were as expected; the *Telegraph* and the *Sun* supporting the Conservative party and the *Guardian* and the *Mirror* backing the Labour party. Some may see the press system as deeply politically divided with loose guidelines for fair and respectful reporting, but that may be precisely what allows media diversity and pluralism. Data show that

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[289] Ibid.
[290] Wilks-Heeg, Stuart, Blick, Andrew and Crone, Stephen. "The political affiliations of the UK's national newspapers have shifted, but there is again a heavy Tory predominance." *Democratic Audit UK*.
[291] BBC. "Professional roles within journalism." Accessed 18 February 2021. Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/ztfnmnb/revision/1

people use more than one media source to gain political information and are introduced to both partisan and nonpartisan news coverage.[292] People are at liberty to choose from a variety of news sources and platforms, though it is still contested whether the readers choose papers which reflect their political views or the papers shape readers' understandings and beliefs. Regardless, a clear relationship between political views of newspapers and voting behavior of their readers [293] indicates most papers have consistent and loyal readers. [294] The clear differences between newspapers suggest that they would rarely deviate from what they are identified as, advertised for, and what the readers expect from that specific paper. Therefore, it can be argued that views and opinions expressed in most of articles generally echo the paper's own political postures, which at times are influenced by their owner's interests. In short, the clear political and ideological divisions and competition between newspapers and their perennial readership are what make the British national press pluralistic, and the reason to believe that there is a decent alignment between their articles and the papers' political stances.

3.4. Newspapers and their Contributing Writers: A Case Study

As explained above, it is assumed that what newspapers put out on their pages or online generally reflects their owners' interests, represent each paper's unique character, as well as their audiences' interests and values. The thesis also suggests that contributing writers who are not employees of papers but occasionally write for them, whose pieces usually appear in 'opinion' section of papers, also reflect the papers' views and values. I contacted all four papers about their procedures in which their contributing writers are appointed; do papers select who are to be contributors, or do people contact the papers to become contributing writers? What

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[292] Taylor. "How well does the UK's media system support democratic politics and represent citizens' interests?"; Ofcom. "News consumption in the UK: 2020 report." p. 65.; "News Consumption in the UK: 2021." p. 71.

[293] Wilks-Heeg, Blick and Crone. "The political affiliations of the UK's national newspapers have shifted, but there is again a heavy Tory predominance."

[294] Taylor. "What do British newspaper reader think about Brexit?"

kinds of qualifications/qualities do papers look for in their contributors? And finally, is conflict of interest taken into consideration? The *Telegraph* said they "appoint the contributing writers in the main, but people also make contact with regards to contributing articles. The appointed contributors are chosen by each individual department on who would be the best fit for them. The potential contributors and articles are looked at and decided on a case-by-case basis." The *Guardian* stated that "the underlying aim is to have people from a wide range of backgrounds and areas of expertise or interest, offering a wide range of opinions." For conflict of interest and other information, I was told to "google." The *Mirror* and the *Sun* did not respond. These answers are generic, but enough to assume that the papers hand-select each contributor to best fit their styles and views. This section takes as an example Colonel Richard Kemp, retired Army commander who actively voices his political opinions in various media platforms.

Figure 1

The Guardian

The Mirror

The Telegraph

The Sun

■ Mention Col Kemp ■ By Col Kemp ■ Other
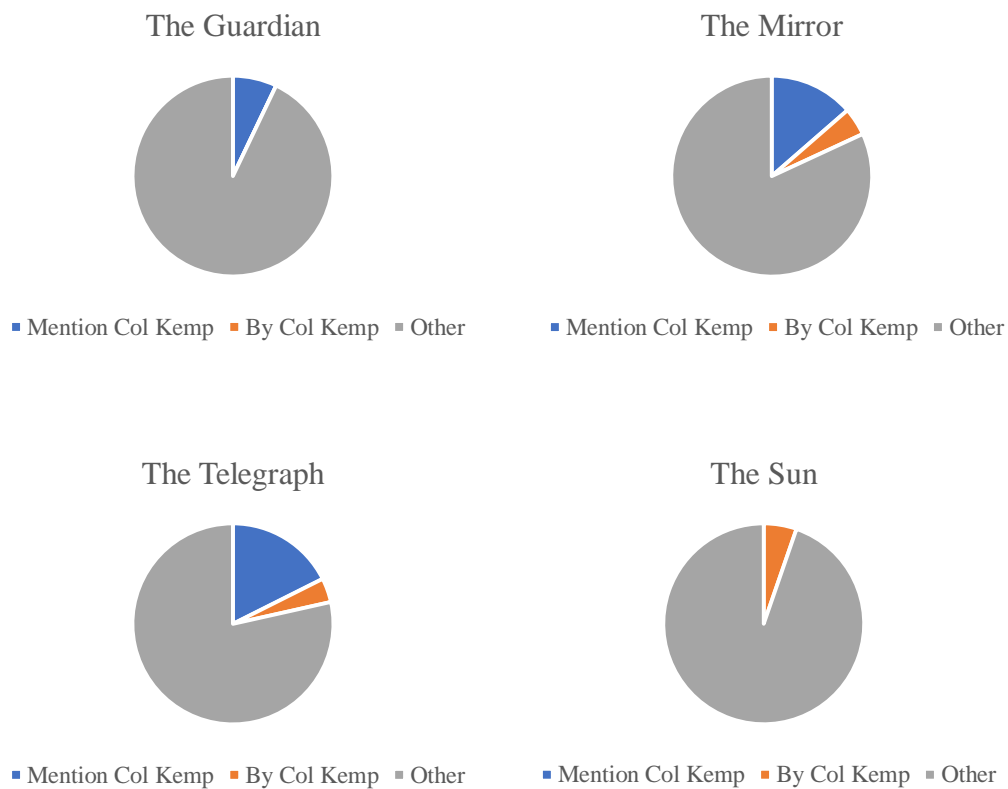
Colonel Kemp was regularly mentioned in articles regarding women on the front line as one of the most pronounced voices of the opposing camp of the debate, which categorically defied the initiative to lift the combat ban on women. He also writes opinion pieces for several newspapers including the papers selected for this thesis. *Figure 1* shows the percentages of articles regarding the inclusion of women in combat roles in the samples of texts taken for the thesis, which either mention or cite Colonel Kemp or are written by himself. As a former infantry commander, he is a credible source for the media to ask for comments about defense and military matters. At the same time, he is well known for his hawkish and bellicose stance; for instance, he claimed that the Iraq war could not have been avoided and believed that Saddam Hussein was "a mass murderer and a long-term supporter of terrorism," who "had to be brought down."[295] His conservative views are also reflected in the ways in which he speaks of women in the military and his logic is sometimes criticized for being old-fashioned.[296]

Since the period during which the discussions of whether women should be allowed in combat roles had become a major topic covered by news media falls in the timeline for this research, the name of Colonel Kemp was salient in the samples. As *Figure 1* shows, he appears in 5 to 20% of the articles regarding the topic of women on the frontline, which indicates his conspicuous presence in the debate. It should also be noted there are differences between mentioning/citing him in articles and publishing pieces written by him with differing implications for the papers. Mentioning his name as a leading voice in the opposition camp in the debate and citing his comments and claims can be considered as a neutral action in reporting relevant topics. However, publishing pieces written by him could denote an endorsement of his opinions by the paper. As it was explained earlier, the British national newspapers characterized by their partisanship, meaning they are not bound to provide impartial and

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[295] BBC. "Colonel Kemp: Iraq war 'could not have been avoided'." *BBC Radio 5 Live.* 6 July 2016. Accessed 24 February 2021. Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p040mby8
[296] Barnett. "Women to fight on the frontline. Now the battle really begins."

balanced reporting to the public, unlike broadcasters such as BBC, ITV, and Sky. The four newspapers selected for this research all have clear allegiances to one party or another (though that is precisely the reason why they were selected) and they have made clear their political standpoints, which have attracted a particular group of readers to each paper. It can be argued, therefore, that by giving people like Colonel Kemp a platform to express their opinions, the papers are giving their support or approval to those contributing writers. It may not always be the case, but it is highly tenable that the papers would be careful choosing contributing writers especially when the opinions or views expressed are controversial and tendentious and they would not actively publish sentiments that clearly go against their general stance.

It would be redundant to point to instances which typify Colonel Kemp's uncompromising attitude towards women in combat roles as it will be mentioned in the analysis of each newspaper. However, to sum up the essence of his unreserved objection to the recent changes in the Armed Forces to allow female personnel to serve on frontline, here are some of his most famous remarks. In 2014, he claimed that women "lack killer instinct" and they would harm "warrior ethos" of the forces should they be allowed on the frontline.[297] In 2015 and 2018, he argued that allowing women in combat roles would compromise unit cohesion and result in lowering the standards.[298] In 2016, he contended that the changes for the inclusion of women on the frontline was only fueled by PC (political correctness) madness which would be paid in blood.[299] Most of his remarks are his personal convictions rather than reflection of the official rhetoric or evidence from studies. Colonel Kemp also argued that "to get out of a trench and attack a machinegun requires a certain comradeship and cohesion. I believe that is at its greatest

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[297] Bond. "Women don't have the 'killer instinct' to fight on the front line, says top former commander."
[298] Ross. "British Army's women soldiers to go into combat."; Merrill. "Female soldiers allowed to fight on the front line and join SAS."
[299] Kemp. "Putting women on the front line is dangerous PC meddling. We will pay for it in blood."

when it's between a band of brothers, that is between men"[300] which indicate that his views are strongly influenced by the heteronormative gender norms.

Aside from a discussion on whether his views may be valid, one could think about what implications there could be for a newspaper to provide someone with an opportunity to disseminate a personal and contentious viewpoint. In respect of the topic of women in combat roles, Colonel Kemp seems to exhibit a quintessential conservative attitude characterized by strongly defending the traditional values and beliefs while dismissing changes as political correctness. Some of his remarks are quite extreme and can be regarded as antiquated and sexist. Hence, one might guess that he would be preferred by papers whose audience is more conservative and likely to sympathize with such views. Among the four newspapers analyzed, the *Telegraph* and the *Sun* would be expected to be aligned with Colonel Kemp, as *Figure 1* shows, and the *Mirror,* as a Labour supporting paper, somewhat unexpectedly, also published pieces by him. It suggests that paying attention to details like contributing writers to a newspaper can sometimes reveal unexpected facet of the paper. It could be argued that by letting him voice his views on their platforms, the *Telegraph*, the *Mirror* and the *Sun* consequently allowed Colonel Kemp to associate himself with them and their values. Contrarily, by not publishing pieces by him the *Guardian* did not represent Colonel Kemp nor were they represented by him and his contentions.[301] Some may argue that newspapers do not necessarily need to agree with what their opinion pieces claim, and in fact papers often present various views to achieve more neutral reporting. However, the thesis maintains that when the appearance of certain authors and their assertions are consistent and recurrent on their pages,

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[300] Farmer, Ben. "Women to fight on frontline." *The Daily Telegraph.* 6 December 2014. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 1.

[301] The data on which these interpretations are based is taken from the samples specifically collected for this thesis. I acknowledge that with different methods of data collection or even from different sets of samples, the result can be different, i.e., the Guardian may have published pieces by Colonel Kemp. However, the thesis maintains that overall reliability of the analysis is supported by the samples of texts reviewed, and other sets of data will likely represent generally similar tendencies of each newspaper.

it is likely that the papers make deliberate decisions to convey and disseminate specific information to their audience through these writers.

The previous sections have delineated the methodology and the justification for why the thesis has adopted its methods, the ways in which the texts were collected for *Soldier* magazine and the newspapers. It has also discussed the British press system where each paper is at liberty to articulate and publish news contents without being obliged to producing fair and impartial reporting, which means that each newspaper is characterized by its specific political posture and affiliation, the tone and language (e.g., frivolous vs solemn, vulgar vs formal etc.), selection of contributing writers, and their audiences. The thesis has chosen four divergent papers with differing characteristics in order to encompass various groups of people of different classes and political affiliations in society and the discourses consumed by them. The aim is to recover various representations of female soldiers circulating in the media and identify common threads within them. These discourses are then analyzed as civil discourses and juxtaposed with the military discourses which were collected from the official magazine of the British Army, *Soldier*. The following section presents the conceptual framework the thesis has formulated and adopted to supplement its reading and analysis of the texts. As it was discussed in the previous section, the method and approach the thesis takes, despite their own merits, necessarily leave room for arbitrariness since the observation cannot be separated from the subjectivity and social embeddedness of the observer. The conceptual framework facilitates the operationalization of discourse analysis and enables the thesis to offer a nuanced analysis which is supported by well-established theories and concepts. Utilizing such a framework would reduce any room in the analysis that is 'open to interpretation', and similar conclusion is likely to be reached by other analysts given the same texts are read through the same conceptual and theoretical framework. The framework also offers a useful analytical

instrument to future research in gender norms and stereotypes, appropriate modes of masculinity/femininity, and representations of gendered bodies.

3.5. Conceptual Framework

In investigating the ways in which women in the military are represented in the media, it is crucial to first lay down some foundational and theoretical understandings about gender roles, stereotypes, as well as the conceptualizations of gender/sex which underpin these concepts to inform the observation and analysis of the thesis. To seek answers to the question of how all the ideas, norms, expectations, and assumptions about gender have come to be, one ought to immerse oneself in an enormous interdisciplinary body of knowledge, from anthropology, sociology, political science to psychology, philosophy, and even bio and neurosciences. This section organizes some of the relevant theories and findings from these fields in relation to the major focuses of the thesis; conceptions of sex/gender, gender stereotypes, societal representations, perceptions and expectations of women's bodies and roles, the sense of discomfort, the resistance to females who defy the gender norms, etc. The aim is to formulate a conceptual framework to inform the empirical analyses in the following chapters. Relevant theories and concepts are explored to provide "an interpretative approach," rather than "a causal/analytical setting"[302] to a social phenomenon. This conceptual framework functions as a lens through which the matters discussed in the literature, as well as the empirical data collected for the thesis, are interpreted and analyzed, offering a theoretical basis for the analyses and observations delineated in the thesis. Specifically, the conceptual framework assists the thesis in identifying and characterizing certain narratives in the texts and to theorize them by drawing on its concepts and theories. In so doing, the thesis seeks to better explain *how* and *why* female soldiers are represented in certain ways in different media discourses by

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[302] Jabareen, Yosef. "Building a Conceptual Framework: Philosophy, Definitions, and Procedure." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 8, no. 4 (2009): p. 51.

adopting a micro approach, which can capture the processes in which their representations are (re)produced.

In the same way that this thesis focuses on women as nontraditional bodies in the military, the literature reviewed here also predominantly deals with theories, effects, and implications of, and the power relations between, men and women and their associations with masculinity and femininity. It is however not to disregard the significance of other nontraditional bodies, i.e., gender and sexual minorities, and the importance of investigating the representations of these bodies that defy and disrupt the heteronormative gender norms today. Because expanding the focus to all possible nontraditional bodies would certainly be beyond the scope of the thesis, it limits its focus to the arguably the most salient power relation in society – between men and women – and its implications in terms of the ways in which the related and often dichotomous beliefs are manifested in our daily lives. However, I believe that in many ways the effects of traditional and binary gender relations, especially how the dominant group seeks to maintain the existing orders, as well as the societal complicity in sustaining it, are relevant to the power relations and arrangements which involve other gender and sexual minorities and their experiences. Therefore, the conceptual framework could be adapted and deployed by studies in various fields in the future. In contrast to rather broad-brushed observations often found in the literature, utilizing such a conceptual framework supplements a discourse analysis and enables the thesis to perform a finer-grained analysis of media representations of female soldiers. The conceptual framework reduces the level of generality in claims made by much research and provides a robust theoretical foundation to the analysis. Presented in the following sections, the unique conceptual framework supplements and informs the reading and analysis of the texts in the military and civil discourses.

3.5.1. Gender Stereotypes

A stereotype is commonly understood as a fixed and generalized image or idea about someone or something, often representing inaccurate and oversimplified beliefs held by a group against another. As Talbot notes, "stereotyping involves simplification, reduction, and naturalization"[303] of a certain group of people, and while it may be accurate or useful sometimes, it is often linked to prejudiced thinking, discrimination, as well as unfair and critical judgements and expectations. In gender stereotypes research, stereotypes are often distinguished between *descriptive* and *prescriptive*. Though there are similarities and overlaps between them, descriptive stereotypes concern typical and generalized characteristics that are different between men and women, whereas prescriptive stereotypes involve a normative aspect which dictates how men and women should be and should not be.[304] Especially in literature in psychology, the terms agency and communion are used regularly to describe gender stereotypes. Researchers have found that men are typically associated with agentic traits such as ambition and assertiveness, and women with communal traits such as care for others and benevolence.[305] As Sczesny et al. acknowledge, the notion of agency and communion reflects the essentialist view on gender, and research on it has failed to pay due attention to the multidimensional and fluid nature of gender by solely focusing on men and women and their alleged dispositions.[306]

Despite its limitations and societal changes with more women occupying agentic roles, psychologists have reported that the notions of agency and communion are still persistent in

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[303] Talbot, Mary. "Gender Stereotypes: Reproduction and Challenge." In Holmes, Janet and Meyerhoff, Miriam. Eds. *The Handbook of Language and Gender.* Maiden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003. p. 470.
[304] Heilman, Madeline E. "Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder." *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (2001): p. 659.
[305] Sczesny, Sabine., Nater, Christa and Eagly, Alice H. "Agency and Communion: Their implications for gender stereotypes and gender identities." In Abele, Andrea E and Wojciszke, Bogdan. *Agency and Communion in Social Psychology.* Oxon: Routledge, 2019. p. 103.
[306] Ibid. p. 111.

gender stereotypes perceived today.[307] Organizational psychologists point out that even when women entered previously male-dominated agentic roles, internal segregation propelled women into "the more communal variants of these roles," which resulted in women's stereotype to remain communal.[308] Eagly et al. conducted a meta-analysis of gender stereotypes held by American public between 1946 and 2018 and although their nuanced conclusion is that the gender stereotypes among Americans have changed over the years, their finding still shows greater attribution of communion to women and smaller but unchanged ascription of agency to men.[309] Another study conducted by Haines et al. found virtually no difference in the degrees of gender stereotypes held by individuals in the early 1980s and in 2014.[310] Despite the societal changes with more and more men and women holding less traditional roles over time, they point out, that "to the extent that people believe that the characteristics of women and men are inherent to the category, then evidence of more peripheral changes in behaviors is unlikely to shape beliefs in the basic attributes."[311] The result of their study indicates that gender stereotypes are very strongly held by people and renitent to change, which suggests there are psychological and discursive processes at work to maintain them in our society.[312] The stereotyping of men and women with agentic and communal attribution respectively is based on the gender binary, the idea, the origin, and issues of which will be discussed further in the later sections.

[307] Ibid. p. 110.; Haines, Elizabeth L., Deaux, Kay and Lofaro, Nicole. "The Times They Are a-Changing … or Are They Not? A Comparison of Gender Stereotypes, 1983-2014." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2016): p. 340.

[308] Eagly, Alice H., Nater, Christa., Miller, David I., Kaufmann, Michèle., and Sczesny, Sabine. "Gender Stereotypes Have Changed: A Cross-Temporal Meta-Analysis of U.S. Public Opinion Polls From 1946 to 2018." *American Psychologist* 75, no. 3 (2019): p. 312.

[309] Ibid. p. 311.

[310] Haines, Deaux and Lofaro. "The Times They Are a-Changing … or Are They Not? A Comparison of Gender Stereotypes, 1983-2014."

[311] Ibid. p. 341.

[312] Ibid. p. 342.

Stereotypes can be used as heuristics by the perceiver or hearer to facilitate the process of judgements about the person or the information presented,[313] and reliable stereotypes may indeed help the perceiver make judgements about the situation. However, as Fricker points out, negative and prejudiced stereotypes distort the perceiver/hearer's perception and therefore the judgement. She argues that it is harder to detect or measure the impact of stereotypes on a judgement compared to the impact of more strongly held idea, such as beliefs, on a judgement in the same context. It is because, Fricker explains, images that stereotypes paints so vividly in our mind can "condition our judgements without our awareness," leading us to make erroneous judgements, such as underestimating or overestimating someone's abilities, not necessarily because of, but in spite of, our beliefs.[314] Soldier is an exemplar of an agentic role, and the military embodies the gendered stereotypes which are still widespread in society. As such, understanding the gender stereotypes and their implications, especially about the traditional gender role divide, which is based on the essentialist beliefs in rigid gender binary is critical for they underpin much of discourses and the ways in which female soldiers are represented.

3.5.2. Social Role Theory

Eagly developed social role theory which posits what underlies gender stereotypes is people's observation of men and women occupying different roles in society.[315] Women are typically regarded as communal (caring, emotional, benevolent) because women tend to take on roles which require these traits, and men are seen agentic (competitive, assertive, ambitious) because they tend to be in roles where these traits are appreciated. According to social role theory, cultural factors as well as physical differences between men and women, that is, women's

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[313] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* pp. 30, 36.
[314] Ibid. pp. 36-7.
[315] Eagly, Alice H. and Steffen, Valerie J. "Gender Stereotypes Stem From the Distribution of Women and Men Into Social Roles." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 46, no. 4 (1984): 735-754.; Eagly, Alice H. and Sczesny, Sabine. "Editorial: Gender Roles in the Future? Theoretical Foundations and Future Research Directions." *Frontiers in Psychology* 10, no. 1965 (2019).

reproductive ability and men's size and strength, determine the division of labor, which makes each sex better suited for certain roles, which will then be inferred by perceivers to be appropriate behaviors for each sex.[316] Gender stereotypes, the theory suggests, arose to provide explanation and rationalization to the division of labor by attributing to each sex the appropriate traits. In summary, social role theory argues that the gender stereotypes stem from "the observed role behavior of members of social groups,"[317] which is governed by the division of labor, determined by the physical differences between men and women, and most individuals choose to conform to these stereotypes.

Social role theory explains the origins of the gender role beliefs but fails to explain the contents and changes in the stereotypes. According to the theory, the stereotypes arose when there was little choice for humans but to fulfill the roles their physical functions allowed. However, the theory posits that the content of the stereotypes is what is perceived of as typical social positions and behaviors of men and women in society.[318] Social role theory claims that because roles held by people predict gender stereotypes, when there are significant changes in roles, the gender stereotypes will change.[319] Eagly has claimed that the gender stereotypes accurately represent "the social structure and division of labor in a society"[320] since the 80s and again in the late 2010s.[321] However, as discussed in the previous section, even with societal changes in

[316] Wood, Wendy and Eagly, Alice H. "Biosocial Construction of Sex Differences and Similarities in Behavior." *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology* 46 (2012): p. 57.; Wood, Wendy and Eagly, Alice H. "A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Behavior of Women and Men: Implications for the Origins of Sex Differences." *Psychological Bulletin* 128, no. 5 (2002): p. 702.

[317] Koenig, Anne M. and Eagly, Alice H. "Typical Roles and Intergroup Relations Shape Stereotypes: How Understanding Social Structure Clarifies the Origins of Stereotype Content." *Social Psychology Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (2019): p. 207.

[318] Eagly, Alice H and Wood, Wendy. "Social Role Theory." In Van Lange, Paul A. M., Kruglanski, Arie W and Higgins, E. Tory. *The Handbook of Theories of Social Psychology.* London: Sage Publications, 2012. p. 459.

[319] Koenig, Anne M. and Eagly, Alice H. "Evidence for the Social Roles Theory and Stereotype Content: Observations of Groups' Roles Shape Stereotypes." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 107, no. 3 (2014): p. 381.

[320] Eagly and Steffen. "Gender Stereotypes Stem From the Distribution of Women and Men Into Social Roles." p. 751.

[321] Eagly, Alice and Wood, Wendy. "Gender Identity: Nature and Nurture Working Together." *Evolutionary Studies in Imaginative Culture* 1, no. 1 (2017): 59-62.

roles where more men and women hold nontraditional occupations, people's perception of gender stereotypes seems to remain unchanged. Nevertheless, social role theory can offer a possible explanation as to why the military is constituted overwhelmingly of men and the ideas of soldiering and women are fundamentally and conceptually irreconcilable.

3.5.3. Lack of Fit Model and Role Congruity Theory

The basic premises of social role theory have led to developments of more theories which explicate the implications of the gender stereotypes and related beliefs. Both lack of fit model and role congruity theory predict that women tend to suffer from discrimination and unfair evaluation at workplace when there is an inconsistency between the agentic role and their perceived non-agentic, feminine gender role.[322] Heilman et al. argue that the discrepancy between the perceived feminine, non-agentic gender stereotype of women and the expectations for agentic traits to be successful in masculine-coded occupations creates perceptions of "lack of fit" which renders female applicants disadvantaged in opportunities for recruitment and promotion.[323] The perception of 'lack of fit' leads to "negative performance expectations" which assumes the woman is il-suited for the job, creating the gender bias in decision-making.[324] In a similar vein, Eagly and Karau suggest that female gender role is incongruent with leadership roles and the inconsistency activates prejudice against female leaders.[325] Their study shows that female leaders tend to be perceived less favorably than male leaders and they argue that this is because women in leadership role violate the expectancies for their female

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[322] Sczesny, Nater and Eagly. "Agency and Communion: Their implications for gender stereotypes and gender identities." p. 106.

[323] Heilman, Madeline. E., Manzi, Francesca., and Braun, Susanne. "Presumed incompetent: perceived lack of fit and gender bias in recruitment and selection." In Broadbridge, Adelina M. and Fielden, Sandra L. *Handbook of Gendered Careers in Management: Getting In, Getting On, Getting Out.* Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2015. pp. 92-3.

[324] Ibid.; Heilman, Madeline E. "Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder." *Journal of Social Issues* 57, no. 4 (2001): 657-674.

[325] Eagly, Alice H and Karau, Steven J. "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders." *Psychological Review* 109, no. 3 (2002): pp. 573-4.

role behaviors. [326] These theories point out that gender stereotypes, whether explicitly or implicitly, have impacts on our judgments and decision-making behaviors. [327] They also highlight the significance of social and cultural learning and its persistence in people's perceptions of social reality. These theories provide insights to an understanding of the traditional gender norms and beliefs in gendered division of labor which are still prevalent today and suggest that a sense of discomfort is felt when there is cognitive dissonance between one's extant knowledge and belief and a perceived social phenomenon or experience, which can be manifested to cause disadvantages to certain groups of people. Lack of fit model and role incongruity theory offer an account for the sense of discomfort induced by female soldiers which may lead to a judgement and prejudice that women are not suited to be in the military or that soldiering is not a female-appropriate vocation.

3.5.4. System Justification Theory

Jost and Banaji introduced the theory of system justification to account for the ways in which social orders and arrangements being preserved and sustained consensually by both advantaged and disadvantaged groups within the society. It is defined as "the psychological process by which existing social arrangements are legitimized, even at the expense of personal and group interest."[328] They argue that because people tend to accept their social positions and the accompanying stereotypes for themselves and others rather than questioning the status quo,[329] they are predisposed to perceive the system as "good, fair, natural, desirable, and even inevitable."[330] Of course, the theory claims that it is not always the case as the degree depends

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[326] Ibid. p. 575.
[327] Ellemers. "Gender Stereotypes." p. 280.
[328] Jost, John T. and Banaji, Mahzarin R. "The role of stereotyping in system-justification and the production of false consciousness." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 33. (1994): p. 2.
[329] Ibid. p. 11.
[330] Jost, John T., Banaji, Mahzarin and Nosek, Brian A. "A Decade of System Justification Theory: Accumulated Evidence of Conscious and Unconscious Bolstering of Status Quo." *Political Psychology* 25, no. 6 (2004): p. 887.

on "situational and dispositional"[331] facets. Nevertheless, it is argued that people will defend and legitimize the existing social arrangements because they are motivated by a few factors; firstly, it was shown in experiments that people respond defensively to criticism or threat to the structure in which they live, which will "increase system-justifying responses."[332] Secondly, studies show that people are more accepting of the status quo when they believe it is "inevitable or inescapable," and when they feel "powerless or dependent on those systems."[333] Jost holds that system justification has the "palliative function" which renders people more satisfied with the status quo, and discourages any action to fight and protest against it.[334] Therefore, he further points out, that system justification serves as both "a threat to the well-being of members of disadvantaged groups and a way of coping with that threat."[335]

Despite studies showing that women have more positive stereotypes than men,[336] Jost argues that "even negative stereotypes of dominant groups may serve the function of system-justification, as long as they indicate that the group is somehow well-suited for its status or role."[337] In a patriarchal society, for example, traits associated with men such as toughness, assertiveness, authoritativeness, competitiveness etc. (which are not necessarily negative) are masculine-coded and reserved for men, and women who possess or seek those qualities are likely to be spurned and sometimes punished. System justification theory provides an interesting insight into the societal resistance to change; though the degree to which it is exhibited may vary from outright hate speech and criticism to a sense of discomfort and consternation, it is a defensive reaction to a change that disrupts and potentially alters the

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[331] Jost, John T. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 58. (2019): p. 263.
[332] Ibid. p. 267.
[333] Ibid.
[334] Ibid. p. 273-4.
[335] Ibid. p. 277.
[336] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 492.
[337] Ibid.

existing arrangements. As noted earlier, being exposed to criticism or threat activates a defense mechanism in which the criticism serves as a motivator to justify the existing system. Such defensive, system-justifying responses can be manifested, for instance, as "complementary stereotypic differentiation of advantaged groups as agentic (but not communal) and disadvantaged groups as communal (but not agentic)."[338] Jost point out that "backlash against feminists and women who defy gender stereotypes"[339] is an example of such a system-justifying reaction.

Thus, system justification theory offers unique explanations to the social phenomena this thesis investigates: the sense of discomfort as a defensive and system-justifying reaction to a disruption to the gender status-quo, the tendency to accept the heteronormative and patriarchal social systems as inevitable, even as disadvantaged groups such as women, and finally, the sense of entitlement and comfort in such a society especially as powerful and advantaged groups such as men. System justification theory, along with other concepts outlined in this chapter, helps us understand why the presence like female soldiers, who disrupts the extant social norms such as gender roles can induce the sense of discomfort not only to men but also to women.

3.5.5. Ambivalent Sexism

Glick and Fiske suggest that sexism is "a multidimensional construct"[340] which is composed of two seemingly opposing attitudes toward women; subjectively negative Hostile Sexism (HS) and subjectively positive Benevolent Sexism (BS). Glick and Fiske define HS and BS as follows; HS "corresponds to classic definitions of prejudice as antipathy and reflects the hostile

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[338] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.
[339] Ibid.
[340] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 491.

derogation of women who pose a threat to the gender hierarchy (e.g., feminists)."[341] BS is "a set of interrelated attitudes toward women that are sexist in terms of viewing women stereotypically and in restricted roles but that are subjectively positive in feeling tone (for the perceiver)."[342] For instance, HS sees women as usurpers of men's entitlement and power[343] and thus often manifests in evidently harmful and disparaging behaviors towards women such as discrimination and assaults.[344] BS, on the other hand, may seem 'nice' and may not immediately appear detrimental as it presupposes protection and affection towards women. However, what motivates such seemingly benign attitudes is the same assumption and expectations about women that it shares with HS; they both presume women's roles as postulated by traditional gender roles and stereotypes (e.g., women are the weaker and subordinate gender, and to be protected) to which they expect women to conform. According to Ambivalent sexism theory, these ostensibly conflicting attitudes are not mutually exclusive, but in fact, complementary notions which justify and reinforce men's structural power. Whereas HS seeks to "justify and maintain patriarchal social structures"[345] by "punishing those who deviate from traditional gender roles," BS "recruits women as unwitting participants in their own subjugation"[346] by offering them protection and affection. Though by different tactics, both HS and BS have a common aim of keeping women in *their place* from which they cannot threat men's status and power.[347]

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[341] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 295.

[342] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 491.

[343] Glick, Peter and Fiske, Susan T. "An Ambivalent Alliance: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism as Complementary Justifications for Gender Inequality." *American Psychologist* 56, no. 2 (2001): p. 109.

[344] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 301.

[345] Glick, Peter and Fiske, Susan T. "Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes Toward Women." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21 (1997): p. 121.

[346] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 295.

[347] Glick, Peter and Fiske, Susan T. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2011): p. 533.

Glick and Fiske further divide those two forms of sexism into three components/subfactors each: *Paternalism*, *Gender Differentiation*, and *Heterosexuality*. Theoretically, HS predicts *dominative paternalism*, *competitive gender differentiation*, and *heterosexual hostility*, whilst BS predicts *protective paternalism*, *complementary gender differentiation*, and *intimate heterosexuality*. Both *dominant paternalism* and *competitive gender differentiation* presume women's incompetence and subordinance by default, legitimizing patriarchy and its control over women, as well as fostering self confidence in men.[348] *Heterosexual hostility* encapsulates objectification of women as well as the fear that women may usurp men's power and status using their sexual attraction.[349] *Protective paternalism* reflects the benevolent aspect of paternalism, where women are the subject of protection and affection as they assume the weaker and subordinate gender. *Complementary gender differentiation* and *intimate heterosexuality* similarly romanticize and assign stereotypically traditional traits to women whose role fulfills and complements men.[350] Although the subfactors only emerge empirically for BS,[351] these characteristics certainly help us better understand the complexity of sexism. Another important aspect to note about the theory is that it recognizes subtypes of women as a major explanation for ambivalent sexist attitudes, which is then supported by several studies. Glick and Fiske point out that by differentiating women into subtypes (e.g., saint and slut) "men could maintain a sense of attitudinal consistency ('I hate some women but love others')."[352] Men can reassure themselves that they are not sexist because they dislike 'certain

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[348] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 493.
[349] Glick and Fiske. "Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes Toward Women." P. 122.
[350] Ibid.
[351] Glick and Fiske. "An Ambivalent Alliance: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism as Complementary Justifications for Gender Inequality." p. 112.
[352] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 494.

types' of women and not women 'in general'. Their research shows that subtypes of women generated polarized views about women, especially in men with high ASI scores.[353]

Despite being established a quarter century ago, Ambivalent Sexism theory remains cogent and relevant today. Moreover, a considerable volume of research has been produced using Glick and Fiske's Ambivalent Sexism Inventory ever since, confirming the positive correlation between HS and BS scores cross- culturally and nationally. In other words, "if people in a society (on average) strongly endorse HS, they also strongly endorse BS and, conversely, if they reject one of these ideologies, they also (on the whole) reject the other."[354] The subsequent research shows not only the validity and relevance of the theory in various societies but also the problematic effects of BS, which are more covert than HS but insidious and just as damaging. For instance, women regularly reject HS, but it is not uncommon for them to endorse BS, especially in more sexist societies,[355] and view it harmless and even romantic.[356] Glick and Fiske argue that it is because sexist beliefs can be learned and normalized in society and adopted by women, which renders those beliefs reinforced even more.[357] Their observation is consistent with the premise of system justification theory that even disadvantaged groups accept and rationalize the social order which holds them back.[358] Importantly, some men may not be aware of BS tendency in their beliefs and behaviors, or that their affection and expectations towards women are in fact rooted in BS.[359] Nevertheless, research suggests victim-shaming tendency in men who endorse BS and that women who endorse BS tend to

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[353] Ibid. p. 509.
[354] Glick, Peter and Fiske, Susan T. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 35, no. 3 (2011): p. 533.
[355] Glick and Fiske. "An Ambivalent Alliance: Hostile and Benevolent Sexism as Complementary Justifications for Gender Inequality." P. 109.
[356] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 299.
[357] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." pp. 507-9.
[358] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." (2019). pp. 267-77.
[359] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." pp. 507-9.

accept their male partners' restrictive and controlling behaviors.[360] These factors make BS "especially effective in undermining women's resistance to inequality,"[361] an evasive and ambiguous thread woven through the intricate psychology of sexism. Whereas HS punishes, threatens, and attacks women who deviate from gendered expectations, BS entices them into conforming to such expectancies and stereotypes. Ambivalent sexism theory points to "a protection racket," the ironic trap, in which "women … seek male protection from male instituted violence."[362]

Another area into which Ambivalent sexism theory provides an insight is objectification of women, one of the major themes that emerged from the analysis of the media discourses in the thesis. Objectification of women's bodies and its detrimental effects need little explanation, but the theory suggests different ways sexism can prompt objectification of female bodies. Research shows that men high in HS tend to objectify sexualized women, i.e., they are likely to deny the women's agency[363] and detach them from "positive, secondary emotions" that are uniquely human.[364] Consistent with the theory's claim that HS is threatened by women who may use their sexuality to seduce and take control over men, HS objectifies women by "reducing them to acted-on objects rather than autonomous actors"[365] in order to (re)gain the power back from women. Regardless of whether she attempted to usurp his power using her sexuality, he tries to cope with the fear by rendering her a sub-human or an object without an agency, reassuring his status. On the other hand, BS leads women to self-objectify and accept that their bodies are to be evaluated, according to the theory. Women are convinced to uphold the traditional gender stereotypes and expectations including appearing feminine and meeting

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[360] Glick and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." p. 533.
[361] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 312.
[362] Ibid. p. 311.
[363] Glick and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." p. 533.
[364] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 304.
[365] Glick and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." p. 533.

the 'beauty standards'. Whereas HS directly and overtly treats women and their bodies as non-agentic objects, BS indirectly polices and controls women's bodies with "rewards associated with conformity to stereotypes."[366]

Ambivalent sexism theory thus provides several perspectives from which representations of female soldiers in media discourses and the sense of discomfort can be investigated. As it will be discussed in the empirical chapters, the notions of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism as well as the subcategories of them are useful tools with which to analyze the subtle and nuanced language and tone used to describe female soldiers. Glick and Fiske have exhibited that HS and BS can be adapted and manifested by both men and women, and it is consistent with the findings of the thesis that the sense of discomfort can be felt regardless of the perceiver's gender. The ambivalent attitudes in the media toward female soldiers reflect the presence of ambivalent sexism in society, which, according to the theory, is a gradation of sexist beliefs and attitudes. The *patriarchal discomfort*, then, can be understood to manifest in either hostile or benevolent forms, both of which are compelled by the similar urge to maintain the gender status-quo by keeping women in *their place*.

3.5.6. Epistemic Injustice

The notion of epistemic injustice in philosophy tends to be discussed in the realm of speech act between a speaker/knower and a hearer, in which the speaker finds herself with less credibility and unable to convey knowledge in the intended way, because of prejudice on the side of the hearer. It is what Fricker calls *testimonial injustice*. One of the conditions through which epistemic oppression takes place, according to Dotson, is *testimonial incompetence* on the part of the audience which is caused by situated ignorance. Situated ignorance is manifested "from

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[366] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 305.

one's social position and/or epistemic location with respect to some domain of knowledge"[367] where one's socioeconomic position becomes either an advantage or a limitation in being an audience with testimonial competence. Kukla argues in a similar vein that it is *discursive injustice* when a speaker cannot "deploy discursive conventions in the normal way" because of her membership in a disadvantaged social group.[368] When a woman attempts to perform a speech act, according to Kukla, because of her gender, her performance may become "a different kind of act than a male would have produced using the same words, in the same context, and with the same conventional entitlements to speak."[369] Even when, in theory, standard discursive and social conventions accord her to speak, her performance is somehow impaired in reality, despite her intentions and entitlement to perform. This, Kukla argues, highlights and amplifies the existent disadvantages attached to her identity (as a member of a disadvantaged social group), effectively rendering her a victim of discursive injustice.

However, as Fricker points out, the influence of the operations of social power goes beyond speech acts, such as "conveying knowledge to others by telling them and making sense of our own social experiences."[370] Of two kinds of epistemic injustice Fricker explicates in her book *Epistemic Injustice*, the notion of *hermeneutical injustice* is especially relevant to the analysis this thesis offers. Some forms of epistemic injustice take place before testimonial injustice occurs; it is when structural prejudice or inequality prevents one from "making sense of their social experiences," due to lack of hermeneutical resources. [371] Unequal relations and distribution of power among social groups result in hermeneutical disadvantages for the powerless and the marginalized. They are deprived of resources to make sense of properly and

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[367] Dotson, Kristie. "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing." *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (2011): p. 248.
[368] Kukla, Rebecca. "Performative Force, Convention and Discursive Injustice." *Hypatia* 29, no. 2 (2014): p. 441.
[369] Ibid. p. 445.
[370] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* p.1.
[371] Ibid. pp. 1, 149.

fairly and articulate their own social experiences. One of the examples in the book is a woman in the 60s who had a moment of enlightenment when she learned for the first time about postpartum depression, which gave her symptoms/experience a name, and equipped her with knowledge that what she and her husband were blaming her for was not, indeed, her fault. Another powerful example depicts how one woman's experience of what would today be called workplace sexual harassment led a group of women to give a name to this phenomenon they all knew too well and come up with the term *sexual harassment*, rendering their experiences intelligible.[372]

These illuminating examples are the essence of the rich history of the women's movement, as it is a history of women sharing and articulating their social experiences and giving them names, when the collective understanding and conceptions of social experiences were only told by and made sense for men. It is a history of women filling the hermeneutical lacunae by participating in the processes in which "collective social meanings are generated,"[373] thereby overcoming hermeneutical disadvantage, and thus epistemic injustice. Unlike testimonial injustice where the hearer's prejudice prevents the subject from conveying knowledge, hermeneutical injustice is not perpetuated by anyone, for it owes its harm to structural prejudice.[374] However, it is entirely possible, and important to keep in mind, that there may be social group(s) who benefits from, and is therefore interested in, maintaining their versions of interpretation of a hegemonic discourse and keeping the others from articulating their own interpretation, which would expose the inequal power relations between them.

Indeed, the history is marked with countless such struggles of the powerless to reclaim their own interpretations of social experiences by filling the hermeneutical lacunae and rendering

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[372] Ibid. pp. 148-52.
[373] Ibid. p. 152.
[374] Ibid. p. 162.

the previously untold discourses intelligible. These are the fights fought by those whose experiences were unspoken and obscured; they shed light on their social experiences and gave them names by articulating their versions of interpretation. As much as it is incredibly empowering for those previously marginalized or oppressed to be able to make sense of their experiences not through someone else's lens but their own, it can be threatening to the powerful/majority/privileged/oppressors. Dotson points out that "epistemic violence does not require intention, nor does it require capacity."[375] This, along with the notion of hermeneutical injustice, may explain the societal complicity outlined in this thesis in resisting the idea of female soldiers. The important point is that a failure of the audience to recognize the speaker/knower which results in epistemic violence can be done intentionally and unintentionally,[376] whether it is due to the audience's testimonial incompetence or structural prejudice. Those who ardently opposed the lifting of combat ban on women, for example, were making active and conscious decisions to deny the ability of women for the role. Yet despite the heightened demand for gender equality in recent years, female soldiers still occupy a highly contested and ambivalent subject position in society. The thesis thus suggests that there is a subtle but shared sense of discomfort and ambivalence in society as well as societal testimonial incompetence due to which people are unable to recognize the subject positions of female soldiers.

To return to the conceptualization of gender stereotypes, Fricker also offers some insights in relation to hermeneutical injustice. The collective social imagination such as stereotypes and prejudices can be so powerful in persisting in one's cognition that it could manifest in their behavior even when it conflicts with their beliefs. [377] Once learned, stereotypes can be imprinted in our cognition and linger for long after we have corrected them, still having

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[375] Dotson. "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing." p. 240.
[376] Ibid. p. 242.
[377] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* p. 37.

influences on our perception of reality. What Fricker calls residual prejudice is very difficult to detect because it persists and continues to influence one's "judgements and motivations … without any focused awareness and without her permission," even after she thinks her beliefs have been updated and her behavior well-intentioned. It causes "the most surreptitious and psychologically subtle forms of testimonial injustice." [378] This would explain behaviors motivated by Benevolent Sexism, for instance, where well-intentioned actions lead to the perpetuation of sexism and gender subordination. The ways in which deeply entrenched gender stereotypes may also manifest involuntarily, where someone or something which deviates from gender norms engenders, despite one's belief in gender equality, a sense of discomfort. It is to suggest that the sense of discomfort can be felt by anyone who has been influenced by the discursive power of gendered power relations, regardless of one's own beliefs which may or may not be sexist in nature.

According to Fricker, gender stereotypes and prejudices are forms of "the social collective imaginary" upon which the structural operations of power rely in order to maintain the social order.[379] Any power relation depends on social co-ordination or social alignment of actions of social agents/groups, but there can also be an "imaginative social co-ordination" on which operations of power depend for "agents having shared conceptions of social identity – conceptions alive in the collective social imagination that govern, for instance, what it is or means to be a woman or a man …"[380] What Fricker calls identity power can be exercised actively or passively; e.g., men's (un)conscious power/influence over women, and some of instances may be "well-intentioned and benevolently paternal."[381] Whether it is active or passive, "it depends very directly on imaginative social co-ordination: both parties must share

[378] Ibid. p. 39.
[379] Ibid. p. 13.
[380] Ibid. pp. 12-4.
[381] Ibid. p. 15.

in the relevant collective conceptions of what it is to be a man and what it is to be a woman, where such conceptions amount to stereotypes … Note that the operation of identity power does not require that either party consciously accept the stereotypes as truthful."[382] Identity power "can control our actions even despite our beliefs" because those stereotypes and other conceptions do not need to be held as beliefs either by subject or object; for the level at which identity power operates is that of the collective social imagination.[383] Gender is one of the realms in which identity power operates, often along with other forms of social power, such as race, class, disability, religion, etc.

3.5.7. Keeping Women in *Their Place*

This section has reviewed the key concepts and theories which compose the conceptual framework and inform the analysis and interpretation of the empirical data. This conceptual framework supplies the thesis with robust theoretical underpinnings to identify and characterize certain narratives and rhetoric. It then aids the thesis to theorize these narratives in the texts to better understand certain phenomena such as defensive reactions in society to violent women. In so doing, the conceptual framework enables the thesis to offer a finer-grained analysis of the ways in which social gender norms operate in the context of media representations of female soldiers, contributing unique insights to the extant body of literature. The framework can offer a useful instrument in research in social gender norms such as stereotypes and gender roles, appropriate modes of masculinity/femininity, and representations of gendered and queer bodies. Together, these theories and concepts guide and inform the analysis throughout the thesis. It is suggested that sex differences likely contributed to determine typical roles men and women occupied in earlier societies. This gendered division of labor, social role theory surmises, was explained and rationalized by gender stereotypes

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[382] Ibid.
[383] Ibid.

which associate each gender with appropriate traits for their typical roles. The gender stereotypes and the concomitant assumptions and expectations for each gender were assimilated and integrated in society and eventually established as a social norm. Theories such as lack of fit model and role congruity theory signal the impacts of such gender norms have in our perceptions and decision-making. The gender norms can dictate one's belief and behavior when they are perceived as 'truth' or 'facts', which could lead to inadvertent consequences such as discrimination. System justification theory offers an explanation why, once established as a norm, the status-quo hardly shifts, as even the disadvantaged groups resist changes and seek to maintain the current order. Ambivalent sexism theory explains the ways in which sexist beliefs that stem from certain assumptions and expectations for each gender manifest in various forms. Finally, the notion of epistemic injustice offers explanations to the prevalence of (mis)representations of female soldiers as well as the logic in which the heteronormative gender norms are maintained by the discursive power of patriarchy. Cooperatively, these concepts and theories provide the thesis with a framework which informs the analysis in the following chapters to engage with and understand the phenomenon of keeping women in *their place*, as the subject of appropriate and respectable femininity.

Chapter 4: Analysis of Military Discourses: *Soldier*

The present chapter offers a reading of the texts from the official magazine of the British Army in which particular attention was paid to how female soldiers are represented, military gender norms (e.g., military masculinities) and culture are illustrated, as well as how female bodies in general are depicted. Dubbed as "Magazine of the British Army[384]," *Soldier* is published by the Ministry of Defence and is distributed to every base and barrack.[385] The first issue was published in 1945. It was published fortnightly from October 1981 to September 1997, and since October 1997 it has been published monthly.[386] The targeted audience is the personnel of the Army and possibly their families. According to their website, it serves as "the Army's primary means of internal communication outside the chain of command," and the contents include "a wide selection of not-to-be-missed news, features, sports, reviews and letters."[387] Though the magazine notes that "views expressed in this magazine are not *necessarily* those of the British Army or the Ministry of Defence,"[388] this thesis considers the magazine as a source of accurate information and, by and large, representative of the British Army as an organization.

The Army and its magazine are chosen as the official military discourses for a few reasons; *Soldier* has the longest history among the official magazines published by the MoD; the Army has the lowest ratio of female personnel among the three services, where its combat roles were the last to become available for women to apply. The magazine is a vital source of information which not only presents the articulation of official narratives of the MoD, but also offers glimpses of the routines and lives of the personnel and insights into the history and evolution

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[384] Ministry of Defence. *Soldier*. March 2019. p. 7.
[385] "Soldier Magazine." The British Army. Available at https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/soldier-magazine/ Accessed 5 August 2021.
[386] Of the issues published from 1980 to 2018.
[387] "Soldier Magazine." The British Army.
[388] Soldier. Emphasis added.

of the institution. As explained in the methodology chapter, total of 662 issues published between 1980 and 2018 were closely read and analyzed. Recurrent themes such as women on the front line, emphasis on femininity, first women to take certain posts, etc. are put into categories and are discussed in this chapter.

4.1. First Women

Especially in the 80s and 90s where the presence of women was becoming more and more prominent, pieces that feature female pioneers in the Army began to regularly appear in *Soldier*. At least 11 such features in the 1980s, 35 in the 1990s, 8 in the 2000s, and 3 in the 2010s can be found in the magazine. These women are often featured smiling in photographs which inevitably draw readers' attention against a backdrop which mostly consists of men. These women are portrayed as testaments to the evolution of the Army as a diverse and progressive institution in which women have become an integral part. There are generally proud and celebratory undertones to these articles that feature the female ground breakers.

Between 1980 to 2018, the first article praising 'first woman' is seen on the page of the April issue of *Soldier* in 1982. Lieutenant-Colonel Jean Blackwood is featured as the first woman to command a regiment of the Army.[389] Titled "First woman CO takes over," the article emphasizes the fact that she is a "housewife" twice in the first two sentences, before proceeding to any other information. Highlighting the gender of female personnel is one of the most conspicuous trends which are found in both military and civil discourses and discussed throughout the thesis. In addition to their names and photographs, these pieces are often accompanied by titles such as "first lady!"[390] and "warrior maiden."[391] The thesis has identified the use of such words and expressions as markers of femininity which emphasize the female

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[389] *Soldier*. April 1982. Part 7. p. 7.
[390] Soldier. February 1989. Part 4. p. 10.
[391] Soldier. May 1988. Part 11. p. 29.

soldiers' identities as women rather than their identities as soldiers. These markers underscore the communal traits of the subjects which are considered stereotypical of women and tacitly draw attention to the incongruity between them and their agentic roles which are stereotypically assumed by men.[392] As it will be discussed in all empirical chapters, women in general are represented and described distinctly differently from their male counterparts. Although it is somewhat inevitable for female bodies to stand out when they are clearly a minority, the markedness of their presence is striking.

Calling female soldiers by their first names has appeared in the magazine as one of the recurring themes, which becomes increasingly rare in the 2010s. It may give a friendly tone but not so much professional and respectful one when introducing someone and their achievements. Just by scanning the titles, many female first names can be found. "Medical first for Susanne,"[393] "Margaret's medal,"[394] "Lesley joins team,"[395] and "Sue is first among nurses"[396] are only a few examples. Male soldiers were occasionally featured with their first names, such as "Mark's in top flight,"[397] yet it was rather rare compared to how often female soldiers were called by their first names.

Another tendency was to dub those articles featuring female pioneers "first lady(ies)." Indeed, between 1989 and 2001, there are at least 6 pieces entitled as such. In addition to calling first names, there are some expressions which can be seen belittling and treating the female personnel rather lightly, despite their achievements to had earned their positions for the first time. For instance, the article "Major Pepita is red cap boss"[398] reports the appointment of

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[392] Sczesny, Nater and Eagly. "Agency and Communion: Their implications for gender stereotypes and gender identities." p. 103.
[393] Soldier. January 1990. Part 2. p. 11.
[394] Soldier. January 1994. Part 2. p. 12.
[395] Soldier. February 2003. p. 8.
[396] Soldier. April 2005. p. 8.
[397] Soldier. August 1992. Part 16. p. 12.
[398] Soldier. May 1986. Part 9. p. 19.

Major Pepita Simpson to a commander of a Royal Military Police unit. According to the Army's website, a rank of Major presumes 8 to 10 years of service.[399] If a male Major was promoted the same way, would he be called by his first name in the magazine? It may have been intended for a playful effect, but it is highly unlikely that the magazine would print male officers' first names in the same manner such as 'Brigadier William retires'. Another example is the piece titled "Service with a smile,"[400] which, just as the title suggests, features a photo of a smiling female soldier. Women seem to be associated with smiles more often that men are, and the title would have been different if it featured a male soldier. These are a few examples of the very particular ways in which women are portrayed and described on the pages of the magazine. As it will be discussed further in the section 4.4, the ways in which female soldiers are depicted are markedly different from how male soldiers are represented, and various markers of femininity are identified throughout the empirical analysis as discursive techniques to paint female soldiers in certain ways.

Naturally, the rate at which such features about female pioneers are published becomes irregular in recent years, as many of them happened in the 80s and the 90s, where the presence of women in the Army was growing and more posts became newly available for them. There is also a change in the way in which they are described. From the 2010s, the magazine becomes much more careful not to put too much emphasis on the gender and femininity of the subject. The way the information is delivered becomes more neutral, and the use of words such as 'lady' or 'girls', as well as calling their first names are avoided. Women still draw attention in the magazine as men are the overwhelming majority, but they are described and illustrated in the same equal manner with their male counterparts on the pages. Recent social norms have dictated that calling professional women 'girls' is disrespectful and no longer accepted; the

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[399] Army.mod.uk, 2019.
[400] Soldier. September 1993. Part 18. p. 11.

changes in the representations of women in *Soldier* indicate that popular values, beliefs, and ideologies, including gender norms in society are also disseminated in the military. Basham points out that as an institution funded and supported by the public, the Army needs to maintain its legitimacy in society by meeting certain standards and expectations, such as equal and diverse workplace practices.[401] As such, the military and its gender norms are continuously influenced by societal gender norms, rather than existing on its own, therefore, although the military culture may seem radically different from the civilian one, the two spaces and their gender norms are intimately interrelated.

4.2. Women on the Front Line

Perhaps the most controversial and longstanding debate in the history of women in the British Armed Forces was on whether to allow them in close combat roles on the front line. Although the ban was lifted and all posts in the British military are open to women now, it still seems to prompt mixed reactions. *Soldier* mainly conveys and reiterates the news and decisions by the MoD on the issue, without specifically arguing for or against it. The first article on the topic since 1980 was published in 1987, in which the magazine reported that Denmark was considering allowing women into the frontline roles. Entitled "The New Vikings," the article favorably tells of the Danish trials in which female soldiers trained alongside their male colleagues. Although the female soldiers are being referred to as 'girls' throughout the article, by both the author of the article and the Danish Defence staff press spokesman, the general tone is that despite some concerns about their physical abilities, the female soldiers are positively assessed as handling well "high stress situations such as tactical evaluations."[402] In terms of the British Armed Forces and their own moves toward inclusion of women, it took

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[401] Basham. "Effecting Discrimination: Operational Effectiveness and Harassment in the British Armed Forces."; "Harnessing Social Diversity in the British Armed Forces: The Limitations of 'Management' Approaches."
[402] Soldier. January 1987. Vol 1. p. 35.

some more years to be featured in *Soldier*. A story about the first female frontline helicopter pilots was featured on the May issue in 1993. Taking up almost half a page is a photograph of Captain Rose Ashkenazi and Sargent Alison Jenkins smiling in a helicopter, in uniform and helmets.[403]

The debate on allowing women in combat roles starts to frequent the pages of *Soldier* in the late 1990s. The magazine published a piece on the parliamentary debate on the issue, citing the Defence Committee's report. The committee, the article reports, "welcomes the prospect of extending opportunities for women in the Army, not just because this may help solve personnel shortages." The Committee also noted that "deployment of women into tanks and infantry in the direct contact battle will be seen by some as a major step. For others it is a natural progression," suggesting a positive attitude toward the change.[404] In an article titled "Women: a call to arms" published in August 1997, then Defence Secretary George Robertson is quoted as stating that the physical requirements for some of the jobs "would preclude not just women, but a number of men," and suggested that there may be "a problem with recruitment" when half of population is "turned off" by military jobs. Robertson also emphasized the importance for the Armed Forces to be "seen as a modern employer,"[405] a discourse which will be reiterated a number of times by government and military officials in the next 20 years. After a decision to make available jobs for women in the Army from 47 percent to 70 percent, *Soldier* printed a piece "Lady on the Line." Combat roles were excluded, and the article argues that "the government does not think society is ready yet to see them in close-combat roles." The article features Lieutenant Amelia Baker, the first female commander of a patrol troop in Cyprus. One

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[403] Soldier. May 1993. Vol 10. p. 5.
[404] Soldier. April 1996. Vol 9.
[405] Soldier. August 1997. Vol 17.

of her subordinates Gunner Nick Claydon, asked how soldiers think about a female commander, tells the magazine that "we have no problem with her being a woman."[406]

The next piece on the topic came over three years later, titled "No role for women in close combat," following the decision by the MoD to forego opening close combat roles to women.[407] After another few years' gap, the magazine had a feature entitled "Femme fatales," in which 4 short interviews with female soldiers appeared. All of them attested that they are not being treated differently and that they enjoy their jobs in the Army. The article describes the British Army "masculine world" and "male-dominated environment," in which those female soldiers had to be recognized as "one of the lads."[408] While illustrating the female soldiers as those who are closing the gender gap in the organization, the article still acknowledges and depicts the Army as inherently masculine. Over the years, the narrative changes to emphasizing diversity and gender neutrality.

In 2009, Soldier published an article "Front line review," as the MoD started its periodic review of the policy on the exclusion of women from ground close-combat roles, demanded by European Community law. The piece reads that "women already serve in the heat of battle in a variety of roles but remain excluded from joining Infantry regiments or serving as tank crew."[409] Following the review which concluded the exclusion of women from close combat roles should remain, the magazine reported the result in an article "Restrictions on roles remaining following review." Recognizing that female soldiers play critical roles in the Army, the article reports that the review found evidence inconclusive.[410] In December 2015, however, then Prime Minister David Cameron ordered the MoD to be ready to lift the ban in 2016.

[406] Soldier. December 1997. P. 5.
[407] Soldier. June 2002.
[408] Soldier. March 2008. p. 32.
[409] Soldier. July 2009. p. 13.
[410] Soldier. January 2011. p. 13.

Following the announcement, *Soldier* dedicated two large features focusing on the topic in 2016. In April, a 5-page piece titled "Stepping up to combat" was published, in which an interview with a head Infantry representative on the tri-Service women in ground close combat review group was printed where he explained the decision-making process and the reasoning and research behind the move. In addition, a list of countries in which women can serve in combat roles as well as interviews with Canadian and Norwegian female combat soldiers were featured.[411] In August same year, the magazine reported the government's announcement to lift the combat ban on women,[412] and printed a 2-page piece titled "On track to fight," explaining the roadmap to fully integrating women in ground close combat roles, as well as a Q&A with a Sergeant Major. The article assured, in bold, that "there will be no lowering of entry or performance standards" when women are allowed in these roles.[413]

In 2017, an article titled "Women need now apply" reported that all units in the Royal Armoured Corps became available to women.[414] Finally in 2018, *Soldier* published a piece titled "Gender is no longer a barrier," as Infantry and Special Forces officially opened the doors to women. Beaming in a photograph with two male soldiers is Lance Corporal Kat Dixon of the Royal Armoured Corps. She recalls being the only woman among 40 men in the training and tells the magazine that "there was no differences because I was a woman – and I carried the same weights on the tabs." "As long as people meet the necessary physical and mental requirements they should be allowed to give any role a go – but standards should not be lowered," She told *Soldier*.[415]

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[411] Soldier. April 2016. pp. 22-7.
[412] Soldier. August 2016. p. 7.
[413] Soldier. August 2016. pp. 40-1.
[414] Soldier. June 2017. p.7.
[415] Soldier. November 2018. p. 7.

4.3. Vox Pop/Final Word

Whilst the ways *Soldier* reported on the topic of women on the front line as reviewed in the previous section are in a neutral and matter-of-fact manner, the magazine also offers interactive features such as interviews with and letters from soldiers. Since October 1997, *Soldier* started a feature called Vox Pop, which was later changed to Final Word, in which around 10 soldiers give their views on certain issues. It offers invaluable insights into more intimate and 'real' experiences of the personnel as well as glimpses of how certain topics are received by soldiers on the ground. *Figure 2* shows the appearance of female soldiers featured in Vox Pop/Final Word between October 1997 and December 2018. The number in 1998 is particularly high as they did an all-female feature in the October issue in which they were asked about the career opportunities in the Army. One might imagine that the number of female soldiers featured would increase as the year goes on and more positions became available to them, but as the figure shows, except for the particular year of 1998, there is no drastic increase or decrease during the 20-year period. As discussed in this chapter, the ways female soldiers are depicted, referred to as girls, and called by their first names through the 80s, 90s, and early 2000s indicate the sexist attitudes lacking respect to women. However, it is argued that such attitudes were also common and accepted in society, and the figure seems to suggest that the inclusivity and visibility of female soldiers in the magazine have remained relatively stable over the years, regardless of the presence of the sexist attitudes.

Figure 2
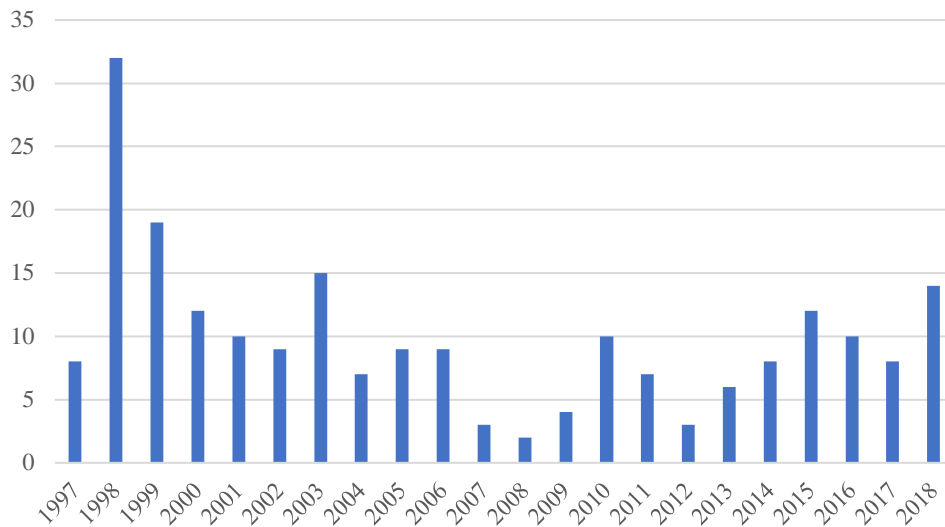
Appearance of female soldiers on Vox Pop/Final Word

Between 1997 and 2018, *Soldier* printed Vox Pop/Final Word on the topic of women on the frontline three times. The first one features 10 soldiers, of which 4 are females, and they were asked "Do you believe that women soldiers should have front-line roles?" 4 of them, including two women, answered women should or can, and 6 of them answered frontline roles would be too difficult for women. In November 2000, it asked 12 soldiers, of which 3 are females, "Should women fight in the front line?" 9 of them, including all three women, answered either women should or can handle the frontline jobs, 2 answered they should not, and one was ambivalent. Given this was over two decades ago, their attitudes seem very progressive. Finally, 8 soldiers, of which 4 of them are females, were asked the same question in May 2014, as then Chief of the General Staff argued a month before that the Army should have more women. 6, including two females said women should be able to take on combat roles if they are capable. Two female soldiers expressed their concern and opposition to the idea. One said she does not

think women should be in infantry but would be fine in other combat roles; the other is adamant that women should not be allowed in combat roles.[416]

These soldiers featured in Vox Pop/Final Word only represent a fraction of all personnel, but it is worth noting that there have been a certain number of soldiers in the Army who recognized female colleagues' ability to potentially be on the front line, as early as in the 1990s. It is compelling as it suggests that the prevalent sexist culture in the 1990s may not necessarily be linked to a sense of discomfort likely to be induced by female soldiers, or distrust of their abilities. Fricker argues that deeply entrenched collective social imagination like stereotypes and prejudices can manifest in behaviors almost at unconscious level, even if they conflict with conscious beliefs.[417] It is a useful insight when considering unconscious bias one might have about female soldiers, which may manifest as the sense of discomfort despite one's belief in gender equality. To these soldiers, however, the female soldiers are not just an abstract concept, as they might seem to many ordinary civilians, but actual colleagues and they depend their lives on each other. It is possible that the direct life-or-death reality reduces the level of ambiguity about the perceptions of female soldiers; stereotypes and prejudices would have much less impact on their judgement about and trust in female soldiers. It is thus considered significant when male soldiers genuinely attest to the legitimacy and abilities of their female colleagues.

4.4. Emphasis on Femininity

This section discusses one of the most salient shifts that is observed in *Soldier* over the years, which is to put an emphasis on the gender and femininity of female soldiers using certain markers of femininity. Examples are to refer to them as *girls*, *ladies*, describing their physicality, and to call them by their first names. This trend, much like the ways in which

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[416] Soldier. May 2014. p. 102.
[417] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* p. 37.

female pioneers in the Army as well as pin-up girls were featured in the magazine, was most conspicuous in the 80s, 90s, and the early 2000s. Just as no male pioneers and male models were seen on the pages, male soldiers, especially officers, are not routinely called by their first names. Female soldiers stand out in the magazine as they are often accompanied by photographs and descriptions which highlight their gender. Since it is a visual medium, photographs and images are a main source of information, which also feature male soldiers. Yet female soldiers draw more attention than their male counterparts precisely because of the ways in which they are portrayed and described on the pages. To name a few examples, an issue published in 1981 describes two female TA (Territorial Army) medical assistants "pretty,"[418] and another in 1982 calls female TA soldiers in weapon training "gun girls" and "the girls of the TA."[419] Calling female soldiers girls was also commonplace. An article in 1983, focusing on the WRAC volunteers who were to be posted in the Falklands, is entitled "Now for the real task."[420] Not only does it imply that what they had done previously to their deployment was not 'the real task', the article also notes that "their military skills will be very much appreciated, as much as their sex."[421] In its attempt to highlight these female soldiers' professionalism, it describes how they resisted the photographer's effort to emphasize their femininity, saying "we're soldiers!"[422] Yet they are photographed with a big stuffed toy, cheerfully laughing.

The thesis has identified the use of certain language and expressions such as discussed above as markers of femininity which are attached to the representations of female soldiers in *Soldier* as well as the newspapers. These markers are used to highlight the identities of female soldiers as women while diverting the reader's attention from their professional identities as soldiers.

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[418] *Soldier.* November 1981. Part 12. p. 9.
[419] *Soldier.* April 1982. Part 7. p. 8.
[420] *Soldier.* August 1983. Part 16. p. 33.
[421] Ibid.
[422] Ibid.

They also underscore the markedness of the bodies of female soldiers, rendering them hyper-visible. The use of such markers of femininity can be explained by Glick and Fiske's notion of Benevolent Sexism which assigns stereotypically feminine roles to women who need protection of men. The use of language and expressions such as gentle, feminine, and pretty to depict the women and calling them by their first names denote characteristics of *complementary gender differentiation* as well as *protective paternalism* of BS which expect women to assume the weaker and subordinate gender who complements men.[423] Moreover, Jost points out that, according to system justification theory, such "stereotypic differentiation of advantaged groups as agentic and disadvantaged groups as communal" is an expression of system-justifying response.[424] In a heteronormative and patriarchal system of society, collective conceptions such as these gender stereotypes are integral functions to sustain the social order, which tend to be accepted and justified as 'good' or even 'inevitable' by people. Criticisms or threat to such a structure, the theory posits, bring about defensive reactions.[425] Female soldiers exemplifies such a threat to the current gendered social arrangements whose presence is stereotypes-defying and anxiety-inducing. The thesis suggests that by emphasizing their identities as women and civilians rather than their professional identities as soldiers, a sense of discomfort induced by the contrast between the feminine bodies and the masculine-coded profession is mitigated. The imposition of such subject positions on female soldiers, the thesis argues, is a manifestation of *patriarchal discomfort* as well as resistance to them as a disruptive figure who subverts the gendered power relations.

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[423] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 493.; Glick and Fiske. "Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes Toward Women." p. 122.

[424] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.

[425] Jost, Banaji and Nosek. "A Decade of System Justification Theory: Accumulated Evidence of Conscious and Unconscious Bolstering of Status Quo." p. 887.

4.5. Women as Motherly Figures

This section touches upon another theme found in the magazine, which is to assign a maternal role to female soldiers. Specifically, there are three pieces in the early 2000s in which female soldiers are photographed with children. In the May issue of 2001, in an article titled "TA for toys…," Lance Corporal Sharon Astor is photographed with two toddlers where 321 Squadron RLC donated £1000-worth of toys and games to a nursery. Whilst there is no doubt this was a well-intended deed by the squadron, the way it is reported, highlighting the femininity of female soldiers, is implicative of the heteronormative gender stereotypes.[426] In another case, in a similar vein, a female soldier is pictured with an Afghan child in a children's hospital in Kabul, Afghanistan. The article entitled "Joy of toys," reports a delivery of clothes and toys to the children under the civil-military cooperation (CIMIC) programme, and it reads "Lieutenant Tracey Prowse … comforts a child."[427] The similarities in these two photographs are undeniable; a young female soldier, smiling next to small children, either holding them or handing them toys. These settings, again, reinforce the idea that those female soldiers are women, first and foremost, before they are soldiers, even when they are dressed in full military uniform.

Another female soldier is featured in a similar manner in the January issue of 2004. The article discusses two soldiers working on the CIMIC projects in Iraq, one is a male and the other one is a female. While 375 words are spent to explain what Captain Little (male) works on, only 188 words are spared to describe the work of Staff Sergeant Smith (female). Moreover, though there are small photographs of Captain Steve Little and Staff Sergeant Anita Smith, there is a bigger photograph of Staff Sergeant Smith surrounded by children who are raising their hands, welcoming her. The title and subtitle each read "Class act from school ma'am," and "Soldier

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[426] *Soldier.* May 2001. p. 13.
[427] *Soldier.* March 2003. p. 31.

extends her tour to finish project."[428] At a glance, what the article *visually* conveys is a story

of 'a devoted female soldier who decided to stay longer in Iraq for children and their school',

rather than *two* soldiers working on the CIMIC projects in Iraq. The title and subtitle, together

with the photograph of a female soldier surrounded by children, give the similar impression

that those two previous articles do. Furthermore, the article describes Staff Sergeant Smith as

"an angel."[429]

While it may be completely acceptable, depending on the context, to portray women as

motherly and nurturing figures, it is problematic in these professional soldiering contexts

especially because male soldiers are never assigned a role to give children toys and be

photographed with them. Such photographs in the media are believed to reinforce "existing

ideas and stereotypes than revealing new information or perspectives."[430] These images signal

the stereotypical feminine traits of nurturance and pacifism of the female soldiers rather than

their professional identities as soldiers. Subject positions of mothers are imposed on these

female soldiers, which may soothe a sense of discomfort engendered by the image of women

in the military uniform, for making sense of them as women and motherly figures is more

convenient and reassuring. Basham similarly argues that "by constructing women as

'empathetic' and 'motherly' but denying them possibilities to be 'warrior-like', binaries of

improper and proper femininity/masculinity continue to 'establish the ontological field in

which bodies may be given legitimate expression.'"[431] Assigning motherly roles to female

soldiers is another example of the markers of femininity, which emphasizes their identities as

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[428] *Soldier.* January 2004. p. 21.
[429] Ibid.
[430] Schwalbe, Carol B. and Dougherty, Shannon M. "Visual coverage of the 2006 Lebanon War: Framing conflict in three US news magazines." *Media, War & Conflict* 8, no. 1 (2015): p. 143.
[431] Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.* p. 82.

the defended (women, wife, mother, civilians) in the defender/defended dichotomy, while trivializing their professional identities as soldiers.

4.6. Sexual Minorities as Nontraditional Bodies

The term LGBTQ+ and issues surrounding it seem became a much bigger subject for the Army to tackle in the late 2000s to 2010s. As discussed in the literature review, homosexuality was long banned in the British Armed Forces until the ban was finally lifted in 2000. The Army's history and evolutions from its rejection, acceptance to 'championing' of sexual minorities are chronicled in *Soldier*. This section focuses on the shift in attitudes toward sexual minorities in the Army in two distinct periods, between 1980 to 2000 and 2000 to 2018. The first period is marked with harsh policies against homosexuality and discriminatory attitudes shared by the policymakers as well as officers and personnel. The second era is characterized by a gradational transition from uncertainty and fear of homosexuality to ostensibly championing sexual minorities and becoming one of top employers in the Workplace Equality Index.

The MoD declared that sexual minorities were "not compatible" with Services in its official report in 1996.[432] *Soldier* reported the government's as well as the Army's official decisions regarding the issue. The first article on the subject (since 1980, the year to which this thesis goes back) appears in the 1982 February issue. It is on the new 'Army General and Administrative Instruction' in which the MoD reiterates its policy against sexual minorities and instructs commanding officers how to handle such cases. A MoD spokesman is cited in the article stating that "homosexuality remains a serious offence under the Army Act."[433] Although the Sexual Offences Act 1967 decriminalized homosexual acts in the UK, the Army and its personnel were excluded from it. The article notes that "medical advice is mandatory and advice is given to medical officers and psychiatrists," and that in most cases the Royal

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[432] *Soldier.* April 1996. Part 7. p. 8.
[433] Ibid.

Military Police investigations were carried out. According to the article, "more than 250 men and 160 women were discharged for homosexual offences" between 1977 and 1981. [434] Evidently, gay and lesbian soldiers were systematically and routinely pathologized and punished for their sexuality.

In 1995, then Shadow Secretary of State for Defence Dr. David Clark said that a Labour government would lift the ban on sexual minorities serving in the Armed Forces, arguing that the ban was "not acceptable in civilized society."[435] In response, then Defence Procurement Minister Roger Freeman justified the policy which considers homosexuality was not compatible with Services, maintaining that "[homosexuality] undermines the good order and discipline necessary for military effectiveness."[436] Moreover, he is quoted in the same article arguing that it was their responsibility to sustain "the welfare and morale of new recruits, 35 per cent of whom were under 18."[437] The articles adds that soldiers are often required to share their working and living environments closely with one another. These statements not so covertly imply that sexual minorities in the Armed Forces were considered a threat to heterosexual soldiers' welfare and morale, especially of young recruits, as there were risks of them being sexually assaulted by sexual minorities. One reader (a soldier) wrote to *Soldier*, expressing his disbelief and concerns about legally allowing sexual minorities in the Armed Forces. He writes, "men are naturally attracted to women," and "to imagine homosexual lovers, especially of different rank, being allowed to serve together beggars belief." [438] He also mentions "the close living relationship" in his letter, which suggests that being physically close

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[434] Ibid.
[435] *Soldier*. May 1995. Part 10. p. 9.
[436] *Soldier*. May 1995. Part 11. p. 7.
[437] Ibid.
[438] Ibid. p. 32.

to gay men, or perhaps more accurately, being with men who were potentially gay, was a common fear among straight men.

Antagonistic attitudes towards sexual minorities in the Army were prevalent back when such perspectives shared by the Army and the government. However, it seems that some had more progressive views on the issue even in the organization whose identity and culture were strictly and exclusively heteronormative. An ex-soldier who identifies himself as 'not homosexual' wrote to the *Soldier* in 1995, amid the controversy over the proposal to allow 'homosexuals' in the Armed Forces, as he felt "compelled" to do so. He wants to dispute some of the 'myths' about homosexuality, since serving sexual minorities cannot defend themselves, as they would risk their career in the Armed Forces if they did. The letter explains that sexual minorities have been serving in the military from the beginning, though in the closet, and the fact that there have not been many allegations that they assault young soldiers for sex refutes the popular misconception. Moreover, he argues, that during his service he did not care about race, sex, and sexuality of his fellow soldiers, because the most important was if they were professional and good at the job. He is sure that "most people in the Service would rather go into action beside a dependable soldier who happens to be homosexual than a heterosexual one who is a poor soldier."[439] He concludes the letter by stating that it would get harder and harder for the Army to defend and justify its 'homosexuals not compatible with Services' view. Like the soldiers who supported women's abilities in combat roles in the 1990s, the letter shows how there were some who did not share with their employer their views regarding sexual minorities. It is also worth noting that *Soldier* represented different opinions like the letter, which suggests fair and impartial journalism as it could have chosen to convey only their official rhetoric as a magazine published by the MoD.

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[439] *Soldier.* July 1995. Part 14. p. 34.

Following the British government's decision to end the ban on gay soldiers in 2000, the Armed Forces issued a new Code of Social Conduct in which they state guidelines regarding social behaviors within the organization, with all serving personnel subjected to it "regardless of gender, sexual orientation, rank or status." *Soldier* features this new code of conduct in an article titled 'Don't fear it, don't flaunt it' in their February issue, explaining what it entails. The title is strongly reminiscent of the American 'don't ask, don't tell' policy towards sexual minorities serving in their armed forces, which was in effect from 1993 to 2011. The policy, in principle, allowed sexual minorities to serve so long as they were closeted, and prohibited them from disclosing their sexual orientation on the grounds that openly gay soldiers would disrupt good order, discipline and unit cohesion in the military. The British 'don't fear it, don't flaunt it' presumes a similar logic; you can be gay but don't let your colleagues know that (or they will be disturbed, and operational effectiveness will be affected). The ban was lifted in the UK after the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the British policy excluding sexual minorities was "not legally sustainable." Then Defence Secretary Geoffrey Hoon expressed his reluctance when he stated that "there will be those who would have preferred to continue to exclude homosexuals but the law is the law. We cannot pick and choose the decisions we implement."[440] He went on to explain why they needed a code of conduct as they now accepted sexual minorities legally. He referred to "unique role" of the Services in which personnel are required to work and live with close proximity with others, and standards of behavior in the Services which are more demanding than that of society in order to maintain unit cohesion and operational effectiveness.

The guideline stresses that given the tight-knit nature of the military; mutual respect is key to avoid 'social misconducts'. It suggests that even after the ban was lifted, the Army was still

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[440] *Soldier.* February 2000. p. 7.

very wary of the 'threat' sexual minorities allegedly posed to the service. The guideline is a clear demonstration of *patriarchal discomfort* felt by the institution whose identity relied upon the traditional conception of heteronormative masculinity, which was disrupted by the marked bodies of sexual minorities. Such a defensive reaction to the homosexual bodies bears a similarity to the response to the possibility of female combat soldiers. The biggest concern raised in both instances is how these nontraditional bodies may disrupt unit cohesion and damage morale. They were seen as 'unfit' for the roles because of their stereotypes which, at the time, were considered incompatible with the occupation. Lack of fit model postulates that such perceptions lead to "negative performance expectations" and thus prompt rejective reactions.[441] When the nontraditional bodies are exposed and visible, consistent with Ahmed's observation that "[t]he fact that we notice such arrivals tells us more about what is already in place than it does about 'who' arrives," [442] the homogeneity of the military, its heteronormativity and maleness are also laid bare.

In the next decade since the announcement of the guideline, however, the Army and its attitude toward sexual minorities personnel change drastically. Instead of expressions of uncertainty, cautiousness and fear, words such as 'progressive', 'inclusive', and 'modern' become prominent on the pages. The message that regardless of their gender, sexual orientations and religions, new recruits will be fully supported and accepted are repeatedly promoted. *Soldier* has printed several special features focusing on its LGBTQ+ personnel as well as the Army's efforts and progresses over the years in terms of its policies regarding sexual minorities. An openly gay soldier, a transgender soldier, and a same-sex couple are interviewed in these special features in which they expressed their contentment in how supportive and respectful

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[441] Heilman. "Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder."; Heilman, Manzi, and Braun. "Presumed incompetent: perceived lack of fit and gender bias in recruitment and selection." pp. 92-3
[442] Ahmed. "A phenomenology of whiteness." (2007) p. 157.

their colleagues and commanding officers have been to them and praised the Army as an ideal employer. It is evident from such features and campaigns which emphasize diversity and inclusivity that the Army has committed to revamping its old public image since the bans on homosexuals and women have been lifted. Jester also points out that the Army began to "construct [itself] as an inclusive team," in its recruitment advertisements, contrary to the earlier campaigns.[443] The fact that the Army has been listed as a top employer in the Workplace Equality Index is a testament to the progresses it has made since 2000.[444] Despite these significant changes, the thesis has also found the ambivalent attitudes of the Army toward nontraditional bodies after 2000. The period between 2000 and the early 2010s seems to have been a transitional phase in which the representations of sexual minorities and women in *Soldier* impart mixed signals. On one hand, the progressiveness of the military is emphasized and promoted, yet on the other hand, a faint sense of disdain for women and femininity was still present. An interview with an openly gay soldier is an example.

In the July 2009 issue, *Soldier* printed a feature titled 'Equal partners; Gay soldiers celebrate diversity of modern British Army', featuring a male openly gay soldier and a female couple.[445] It was intended to praise and celebrate the Army's "giant strides in equality and diversity," through the interviews with them expressing their satisfaction with their work environment. In one of the interviews titled 'Pride, not prejudice', then[446] Trooper James Wharton, openly gay personnel who was known as a poster child of the LGBTQ+ community, told *Soldier* that just 10 years after the big change, gay and lesbian soldiers are fully supported by the British Armed Forces. He mentions the American 'don't ask, don't tell' policy under which gay soldiers are

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[443] Jester, Natalie. "Army recruitment video advertisements in the US and UK since 2002: Challenging ideals of hegemonic military masculinity?" *Media, War & Conflict* 14, no. 1 (2021): p. 70.
[444] The British Army. "Army One of Britain's Top 100 LGBT-Inclusive Employers.";
https://www.stonewall.org.uk/full-list-top-100-employers-2020
[445] *Soldier.* July 2009. p. 23-7.
[446] He was later promoted to Lance Corporal.

"not allowed to be themselves," in comparison to the UK forces today, to which he came out even before he told his parents. The article points out that the fact that he is comfortable to tell his colleagues that he is gay and likes Britney Spears (which implies he is 'very' gay) is a testament to the great progress the Army has made. Although he admits that there are people within the military who are not in favor of or "can't accept" the new policy, he says "it's 1,000 times better than ten years ago." What stands out in the interview, however, is the ways in which both Wharton and the writer of the article repeatedly stress how Wharton, who was deployed to Iraq in 2007, is not "a pansy" nor does he fit into any "gay stereotype." Wharton explains that "whoever goes on a tour to a place like Iraq can't really be described as a pansy – so the gay stereotype doesn't really apply."[447] The article reiterates that "the hard image and stories from Iraq" do not fall into any 'gay stereotype'.

What is the 'gay stereotype' are they referring to? Wharton explains *his* conviction about misconceptions about gay people; "people tend to think gay people don't like sports and that they just sit and file their nails – that is not the case," he says. "I love playing and watching sport – I'm a massive Liverpool fan and I don't own a nail file."[448] By emphasizing his toughness and masculinity, he ironically reinforces the gender and sexuality norms by defining himself as opposite of the 'gay stereotype'. Unaware of his own prejudice, he tries to differentiate himself from what is being referred to in the article as the 'gay stereotype'. Given the traditionally heteronormative and masculine identity of the military, especially in its transitional period between 2000 to the early 2010s, it is plausible that femininity was still frowned upon, and perhaps, femininity in gay men was especially considered offensive to some heterosexual men. The clearly negative and almost disrespectful undertone to the way Wharton talks about 'pansies' and 'gay stereotypes' suggests that even after the ban was lifted, there

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[447] Ibid. p. 24.
[448] Ibid.

was still an ambiguously sexist and homophobic undercurrent in the institution. Perhaps acting stereotypically macho and tough, consciously or unconsciously, was a way some gay soldiers had adapted in order not to be discriminated against by their straight colleagues. This episode is indicative of the significant impacts the stereotypes can have on judgements and prejudice against the nontraditional bodies.[449] The 'gay stereotype' from which Wharton tried to distance himself was likely to be associated with the perception of 'lack of fit', which would leave the nontraditional bodies in a disadvantaged position.[450]

4.7. Pin-up Girls and Other Female Bodies

Female soldiers were not the only women who appeared on the pages of *Soldier*. The coverage of 'pin-up girls', glamour models, actresses and beauty pageants contestants paying visits to, and "cheer" soldiers were a recurrent theme until the 2010s.[451] It was increasingly considered anachronic and inappropriate to depict women as sex objects in the media outlets which was also reflected in *Soldier*. For instance, the *Sun* dropped its feature known as 'Page 3' with topless glamour models from their printed papers in 2015 after 44 years, as it had been faced with criticisms and campaigns like 'No More Page 3'.[452] The pin-up girls and models featured in *Soldier* were not as explicitly sexualized as those in the *Sun*, yet their often skimpy clothing and heavy makeup suggest their femininity, civilianness and promiscuity which draw a contrast to the masculine, stern and disciplined military environment in which they are portrayed. Those

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[449] Ellemers. "Gender Stereotypes." p. 280.

[450] Heilman, Manzi, and Braun. "Presumed incompetent: perceived lack of fit and gender bias in recruitment and selection." pp. 92-3; Eagly and Karau. "Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders): p. 575.

[451] There are at least 35 such features with photographs of the women in the 1980s, 11 in the 90s, 16 in the 2000s, and 7 in the 2010s.

[452] They are still available online. O'Carroll, Lisa, Sweney, Mark and Greenslade, Roy. "Page 3: The Sun calls time on topless models after 44 years." *The Guardian*. 20 January 2015. Accessed 21 March 2019. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/jan/19/has-the-sun-axed-page-3-topless-pictures
Greenslade, Roy. "No More Page 3 step up their campaign against the Sun." *The Guardian*. 9 December 2014. Accessed 21 March 2019. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/media/greenslade/2014/dec/09/no-more-page-3-step-up-their-campaign-against-the-sun

women were meant to be charming, harmless, just 'a bit of fun', who provided some entertainment to the soldiers.

The ways in which these women are portrayed in the magazine are similar to how female soldiers were depicted, characterized by the use of the markers of femininity such as referring to them as girls, calling them by their first names, as well as certain language and expressions. Examples include "Sweet Sue signs on with the Dragoons"[453] for a Page 3 girl in a swimsuit, "That's our girl!"[454] for a TV personality training among sappers, "Ida – soldiers' favourite"[455] for a tribute for a former *Soldier* pin-up girl, and "Precious Gemma"[456] for an actor who appears on the front cover, wearing nothing but the Union Jack flag wrapped around her body and high heels. Most women are dressed in revealing clothes and suggestively smiling at the camera. They are not only portrayed visually with their femininity highlighted, but also described in certain ways – cheerful, lighthearted and frivolous, such as "sweet,"[457] "sunshine,"[458] and "Debbie delights the aviator."[459] Some of them are called 'Forces' sweetheart' or 'soldiers' sweetheart'. They are often pictured with very pleased looking soldiers, kissing them and lifting them. There are certain language and expressions that are used for women, never for men; adjectives used to describe male soldiers are usually 'brave', 'respected', and 'rising star' rather than 'pretty' 'bright' and 'gentle'.

As images of overtly sexualized women started to disappear from the mainstream media in society, *Soldier* also shifted its contents and there were almost no glamour models featured and far less use of certain language and expressions to describe women by the 2010s. The frequent appearances of sexualized women as contents that are sexy and 'a bit of fun' suggest that the

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[453] *Soldier.* November 1986. Part 23. p. 10.
[454] *Soldier.* March 1988. Part 5. p. 35.
[455] *Soldier.* September 1995. Part 18. p. 36.
[456] *Soldier.* January 2009. pp. 34-5 and the front cover.
[457] *Soldier.* November 1986. Part 23. p. 10.
[458] *Soldier.* October 1988. Part 21. p. 10.
[459] *Soldier.* April 1986. Part 7. p. 8.

magazine mostly catered toward straight male soldiers. However, a shift in general attitudes toward nontraditional bodies around the 2010s is reflected not only in the ways in which they are represented in *Soldier*, but also how the contents of the magazine became more curated and professional whose audience included women and sexual minorities. The thesis suggests that as the traditional and sexist gender norms started to be challenged in wider society, the need for a change was also recognized in the military. Both tangible and perceptual changes were implemented in the organization, including policy changes and attitudinal shifts. Yet, as also discussed in the previous section, there was a period of transition between 2000 to the early 2010s which saw a certain ambivalence and double standards in the ways the Army treated its female soldiers.

In 2001, then Lance Corporal Roberta Winterton decided to be the first serving soldier to pose for Page 3 which caused a controversy in the Army. Many senior officers saw it as "regrettable" and a MoD spokesman desperately tried to dissociate Winterton from the Army and its professionalism, arguing that she does not represent women in the Army.[460] Although an employee going topless on a tabloid may not be exactly desirable for their employer, there are some unmissable contradictions. Both the MoD and the Army implicitly condoned the Page 3 girls and other glamour models as they were regularly featured in *Soldier*, therefore the idea of consuming sexualized and objectified women was also accepted. Yet it was unacceptable and "damaging" to the organization when it was their employee that was being consumed as a sex object by men. It was received as a huge embarrassment to the Army, especially because Winterton was considered a face of the modern Army to the public, representing women in the organization and appearing on television as such. It is understandable, to some extent, that the Army was defending itself as well as the reputation of their female members. On the other hand,

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[460] O'Neil, Sean. "Army shame as another woman goes over the top." *The Telegraph*. 10 February 2001. Accessed 25 March 2019. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/1322002/Army-shame-as-another-woman-goes-over-the-top.html

a question remains, why it was acceptable to feature a topless civilian girl from Yorkshire in *Soldier* but when it was a female soldier, it is not. Would a male soldier have been dismissed for posing for a magazine?

Moreover, the MoD spokesman claimed that topless female soldiers damage the Army's image and reputation more than those loud and violent (male) ones do – citing an incident in which a Royal Marine hit two women and got fined £500 a year before – and said "young men are young men whether they are in the Army or not." [461] This statement reflects a deeply problematic view that justifies and normalizes violent and aggressive 'military masculinity' while demeaning and shaming women and their bodies. Women's misdemeanor seemed to upset the military more than any offences committed by men. A similar paradoxical logic came to light when the MoD revealed in 2014 that they barred pregnant servicewomen from deployment and sent them home. [462] Although the majority of them had become pregnant before their deployment, a small number of them may have conceived while being deployed. An MoD spokesman commented that "the MoD does not encourage or condone sexual relationships in theatre; our personnel are expected to behave in accordance with the Armed Forces values and standards at all times." [463] Again, it is women who are criticized for becoming pregnant, not the men who impregnated them.

Finally, there is a bulletin by the Army Health Promotion on prevention of unplanned pregnancy and STIs, targeting female personnel. It depicts 7 bullets, but the heads of them are red lipstick. Above those lipstick bullets it reads, "Hey gorgeous!" "Fancy a drink?" "Come

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[461] O'Neil. "Army shame as another woman goes over the top."
[462] Ministry of Defence. "Number of British servicewomen sent home due to pregnancy." 25 March 2014. Accessed 26 March 2019. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/number-of-british-servicewomen-sent-home-due-to-pregnancy
[463] Sanghani, Radhika. "Army's former most senior female officer condemns compulsory pregnancy test for soldiers." *The Telegraph.* 18 February 2014. Accessed 26 March 2019. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-politics/10644596/Armys-most-senior-female-officer-condemns-compulsory-pregnancy-tests-for-soldiers.html

here often?" "We're made for each other!" "Get your coat, you've pulled!" in black letters. And then it reads, "Your test is positive" in red. Under the lipstick bullets, it reads:

> on deployment, there'll be 50 blokes to each woman, so you'll hear all these lines and more! If you have sex without a condom you risk an unplanned pregnancy or an STI including HIV, the virus that leads to AIDS. Stay in control – always insist he uses a condom, or you could end up facing something you really don't want to hear.

Similarly to the Winterton case and the MoD's decision to send pregnant servicewomen home, there is a complete disregard for the roles played by men and their responsibilities in those situations. The discourse is deeply problematic as it depicts sex and pregnancy a women's responsibility, while men are not held accountable for their part. Although pregnancy of servicewomen can cause some practical issues for the forces such as finding their replacements, Basham points out that the lack of provisions for flexible working hours and paternity leave further adds to and reinforces the notion of women's unsuitability as soldiers while rendering them solely responsible for the consequences of the pregnancy.[464]

These examples demonstrate the ambivalent attitudes which were still present in the period of transition, between 2000 and the early 2010s, in which the military was eager to reinvigorate its image as a modern and progressive employer while failing to conceal its traditional masculinist culture and a sense of disdain for women. At times women were sexualized and objectified for men's pleasure, and other times women and their biological functions such as pregnancy were considered as a trouble and embarrassment. Women and their bodies in the military have always posed challenges to the traditional gender norms. It is only recently that the Army has 'championed' to be an equal and inclusive employer appealing to new recruits, regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, and faith.[465] In *Times*' 'Top 50 Employers for

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[464] Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.* pp. 73-5.
[465] The Army was named as one of top 100 employers in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index 2018, 2019, and 2020. WEI 2021 was not run due to the pandemic. The Army is not among the top 100 employers in the

Women', the Army's comment reads, "by understanding and celebrating our female soldiers' vital contribution, and driving change, the British Army is maximising the potential of greater gender balance."[466]

4.8. Conclusion

This chapter has offered an analysis of the Army's official magazine *Soldier* as the military discourses in which particular attention is paid to how female soldiers as nontraditional bodies are represented during the 39-year period between 1980 and 2018. Several recurrent themes have emerged in the analysis which have been delineated in this chapter and many of them have also been found in the civilian discourses. One of the most salient is what the thesis has identified as the markers of femininity which are often attached to the representations of female soldiers. They are certain language and expressions which highlight the identities of female soldiers as women while trivializing their professional identities as soldiers, and examples include referring to them as girls, calling them by their first names, and describing their physical appearances and personal lives. These markers render the already-visible female soldiers hyper-visible by emphasizing their gender and femininity. In contrast, male soldiers are 'unmarked', which are "nonfocused, … nonspecialized"[467] and therefore unnoticed. Their gender and masculinity need not be highlighted for they are, as the masculine bodies in the agentic role, the norm. The markers of femininity were extremely prevalent until early 2010s. These seem to, however, give the impression that female soldiers were seen and treated with a certain sense of curiosity and lightheartedness, rather than with disrespect and hostility. Female soldiers were something peculiar, the marked bodies against the background of unmarked

WEI in 2022. See https://www.stonewall.org.uk/full-list-top-100-employers-2020; as one of top 50 employers for women by the Times in 2017 and 2018, see https://appointments.thetimes.co.uk/article/times-top-50-employers-for-women/.
[466] The Times. "The Times Top 50 Employers for Women 2018." 26 April 2018. Accessed 4 April 2019.
[467] Waugh. "Marked and unmarked: A choice between unequals in semiotic structure. p. 309.

maleness. The thesis argues that such acts of deliberately emphasizing the gender and femininity of female soldiers, no matter how benevolent, render them Othered and their subject positions unintelligible. Imposing feminine identities on them while disregarding their professional identities as soldiers can be understood as a manifestation of *patriarchal discomfort*, a coping mechanism with which the incongruity between 'woman' and 'soldier' is neutralized by making sense of female soldiers inherently as women. The thesis also suggests that the use of markers of femininity to differentiate female soldiers from male soldiers by underscoring their stereotypic traits is a defensive and system-justifying response to uphold the agentic and masculine identities of the military.[468]

The thesis has also identified the transitional period in which the Army struggled to refresh its old public image and to be seen as a progressive employer while failing to camouflage its masculinist culture and identities as well as a sense of disdain for women and femininity. The ambivalent attitudes in the Army toward nontraditional bodies were exhibited especially in the period between 2000 and the early 2010s, after the ban on homosexuality was lifted and the Army had officially begun its campaigns to revamp the traditional image of the institution by promoting its newer inclusivity policies and featuring more sexual minorities personnel. Perceptions of 'lack of fit' toward nontraditional bodies confirms the prevalence of gender stereotypes and their negative implications.[469] The Winterton and Wharton cases are especially striking examples in which such ambiguous attitudes were unveiled. Winterton was dismissed because she appeared on the *Sun*'s Page 3 which embarrassed the Army, yet the magazine published by the same organization continued actively featuring sexualized women as an entertainment for the soldiers. Female soldiers were required to be professional while non-

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[468] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.
[469] Heilman, Manzi, and Braun. "Presumed incompetent: perceived lack of fit and gender bias in recruitment and selection." pp. 92-3.

Army women could be seen as an entertainment. Such double standard and contradictory expectations for women can also be found in the way the 'professional' female soldiers were called by their first names but not male soldiers; the Army expected the female soldiers to be professional yet failed to treat them as professionals. There was also a fear of being associated with femininity among men, regardless of their sexual orientation. Wharton, for example, who was a prominent figure in the Army's LGBTQ+ community (he is now author and activist), believed that being deployed in Iraq was a proof that he was not a 'pansy' or 'gay stereotypes'. He listed his favorite activities that typify heteronormative masculinity and denied any femininity in himself. While praising the Army for the progresses it had made in terms of policies regarding sexual minorities, Wharton sought to conform to and reinforce the heteronormative gender and sexual norms.

What the almost four decades of archive of *Soldier* has divulged is that the gender norms, identities, culture, and traditions of the military are still prevalent, yet the ways in which the institution projects itself has changed in recent years. The analysis of the magazine indicates that there have been substantial, both tangible and perceptual, changes in the institution regarding its nontraditional personnel. The decisions to make available the roles to all, regardless of their gender and sexual orientations are marked as momentous milestones in the history of the Armed Forces. Although at a slow pace, the number of women in the military has grown over the years and they serve in various roles across ranks. The interactive features of *Soldier* suggest that the constant presence of female soldiers and personal experiences of working with them have had a significant influence on how they are perceived by their male colleagues. Within the military discourses, the language and expressions used to portray female soldiers have become more neutral and professional and they are no longer treated differently from male soldiers. In contrast to the representations of female soldiers in the civil discourses that are still ambivalent today, the increasing visibility of women in the military seems to

challenge the gendered stereotypes and perceptions of women and soldiers within some areas of the organization. Social role theory suggests that gender stereotypes are underlay by people's observation of men and women occupying different roles which are deemed 'gender-appropriate' for their traits and dispositions. [470] This seems to explain why men are the overwhelming majority in the military and the stereotypes of men in agentic roles and women in communal roles persist in society, but it also indicates that the more visible and normalized female soldiers become in society, the less influences these stereotypes would have on people's perception and conceptualizations of 'woman' and 'soldier'.

Despite these ostensibly positive changes, however, it is crucial to note that the analysis is based on the representations of female soldiers in only a part of official military discourses, and representations are not necessarily a reflection of the reality. In fact, despite various changes and efforts to make the military a more diverse and equal workplace, as observed by studies explored in the literature review, the sexist culture remains prevalent, and a number of sexual assaults and harassments go unreported and overlooked. Although the analysis of *Soldier* has found a significant changes in the ways in which female soldiers are represented over the years, it does not suggest that there have also been fundamental changes in the attitudes toward and treatment of female members within the organization. In other words, these changes in the representations of female soldiers in their publication suggest that the military has become more tactful in how they project themselves toward society 'outside', responding to and aligning itself with the recent trends in workplace equality and diversity practices. Nevertheless, the veneer of progressiveness, as several studies have pointed out, hardly conceals the anachronistic culture still rife with sexism and toxic masculinity. The normative and ideological struggles of female soldiers to be 'fully' integrated and accepted as true equals

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[470] Eagly. and Steffen. "Gender Stereotypes Stem From the Distribution of Women and Men Into Social Roles."; Eagly. and Sczesny. "Editorial: Gender Roles in the Future? Theoretical Foundations and Future Research Directions."

to their male colleagues are the testament to such gendered ideas and attitudes still being pervasive in the military. As it has been argued elsewhere, simply 'adding women and stirring' is not enough to address fundamental issues that derive from firmly socialized ideas and prejudices about gender including gender stereotypes, which are also deeply entrenched in the organizational culture.[471]

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[471] *Inter alia* Basham. "Gender and militaries: the importance of military masculinities for the conduct of state sanctioned violence."; Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.*; Harel-Shalev and Daphna-Tekoah. "The Double-Battle: women combatants and their embodies experiences in war zones."; Sjoberg. "Agency, Militarized Femininity and Enemy Others: Observations From The War In Iraq."; Sjoberg and Gentry. *Mothers, Monsters, Whores: Women's Violence in Global Politics.*; Woodward and Winter. *Sexing the Soldier: The politics of gender and the contemporary British Army.*

Chapter 5: Analysis of Civil Discourses: Newspapers

The next four chapters examine the texts from four most widely circulated and read newspapers in the UK, the *Guardian*, the *Telegraph*, the *Sun* and the *Mirror*. These papers are selected to encompass a wide spectrum of audience with various socioeconomic and political backgrounds. Choosing these newspapers with divergent characteristics and political affiliations has enabled the thesis not only to conduct a comparative and in-depth analysis of the papers but also to recover common threads in the various representations of female soldiers in the media. The aim is to retrieve the representations of female soldiers, discourses in which their subject positions are rendered (un)intelligible. Each newspaper was searched with the same set of keywords (military, army, armed forces, navy, marines, air force, airforce, RAF, military, soldier, and soldiers, woman, women, female, females, girl, and girls) for the 10-year period between 1st January 2010 to 31st December 2019. The result for each newspaper was sampled which presented some 10,000 articles, which were then subjected to a careful reading and analysis. These samples do not represent every single text ever published by the newspapers, nor is it the aim of the thesis to provide a comprehensive overview of media discourses on the topic. Rather, what is presented here is only a part of reality and the analysis offers "a relative, working truth"[472] of the research objects. The following chapters discuss the findings from the analysis of each paper in accordance with recurring themes which have emerged in the reading of the texts.

5.1. The Sun (Print 2010-2019, Digital 2016-2019)

The *Sun* is a British tabloid paper established in 1969, bought and owned by media tycoon Rupert Murdoch since then. The paper is usually considered as a sympathizer of the Conservative Party, but it has a history of swinging back and forth between the parties,

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[472] Hopf. *Social Construction of International Politics: Identities and Foreign Policies, Moscow, 1955 and 1999*. p. 24.

supporting the governing party at the time.[473] The *Sun*'s now infamous Page 3, which featured

glamour models, first in lingerie or bikinis, but topless from 1970, had significantly aided the

paper's sales, prompting other tabloid papers to print nude photographs of young women

between the news stories. It faced complaints and criticisms from the beginning, but it was not

until 44 years later when the paper finally decided to drop the controversial feature of topless

models.[474] Characterized by its news stories with sensational headlines, celebrity gossip and

sports contents, the *Sun* continues to be one of the UK's best-selling newspaper titles.

According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), the *Sun* sold 1,210,915 print copies and

the *Sun* on Sunday sold 1,013,777 copies in March 2020.[475] Monthly readership of the paper

on average consists of 6,900,000 for print edition, 5,276,000 digital edition accessed from

desktop, and 34,991,000 accessed from mobile/tablet for the same month, according to the

Publishers Audience Measurement Company (PAMCo).[476]

5.2. Pin-up Girls and Page Three: the *Sun*'s Defining Character

The *Sun*'s Page 3 has long defined the paper's identity and despite the criticisms it has attracted,

the paper and the photographs of women in bikinis seem inseparable. However, the pin-up

models are not just a trademark of the *Sun* but have a rich history in the British journalism

industry and were also used in campaigns in wartime to boost soldiers' morale. According to

Bingham, the introduction of the technologies to print photographs in newspapers during the

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[473] Prestwich, Michael Charles and Barr, Nicholas A "United Kingdom" (under a subcategory of "Newspapers.") *Encyclopædia Britannica.* Accessed 28 June 2020. Available at https://www.britannica.com/place/United-Kingdom

[474] O'Carroll, Sweney and Greendale. "Page 3: The Sun calls time on topless models after 44 years." *The Guardian.*

[475] Audit Bureau of Circulations. "The Sun." 16 April 2020. Accessed 30 June 2020. Available at https://www.abc.org.uk/Certificates/49814060.pdf
On the ABC website, the data after March 2020 is either unavailable or not representative of average month, as newspaper circulation declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, for all four papers the data on March 2020 is used to represent their average circulation on more "normal" months prior to the pandemic.

[476] Publishers Audience Measurement Company. PAMCo 2 2020 Apr' 19 – Mar' 20 Mar' 20 Comscore data. Accessed 1 July 2020. Available at https://pamco.co.uk/pamco-data/latest-results/
For the same reason noted in the footnote above, the data between April 2019 and March 2020 is used for all four newspapers.

last decade of the 19th century contributed significantly to the mass-circulation and proliferation of sexualized images of women and their bodies in the media. The *Mirror* was one of the first picture papers by 1904 and was soon known for featuring "bathing belles."[477] The imageries became more sexualized by the mid 1930s, and by the 1950s pin-up shots of women were featured across the press. With the *Sun*'s Page 3 and its enormous success with its topless models, Bingham argues, the pin-up "became a defining symbol of British popular journalism."[478] Editors regarded these pictures of pretty girls to be harmless and assumed that readers, men and women alike, would appreciate them for "brightening up" their papers.[479] It was not without criticisms and protests, but the pin-ups contributed to better sales and circulation and the public responded with "a substantial appetite for unapologetically entertaining and titillating forms of sexual content."[480] During the WWII, the pin-ups Hollywood studios sent to American soldiers were praised "as patriots" for boosting the soldiers' morale, which helped these images of exposed and sexualized female bodies become accepted and legitimized in society.[481] Similarly, it was the *Mirror*'s cartoon Jane, who kept the British soldiers' morale by "keeping her clothes off."[482] Bingham notes that in the UK, too, the pin-ups' role to cheer up the troops facilitated societal acceptance, and criticisms by moralists or feminists even appeared inappropriate.[483]

Reflecting the increasingly "permissive society," the *Sun* sealed the deal and established toplessness as a new norm. Just as the *Mirror* thrived in the 1930s despite the controversies for its overtly sexualized pin-up shots, the *Sun* too welcomed the criticisms against the Page 3,

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[477] Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. p. 201.
[478] Ibid. p. 202.
[479] Ibid. pp. 201-2.
[480] Ibid. p. 210.
[481] Meyerowitz, Joanne. "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material: Responses to Girlie Pictures in the Mid-Twentieth-Century U.S." *Journal of Women's History* 8, no. 3 (1996): p. 12.
[482] Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978.* pp. 210-2.
[483] Ibid. p. 211.

flaunted its huge success and publicity.[484] As Bingham argues, however justified, the pin-up is imagery of sexualized women and their bodies which was produced for nothing but heterosexual men and their salacious entertainment. It was produced and circulated at such a rate and scale, "readers became so accustomed to their presence that few stopped to think."[485] Prioritizing profits over morality, and prioritizing male pleasure over female disquiet made it possible the commodification of the female body, which is marketed throughout the popular culture, and, as Bingham points out, "the idea that women's bodies should be available for public scrutiny and consumption was powerfully reinforced."[486] The *Sun* stopped featuring topless models on their Page 3 in 2015, but it did not mean completely scrapping the feature – the Page 3 remains, "in the same page it's always been – between page 2 and page 4,"[487] in the words of then head of public relations of the paper, with models now covering their nipples with lingerie, bikinis or other small pieces of clothing. Other major tabloids, the *Mirror* and the *Star*, also printed topless models in their Page 3 in order to compete against each other in the past but removed them in the 1980s and in 2019 respectively. Even though the pin-up in its original form and intention to 'brightening up' the page of newspapers only remains in the *Sun*, the pin-up culture in tabloid papers had certainly contributed to the mass production and circulation of sexualized images of women to be normalized in popular culture and accepted in society.

On one hand, there were many protests and campaigns against the feature with topless women in newspapers, deeming the content to be sexist, outdated and offensive. There had been complaints about the nudity on the tabloids right from the beginning, in the 70s, and the voice became louder and the controversy bigger in the late 80s to 90s, through the 2010s. However,

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[484] Ibid. p. 221.
[485] Ibid. p. 227.
[486] Ibid.
[487] BBC News. "Sun newspaper drops Page Three topless pictures – Times." 20 January 2015. Accessed 1 July 2020. Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-30891939

the *Sun* dismissed these criticisms and complaints, and it even seemed to revel in the controversy, enjoying the large sales of the paper. MP Claire Short, although unsuccessfully, proposed banning images of topless models from the *Sun* and other tabloid papers in 1986. The 'No More Page 3' campaign launched in 2012, the leader of which asked the editor of the *Sun* to "stop conditioning your readers to view women as sex objects,"[488] ultimately led to the paper to drop the feature with bare-breasted models. Reportedly, there was an attempt by then female senior executive of the *Sun* to advance equality by debuting "the bare-chested Page Seven fella."[489] Not surprisingly, it was not a successful venture – as Braid points out, topless male models "never really had the same impact on readers and their nakedness never carried the same social meaning."[490] It was eventually scrapped as it was feared that it would "attract unwanted gay readers."[491]

On the other hand, even after the *Sun* scrapped topless women from Page 3, the fact that there are always scantily clad glamour models generously showing off their bodies, often posing suggestively and provocatively, smiling in underwear or bikinis on page 3, remained. The former features editor of the tabloid notes that "[covering the nipples] hasn't really changed the nature that women are objectified in these newspapers. It has merely, […] come down a notch by deciding to cover the nipples."[492] As argued by Bingham and Meyerowitz, highly sexualized images of women have become unremarkable, even regarded by some as "good harmless British fun."[493] Back in the 2012, then deputy prime minister Nick Clegg refused to back the 'No More Page 3' campaign claiming that it would be "illiberal" for the government to control what is printed in newspapers. "If you don't like it, don't buy it … you don't want to

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[488] O'Carroll, Sweney and Greendale. "Page 3: The Sun calls time on topless models after 44 years."

[489] Braid, Mary. "Page Three girls – the naked truth." *BBC News Online*. 14 September 2004. Accessed 30 June 2020. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/3651850.stm

[490] Ibid.

[491] Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978.* p. 225.

[492] Tsang, Amie. "British Tabloid's 'Page 3 Girl' Is Topless No Longer." *The New York Times.* 12 April 2019. Accessed 1 July 2020. Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/12/business/page-3-daily-star.html

[493] Braid. "Page Three girls – the naked truth."

have a moral policeman or woman in Whitehall telling people what they can and cannot see."[494]

This 'if you don't like what you see, don't look' discourse was also used by Rupert Murdoch, defending his paper in light of the No More Page 3 campaign. He tweeted claiming that "Brit feminists [who] bang on forever about page 3 … never buy paper," then added that "I think [page 3 is] old fashioned but readers seem to disagree."[495] Murdoch also reportedly told the media that he was simply "playing to a conservative audience."[496]

Clearly there are societal acceptance and tolerance, however reluctant. The thesis suggests that perhaps, there is willful ignorance behind the public toleration of sexualized images of women readily available everywhere, that even if one does not enjoy seeing such images or finds them problematic, one is convinced and accepts that it is, after all, *the ways* in which women and their bodies have always been displayed and consumed. These images become a familiar, if slightly uncomfortable sight, when objectification of women is presumed as a norm. The social justification theory can be useful to understand why people tend to accept and legitimize social arrangements even when they are not beneficial to them. Jost argues that defending the existing social order can have a palliative effect which discourages people from protesting against the status-quo, which then leads to passive acceptance and willful ignorance.[497] It is pointed out by the former editor of the *Sun* Mohan when he said "the ultimate sanction lies with the reader … I think it is tolerated in the British society, by the majority of the British society." In Mohan's words, it is "an innocuous British institution … a part of British society."[498]

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[494] Watt, Nicholas. "Clegg: banning Sun's Page 3 girls would be illiberal." *The Guardian.* 12 October 2012. Accessed 30 June 2020. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/oct/12/clegg-banning-sun-page-3-illiberal

[495] Martinson, Jane. "Rupert Murdoch says the Sun's page 3 is old fashioned." *The Guardian.* 10 September 2014. Accessed 30 June 2020. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/media/2014/sep/10/rupert-murdoch-sun-page-3-old-fashioned

[496] Braid. "Page Three girls – the naked truth."

[497] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." pp. 273-4.

[498] BBC News. "Sun editor Dominic Mohan defends Page Three."

5.3. Objectification of Women: Fetishization of Women in the Military

One of the most salient themes which emerged from the reading of the texts is the markers of femininity attached to the representations of female soldiers, and they are found in both military and civil discourses. These markers vary in their forms, but they work as a descriptor or a label to underscore the gender and femininity of female soldiers. The thesis has found that these markers of femininity are routinely used by all four newspapers. However, the analysis of the *Sun* has observed what can be considered as the most extreme forms of markers of femininity, which are not found in the *Mirror*, the *Telegraph* or the *Guardian*. They are more blatant and crude forms of markers to sexualize and objectify female soldiers. It may be unsurprising considering the paper's pertinacious adherence to the pin-up feature, yet the ways in which female soldiers are subjected to fetishization distinctly set the *Sun* apart from the rest of the papers analyzed. The thesis finds that the markers of femininity in the media are often used by default to simply differentiate female soldiers from their male counterparts rather than to express contempt for women. When used in extreme forms, however, such as to objectify and fetishize them, it is an exhibition of sexism and lack of respect. This section examines such extreme markers used by the *Sun* to objectify and fetishize female soldiers.

Languages used for titles and headlines are especially sensational and explicit to attract the attention from the audience. To list a few examples; "Bikini babes gunbathing,"[499] "FEMME FATALEs: Bikini-clad Israeli army soldiers pose with guns and explosives in dangerously sexy snaps,"[500] "BUMS OUT, GUNS OUT: World's sexiest Marine Shannon Ihrke strips off for hot military calendar wielding massive machine guns,"[501] and "BLONDE BOMBSHELL:

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[499] The Sun. "Bikini babes gunbathing." 13 July 2012. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 12.
[500] Sun Reporter. "FEMME FATALEs: Bikini-clad Israeli army soldiers pose with guns and explosives in dangerously sexy snaps." *The Sun.* 16 October 2017. Accessed 7 July 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4699160/bikini-clad-israeli-army-soldiers-pose-with-guns-and-explosives-in-dangerously-sexy-snaps/
[501] Knox, Patrick. BUMS OUT, GUNS OUT: World's sexiest Marine Shannon Ihrke strips off for hot military calendar wielding massive machine guns." *The Sun.* 27 September 2018. Accessed 7 July 2020. Available at

US Marine is dubbed 'Combat Barbie' for her sexy photoshoots mimicking classic Army pin-ups of World War Two."[502] Many of these pieces are published online for the digital edition with several photographs of the 'sexy' female soldiers. The first two articles describe young Israeli female soldiers in bikinis and the latter two feature photoshoots done by two former U.S. female marines. The language chosen for these titles alone are crude and suggest that these articles include explicit images of the female soldiers. Expressions such as "dangerously sexy," "bums out, guns out" and "world's sexiest marine … strips off" evoke a fetishized discourse of 'sexy soldier girl'. The thesis has identified this specific discourse as a continual theme throughout the representations of female soldiers in the *Sun*. The article "Femme fatales" explains the conscription system in Israel and notes that "this explains what might seem like an unusually high number of young, beautiful women who would seem to have chosen a career in the military."[503] It insinuates the unlikelihood of those 'young, beautiful' women to be in the military had it not been for the mandatory requirement to serve, or that they would not have chosen to serve in the military if it was not for the conscription, because they are too pretty to be soldiers.

The articles "Bums out, guns out" and "Blonde bombshell" present similar photographs from the photoshoots which feature two American female ex-marines. The images are strikingly reminiscent of Page 3, as the women are dressed in minimum pieces of clothing except that they are posing with machine guns and ammunition. While these guns and bullets suggest that they are (were) indeed trained soldiers, what they are wearing could not be further from a realistic portrayal of soldiers. In many of her photographs, the ex-marine wears camouflaged

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https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/7360168/worlds-sexiest-marine-shannon-ihrke-military-calendar-photoshoot-guns/

[502] Parker, Charlie. "BLONDE BOMBSHELL: US Marine is dubbed 'Combat Barbie' for her sexy photoshoots mimicking classic Army pin-ups of World War Two." *The Sun.* 2 May 2019. Accessed 8 July 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/8989469/us-marine-combat-barbie-sexy-classic-army-pin-ups-world-war-two/

[503] Sun Reporter. "FEMME FATALEs: Bikini-clad Israeli army soldiers pose with guns and explosives in dangerously sexy snaps."

trousers and combat boots on her bottom but only has a khaki bra that is ripped. In one of the photos, she even ditches her trousers and poses in underwear. The *Sun* describes this image as "Shannon shows she's a real rear gunner with this cheeky pose."[504] The other ex-marine in her photoshoot, in the writer's words, "covers up using only an ammunition belt, salutes in a tight Navy uniform and rides a bomb naked."[505] In one of the photos, she is riding a large bullet only wearing a helmet, combat boots and a top that barely covers her chest. In the other, she is wearing what seems to mimic a US Navy uniform on her upper body and a thong and high heels. Again, these photographs represent the fetishized 'sexy soldier girl' discourse; these female soldiers are framed in ways that are not a reflection of the reality but that reflect heterosexual men's fantasy. Unlike the glamour models and pin-up girls featured in *Soldier* were from 1980s to early 2000s, these pieces in the *Sun* were published between 2012 and 2019.

The *Sun* used to send their Page 3 Girls to visit soldiers at a military rehabilitation institution around Christmas, which is reminiscent of the pin-up girls whose photographs adorned the barracks during the World War II. Pieces entitled "HEROES' TASTY TREAT," [506] "4 PAGE 3s 4 HEROES"[507] and "DISH OF THE DAY: Page 3 beauties visit military rehab centre to bring festive cheer to Christmas lunch"[508] all feature Page 3 Girls' visits, in 2010, 2014 and 2016 respectively. The Girls would sign Page 3 calendars for the soldiers, hand them stockings and crackers provided by the tabloid's charity and get photographed with them. The articles report that the soldiers were thrilled to meet the Page 3 Girls, telling that "the girls

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[504] Knox. "BUMS OUT, GUNS OUT: World's sexiest Marine Shannon Ihrke strips off for hot military calendar wielding massive machine guns."

[505] Parker. "BLONDE BOMBSHELL: US Marine is dubbed 'Combat Barbie' for her sexy photoshoots mimicking classic Army pin-ups of World War Two."

[506] The Sun. "HEROES' TASTY TREAT." 18 December 2010. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 15.

[507] Ridley, Mike. "4 PAGE 3s 4 HEROES." *The Sun.* 24 December 2014. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 13.

[508] Pisa, Nick. "DISH OF THE DAY: Page 3 beauties visit military rehab centre to bring festive cheer to Christmas lunch." *The Sun.* 24 December 2016. Accessed 10 July 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2472883/page-3-beauties-visit-military-rehab-centre-to-bring-festive-cheer-to-christmas-lunch/

coming to our Christmas lunch is a real morale boost," "the Page 3 girls really cheer us up. They're tonic,"[509] and "they were great fun … it is fantastic for morale."[510] The online article "Dish of the day …" features 6 photos and one video in which the soldiers and Page 3 girls are seen to be posing for photographs together, smiling and chatting. One of the photos even shows a signature by one of the models on what seems to be an image of her bare breasts in the calendar. The words used for the titles such as "tasty treat" and "dish of the day" suggest that these Page 3 girls are the figurative "treat" and "dish." The idea of 'cheering up the heroes with sexy girls' is not only anachronistic and sexist but also seems inconsiderate to gay and female personnel.[511] It is exemplary of the paper's heteronormative and gendered stereotypes of men and women.

In the 'sexy soldier girl' discourse, which was identified in the analysis, female soldiers are fetishized to fit into a fantasized version of young, beautiful, sexy, flirtatious and fun-loving woman, whose often overexaggerated and sexualized femininity makes a stark contrast from their profession – military personnel – which is stereotypically characterized by strict disciplines, toughness and masculinity. The ways in which female soldiers are represented in the media are not diverse; as it was found across the papers, there are almost always some forms of the markers of femininity attached to them which reduce their subject positions to 'woman' rather than soldiers. They highlight their gender and femininity while trivializing their professional identities. The objectification of female soldiers in the *Sun* is on the extreme end of the spectrum; it often paints them into the fanaticized 'sexy soldier girl' rhetoric, which is

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[509] Ridley. "4 PAGE 3s 4 HEROES."

[510] Pisa. "DISH OF THE DAY: Page 3 beauties visit military rehab centre to bring festive cheer to Christmas lunch."

[511] Studies have shown that it was only a socialized perception in relation to the traditional and heteronormative notion of gender roles but in reality, there have always been homosexuals and other sexual minorities in the Armed Forces. For few examples see Harvey, A. D. "Homosexuality and the British Army during the First World War." *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research*, 79, no. 320 (2001): 313-319; Vickers, Emma. *Queen and Country: Same-Sex Desire in the British Armed Forces, 1939-1945.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013.

extremely distorted and by no means representative of majority of female soldiers in the military. Consistently with Berger and Naaman's analysis of media coverage of female soldiers, the thesis has found that the language and images that are used in the articles assume and seek to provoke male gaze, interests and pleasure; the ways in which objectification and sexualization of women are decidedly done from male perspective.[512]

By regularly seeing these eye-catching and explicit headlines about and images of women in the military, the audience could get used to or even crave such sensational journalism often filled with derogatory and sexist language, and ultimately adopt the certain views and images that the paper disseminates. While the Armed Forces themselves had ostensibly left behind the old-fashioned and sexist attitudes and policies towards their female personnel over the years, as the analysis of *Soldier* has shown in the previous chapter, some part of wider civilian society may still be clinging to those unrealistic ideas and fantasies about women in the military. Sexualized and fantasized images of female soldiers are prevalent and readily available in popular culture such as in comic books, films, videogames, etc. The *Sun*'s objectified and fetishized portrayals of female soldiers not only reproduce the image of female soldiers as fantasized and fictitious figures but also reinforce the traditional gender norms and expectations for women to be feminine and assume the subordinate gender.

5.4. Emphasis on Femininity

The blatant objectification of female soldiers discussed in the previous section is the markers of femininity in extreme forms, but the analysis of the *Sun* has also found other forms, which are more subdued and commonly found in other papers as well as in *Soldier*. One of the most noticeable markers is referring female soldiers and officers as girls. For instance, the piece which report on the resignation of Brigadier Nicky Moffat, who was the highest-ranking female

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[512] Berger and Naaman. "Combat cuties: photographs of Israeli women soldiers in the press since the 2006 Lebanon War." p. 275.

officer in the Army until she resigned in 2012, is titled "Army top girl quits."[513] It is highly unlikely for a male senior officer who is the same rank as Moffat to be called 'boy' or 'lad', as male officers and soldiers are usually described in a formal and respectful way. The word 'quit' also adds to the facetious tone; referring to professional women as girls trivializes their professionalism and achievements. The articles entitled "6 soldiers 'racially abused' Army girl" [514] and "NATO GIRL'S KINKY FLINGS SHAKE MoD; PROBE ON MILITARY SEX SCANDAL"[515] would have conveyed the exact same information had they called the subjects *soldier* instead of *girl*. Calling professional women girls not just emphasizes their gender, youth and femininity, but it also takes their identities as soldiers lightly, implies their vulnerability, and even insinuates their promiscuity.

Calling female soldiers by their first names is another example of markers of femininity which highlight their gender and femininity. The articles "GIRL WHO LIVED FOR THE ARMY IS KILLED; Channing and patrol pal die in 'friendly fire'"[516] and "NO EQUIPMENT, NO TRAINING, NO CHANCE; DEVASTATING VERDICT ON MoD; Cpl Sarah and her three comrades were 'killed unlawfully' says coroner"[517] both report the tragic events that killed soldiers in Afghanistan. The first article reports deaths of Lance Corporal Channing Day and Corporal David O'Connor, but the title draws the readers' attention to the word 'girl', and Lance Corporal Day's first name Channing. Similarly, the second article reports the deaths of Corporal Sarah Bryant, Corporal Sean Reeve, Lance Corporal Richard Larkin, and Trooper Paul Stout, but the title leads the readers' attention to Corporal Bryant's first name Sarah. The

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[513] The Sun. "Army top girl quits." 2 July 2012. Edition 1, National edition. p. 12.

[514] Bennett, Adam. "6 soldiers 'racially abused' Army girl." *The Sun*. 17 February 2019. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 7.

[515] Parker, Nick. "NATO GIRL'S KINKY FLINGS SHAKE MoD; PROBE ON MILITARY SEX SCANDAL." *The Sun.* 5 October 2015. Edition 2, Scotland. p. 25.

[516] Willetts, David. "GIRL WHO LIVED FOR THE ARMY IS KILLED; Channing and patrol pal die in 'friendly fire'." *The Sun.* 26 October 2012. Edition 2, National edition. p. 9.

[517] Coles, John. "NO EQUIPMENT, NO TRAINING, NO CHANCE; DEVASTATING VERDICT ON MoD; Cpl Sarah and her three comrades were 'killed unlawfully' says coroner." *The Sun.* 10 March 2010. Edition 1, Northern Ireland. p. 17.

male soldiers in both cases are mentioned only as 'patrol pal' and 'three comrades', the subtlety of which renders the female soldiers highlighted. Emphasizing the gender of the soldiers by calling them girls and their first names may attract more attention and sympathy, however, not only is it unnecessary to draw attention to their gender but it is also inconsiderate and disrespectful not to describe those fallen soldiers in the same way and with same respect. Finally, the article titled "Army girls told: Use protection"[518] tells of an advertisement by the MoD in *Soldier*, in which female soldiers are asked to carry condoms as the pregnancy rate rose during tours in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although the advertisement was problematic in the first place to tell female soldiers, not to male soldiers, to use protection, the title hints at female soldiers' potential promiscuity, which furthers the 'sexy soldier girl' discourse. The same writer published a similar article the year after, titled "12 PREGNANT SOLDIER GIRLS ORDERED HOME; Rise in mums-to-be EXCLUSIVE."[519] Again, the female soldiers are called 'girls' for no specific reasons and the title insinuates that some of the 'soldier girls' became pregnant while on tour as a result of sexual relationships they had. Male soldiers and their responsibilities are deliberately omitted out of the equation in both articles, and the focus is on female soldiers who became pregnant and how they should carry protection to avoid such occurrences.

Another theme which has also been observed in the analysis of *Soldier* is the ways in which female pioneers are portrayed. On one hand, the fact that there are still 'first women' to ever occupy certain roles in the 2010s is telling that careers in the military are not as common for women as they are for men, but on the other hand, it also shows the developments and progresses that have been made in terms of equal opportunities in the institution. The general tone in reporting the topic of female pioneers seems to be relatively neutral and respectful, with

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[518] Willetts, David. "Army girls: Use protection." The Sun. 17 May 2010. Edition 1, Scotland. p. 2.
[519] Willetts, David. ""12 PREGNANT SOLDIER GIRLS ORDERED HOME; Rise in mums-to-be EXCLUSIVE." *The Sun*. 6 October 2011. Edition 2, National edition. p. 21.

occasional lightheartedness. The article "SUE IS 1st WOMAN GENERAL"[520] reports the first ever female General in the history of the British Army. The rank of General is the most senior rank of the British Army,[521] yet the title calls General Ridge by her first name which gives off rather frivolous and carefree impression to this otherwise historic and significant achievement. Almost certainly, the paper would not have called a male General by his first name reporting his monumental achievement. Captain Kate Philip for instance, the first female soldier to lose a leg in combat, is described by the tabloid as "1st Army girl to lose leg."[522] Another example is calling the U.S. Marine to become the first woman to complete the infantry officer training, 'Marines girl'.[523]

The thesis suggests that highlighting the gender and femininity of female soldiers draws a sharp contrast to their traditionally masculine-coded profession of soldiering which can evoke doubts and concerns about their abilities as well as a sense of discomfort. The sense of discomfort stems from the incongruity between the beliefs and expectations based on the traditional gender norms and experiencing something which deviates from such beliefs. Women in the military uniform can cause such cognitive dissonance in which the perceived femininity of women and the masculine-coded profession contradict each other. Emphasizing her identity as a woman over her professional identity hence provides a sense of relief that she is indeed a woman, first and foremost, and her occupying a soldier identity is only temporary. By imposing a familiar subject position of a woman with feminine traits and a female-appropriate role on a female soldier, the sense of discomfort is mitigated. While explicitly objectifying women is a characteristic of Hostile Sexism, according to Glick and Fiske, emphasizing the gender and

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[520] Willetts, David. "SUE IS 1st WOMAN GENERAL." *The Sun.* 7 July 2015. Edition 1, Scotland, p. 20.
[521] The British Army. "Our People Ranks." Accessed 5 January 2021. Available at https://www.army.mod.uk/who-we-are/our-people/ranks/
[522] Kay, John. "It was just a scratch – CAPTAIN KATE PHILIP; 1ST ARMY GIRL TO LOSE LEG TALKS TO THE SUN." *The Sun.* 1 February 2010. Edition 1, National Edition. pp. 12-3.
[523] The Sun. "Marines girl's first." 27 September 2017. Edition 1, Ireland. p. 25.

femininity is a distinct aspect of Benevolent Sexism. [524] Similarly, the narrative which insinuates that 'she is too pretty to be a soldier' also signals the sense of discomfort. Despite its ostensibly complimentary and benign tone, it divides what men and women should do based on gendered stereotypes which dictate that soldiering is not a female-appropriate vocation. As such, the thesis suggests that the use of the markers of femininity is motivated by the sense of discomfort and a resistance to recognizing female soldiers as "good female soldiers"[525] just like their male counterparts, attempting to coax them into *their place* instead. Moreover, the thesis argues that the deliberate differentiation of female soldiers using these markers is a defensive and system-justifying response to the nontraditional female bodies in the agentic and masculine space who defy the gender stereotypes.[526]

5.5. Women on the Front Line and Gender Policies

One of the most extensively and controversially debated topics over many decades among policymakers and military officials, which inevitably attracted public attention as well, was whether women should be allowed on front line combat roles in the British Armed Forces. The 10-year period between 2010 and 2019 saw significant policy changes and developments regarding the full integration of women in the military. Since then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that women would be allowed to serve in ground close combat (GCC) roles in 2016, the Royal Armoured Corps opened up later that year, followed by the Royal Air Force Regiment in September 2017.[527] The *Sun* printed several articles related to the topic over the years, often quoting military officials, veterans and other military sources. There seems to

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[524] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 493.; Glick and Fiske. "Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes Toward Women." p. 122.

[525] Millar, Katharine M. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 4 (2015): p. 757.

[526] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.

[527] The British Army. "All British Armed Forces roles now open to women." 25 October 2018. Accessed 14 July 2020. Available at https://www.army.mod.uk/news-and-events/news/2018/10/women-in-ground-close-combat-roles/

be an ambiguity in the paper's stance in the topic; it published a piece by the Defence editor conveying strong words of support, but they also printed several pieces which express critical and negative views towards the topic. As regards to the issue of the inclusion of women in the combat roles in the Armed Forces, the paper published covering both sides of the debate. The paper published a piece with a comment by Brigadier Nicky Moffat in 2013 in which she expressed her support for the inclusion of women. She is quoted as saying that "if we look at the achievements of our women Olympians I don't think any reasonable person could say there aren't some women who could meet those standards."[528]

The voices against the idea of women on the frontline are reflected on the pages too. Retired military officer Colonel Tim Collins is quoted as claiming that allowing female soldiers on frontline "inevitably will cost lives," and that "the infantry is no place for a woman, and to permit them to serve in close-combat toles is a pure politically correct extravagance."[529] Similarly, Colonel Richard Kemp, another retired Army officer who has famously been a major opponent in the debate, penned an article titled "Army should target Call of Duty fans… not Bawl of Duty" for the *Sun*. In the piece, he criticizes David Cameron's decision to lift the combat ban on women, arguing that it is "dangerous political correctness" which puts the Army "under threat."[530] He also attacks the Army's new recruitment campaign 'This is belonging',[531] which emphasizes the diversity and inclusivity of the organization by featuring ethnic minorities and female soldiers. He asserts that "while these adverts may have a marginal effect on recruiting minorities, they will not appeal to the majority of potential recruits," and that the campaign is an example of "the kind of soft, touchy-feely, caring-sharing public image that is

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[528] Willetts, David. "Olympics show Brit females fit to fight." *The Sun.* 27 January 2013. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 27.
[529] De la Mare, Tess. "Combat girls 'will cost lives'." *The Sun.* 10 July 2016. Edition 2, National Edition.p. 16.
[530] Kemp, Richard. "Army should target Call of Duty fans… not Bawl of Duty." *The Sun.* 11 January 2018. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 10.
[531] Campaign. "British Army 'This is belonging 2018' by Karmarama." 15 January 2018. Accessed 20 July 2020. Available at https://www.campaignlive.co.uk/article/british-army-this-belonging-2018-karmarama/1454470

projected by recent PC-imposed measure."[532] With the language such as "bawl," "soft" and "touchy-feely" to describe the move, he denies the compatibility of women/femininity and the toughest – therefore the most masculine – job in the Army. His conviction that anyone who are weak and delicate, such as (his idea of) women and those who promote the "soft and touchy-feely" image of the military are irreconcilable with the combat roles, which represent the ultimate toughness and masculinity, embodies the traditional notion of military masculinity. Other critical views also encapsulate the gender norms based on essentialist ideas about men and women, including "[the infantry is] not the right place for them (women)" by Lord Dannatt and former Army officer and MP Richard Drax arguing that women on frontline would cause "a serious distraction."[533]

The article "Should women fight on frontline?" introduces various views on the matter, including the paper's own Defence editor. Former SAS Andy McNab endorses the move because women historically have always worked alongside infantries on front line, where they must be ready to take up arms and defeat the enemy if needed. McNab recalls brave and competent female soldiers he had met on the front line, and argues that "if women fulfil the requirements of the role I do not see a problem with them being placed anywhere."[534] Major Judith Webb, who was the first woman to command an all-male squadron argues otherwise, that women should not be allowed in combat roles because they are physiologically different than men. Whilst Major Webb urges the Army to expand career opportunities for women to advance to be senior officers, she maintains that "it (career opportunity) doesn't have to be as infantry and armour officers," because she believes that "women do not have the endurance

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[532] Kemp. "Army should target Call of Duty fans… not Bawl of Duty."
[533] Dun, Tom Newton. "Frontline women by Xmas; Army." *The Sun.* 9 May 2014. Edition 1, National Edition. pp. 1, 6.
[534] The Sun. "Should women fight on frontline?; AFTER AMERICA LIFTS COMBAT BAN." 26 January 2013. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 8.

and the physical capabilities to be infantry soldiers."[535] Finally, the article presents a comment by the *Sun*'s Defence editor Willetts, who rather enthusiastically advocates for women on the front line. He writes that "military wonder-women already serve with bravery on the frontline," noting that he had met such female soldiers in Helmand who "everyday … make their case to be allowed to conduct close combat roles." Willetts concludes the piece by stating that "anyone arrogant enough to deny them should first prove they can load up and take a walk through Helmand – just as they do."[536] The zealous support by the Defence editor in a way offsets the series of critical views by the furious retired officers presented on the paper, making the paper's position in the debate somewhat ambivalent. Overall impression is that even though there may be more articles that present critical and opposing views against women on front line, the tabloid does not seem to be attempting to actively convey a view that is disproportionately favorable to one side or the other.

In stark contrast to the paper's ambivalent and more neutral tone towards the inclusion of female soldiers in combat roles, the *Sun* makes clear that they do not sympathize with other gender-neutral policy changes the Armed Forces have made in recent years. When the Forces published a list of gender-neutral words for their personnel to follow to make the institution more inclusive, the paper published a piece in which a soldier is quote saying, "This is the daftest thing I've ever seen in my life."[537] It also mentions the Army's plan to replace its crest because it was deemed "non-inclusive," pointing out that it would cost £1.5 million, "plus expensive image consultants who have advised on the rebranding." The tone remains sarcastic throughout the article. Another example is the corresponding articles that the *Sun* published as both print and digital edition after it was reported that soldiers were asked not to answer the

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[535] Ibid.
[536] Ibid.
[537] Willetts, David. "DON'T CALL US CHAPS, CHAPS!; LANGUAGE LIST IN BASE'S LOO Army's gender neutral word guide." *The Sun.* 27 December 2017. Edition 1, Scotland. p. 13.

phone with the phrase 'How can I help you, Sir?' The articles report that the top brass decided

that the greeting is "outdated and unnecessary," as it assumes the person on the line is a man.

The titles themselves express the paper's view on the matter; "PC BARMY ARMY; Squaddies

banned from saying Sir as they answer phone"[538] and "PC BARMY ARMY Squaddies banned

from saying Sir as they answer phone in case they cause offence; Military top brass have

enforced the order for soldiers answering phones in case a woman is calling."[539] Not only do

the titles directly call the Army 'PC crazy' for their new protocol, the articles also quote

Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander who is famously conservative and has been vocally

critical about the inclusion of women in combat roles. He tells the *Sun* that "there is too much

of this going on. In the 30 years while I served I never heard of one complaint on this. The only

thing that has changed is the Army's obsession with PC (political correctness) madness."[540]

Colonel Kemp is quoted again in the articles on gender-neutral bathrooms at the Army

headquarters in which he commented, "it's quite shocking that the Army is being dragged into

this whole world of political correctness."[541] The writings on both stories indicate that the *Sun*

shares the sentiments with Colonel Kemp that gender-neutral words and bathrooms in the

Armed Forces are foolish and absurd. As Fairclough points out, political correctness refers to

notions and "identifications imposed upon people by their political opponents."[542] It is also

observed that the critics of political correctness are often on the right,[543] opposing the liberals'

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[538] Willetts, David. "PC BARMY ARMY; Squaddies banned from saying Sir as they answer phone." *The Sun.* 6 January 2018. Edition 2, Scotland. p. 28.

[539] Willetts, David. "PC BARMY ARMY Squaddies banned from saying Sir as they answer phone in case they cause offence; Military top brass have enforced the order for soldiers answering phones in case a woman is calling." *The Sun.* 5 January 2018. Accessed 15 July 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/5278779/squaddies-banned-from-saying-sir-as-they-answer-phone-in-case-they-cause-offence/

[540] Ibid.

[541] Hamilton, Michael. "ARMY TOP BRASS GET GENDER-NEUTRAL LOOS." *The Sun.* 3 June 2018. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 33; Hamilton, Michael. "GENDER- NEUTRAL LOOS: Toilets at Army headquarters go gender-neutral as chiefs scrap 'Ladies' and 'Gentlemen' signs. *The Sun.* 3 June 2018. Accessed 15 June 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/6436996/army-headquarters-toilets-gender-neutral/

[542] Fairclough, Norman. "'Political correctness': the politics of culture and language. *Discourse & Society* 14, no. 1. (2003): p. 21.

[543] Loury, Glenn C. "Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of 'Political Correctness' and Related Phenomena." *Rationality and Society* 6, no. 4 (1994): p. 429.

attempts to introduce new ideals and standards. Therefore, labeling something PC can indicate skepticism and sometimes even ridicule. Whilst the *Sun* remains relatively neutral on the issue of women's inclusion in combat roles, it is dubious about the ideas of gender-neutral loos and words, calling them political correctness madness.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the representations of female soldiers in the popular tabloid paper the *Sun*. The paper is known for and characterized by its sensational journalism embellished with dramatic and inflated headlines, whose contents are often entrenched in sexism and heteronormativity. The blatant objectification of female soldiers and the fetishized 'sexy soldier girl' discourse, as well as the persistent legacy of Page 3 seem to epitomize the institutionalized sexism of the *Sun* and its general patronizing attitude toward women. It often reduces women to objects for lascivious gaze, by ignoring or trivializing their achievements and professionalism, (mis)leading the readers' attention to their gender, physical appearances and sexuality. The explicit ways in which female soldiers are sexualized and objectified are found to be distinctively unique to the *Sun*. The analysis has identified the objectification for male gaze and self-objectification, which can be explained using Glick and Fiske's Hostile Sexism and Benevolent Sexism. According to them, men who score high in HS tend to objectify women, deny them agency and treat them like subhuman without emotions. They argue that HS is threatened by women and their sexuality and objectifying them is a coping mechanism to claim and reassure its superior status. Indeed, the female soldiers who are dressed in underwear and bikinis to embody the fetishized 'sexy soldier girl' discourse are highly sexualized and serve as an entertainment for male gaze. The objectification of female soldiers not only reduces their bodies to a sexualized and fictitious figure, but also strips them of their respectable identities as soldiers. On the other hand, the notion of Benevolent Sexism is helpful to understand the motivation for self-objectification by these women who are

featured in the paper. Glick and Fiske argue that BS incites women to self-objectify and convince them to uphold the traditional gender stereotypes by appearing feminine and assuming a complementary role to men. The ostensible 'willingness' of the former female soldiers who appeared in the *Sun* as 'sexy soldier girls' and chose to self-objectify suggests that the operation of BS is at play in impelling them to emphasize their sexuality and stereotypical femininity.

Female soldiers pose a disruption in a society with the traditional gender norms and conservative expectations for men and women, for a clear dichotomy between men and women is the key ingredient to the maintenance of the social order and its power relations. Acknowledging that female soldiers are as competent, as qualified, and as strong as male soldiers in such a society creates a sense of discomfort and anxiety as it destabilizes and threatens the current order. The markers of femininity intentionally differentiate female soldiers and their communal traits from male soldiers and their agentic roles. The thesis suggests that it is a defensive and system-justifying response to the nontraditional female bodies occupying the traditionally masculine space. Deliberately minimizing female soldiers to the 'sexy soldier girl' discourse rather than recognizing their identities as soldiers is, the thesis argues, an attempt to soothe the sense of discomfort and to keep women in *their place*. Such reaction and resistance to female soldiers highlight the patriarchal and heteronormative system of society.

Chapter 6: The Daily Mirror (Print 2010-2019, Digital 2013-2019)

The *Daily Mirror* is a British tabloid paper founded in 1903. It started as a newspaper for women, though it almost immediately shifted its target audience to both men and women of the working class, characterized by its photo-rich contents. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the *Mirror* was one of the pioneers in the British press to popularize the pin-up culture. Its cartoon Jane was so popular among servicemen that "nearly everyone recognized" her and was 'pinned up' on the walls of barracks as a morale booster for soldiers.[544] Indeed, the *Mirror*'s Jane had garnered a similar level of popularity as the *Sun*'s Page 3 enjoyed a few decades later.[545] The paper flourished as the UK's best-selling newspaper in the 60s, until its sales were eventually overtaken by the rival tabloid, the *Sun*. The *Mirror* was threatened by the success of the *Sun*'s Page 3 and was pushed to venture to print more explicit and provocative pin-ups including topless. It landed on "naughty pin-up pictures" but "without exposing nipples,"[546] which the paper eventually withdrew altogether in the 1980s. The paper still remains to be one of the most widely circulated newspapers in the UK.[547] The *Mirror* is considered as left leaning, supporting the Labour Party in every election since 1945.[548] According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), the *Mirror* sold 442,610 copies in March 2020.[549] Monthly readership of the paper on average consists of 3,339,000 for the print edition, 3,481,000 digital edition accessed from desktop, and 28,263,000 accessed from mobile/tablet devices, according to the Publishers Audience Measurement Company (PAMCo).[550]

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[544] Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978.* p. 210.
[545] Ibid. p. 211.
[546] Ibid. p. 222.
[547] Ofcom. "News Consumption in the UK: 2019. pp. 35-8.; "News Consumption in the UK: 2021." p. 36.
[548] Prestwich and Barr. "United Kingdom."; Mirror. "About Us." Accessed 1 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/about-us/
[549] Audit Bureau of Circulations. "Daily Mirror." 16 April 2020. Accessed 1 September 2020. Available at https://www.abc.org.uk/Certificates/49813243.pdf
[550] Publishers Audience Measurement Company. PAMCo 2 2020 Apr' 19 – Mar' 20 Mar' 20 Comscore data. Accessed 1 September 2020. Available at https://pamco.co.uk/pamco-data/latest-results/

6.1. Women on the Front Line

One of the most frequently disputed themes regarding women's roles in the military is the debate on whether women should be allowed to take on the frontline duties. Correspondingly to other three newspapers, the coverage on the topic by the *Mirror* is concentrated on the period of 2014 and onwards,[551] around which time then Defence Secretary welcomed the prospect of opening ground close combat (GCC) roles to women which was further reinforced by then Prime Minister David Cameron.

The first article on the topic found in the sample was published in April 2014 which reports an exhortation by then Chief of the General Staff (the head of the British Army) to review the ban on women. Admitting that there would be people who are against the idea of allowing women into combat roles, General Sir Peter Wall said that it would make them "look more normal in society," and "women need to see they have equal opportunities" in the Army.[552] Less than a month later, the paper published articles reporting the review on the ban ordered by then Defence Secretary Philip Hammond. The articles suggest that the move is to follow the U.S. lifting its combat ban on women in 2013. Mr. Hammond stated that "there's a big gap between what our society looks like and our armed forces look like," arguing that they do not recruit enough ethnic minorities and women. He reportedly also said that it would help tackling the Army's "macho" image.[553] It is stressed that the standards for fitness will not be lowered even if the ban is lifted. The *Mirror* reports the result of this review later in the same year, which recommended combat roles to be opened to women. Then Defence Secretary Michael Fallon

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[551] See *Figure 3*.
[552] Layton, Josh. "WOMEN SOLDIERS 'TO FIGHT ON FRONT LINE'; Army chief calls for probe into lifting combat ban." *Daily Mirror.* 7 April 2014. Edition 1, National Edition. p.4.
[553] Blanchard, Jack. "Army women get a shot at combat roles." *Daily Mirror.* 9 May 2014. Edition 1, Northern Ireland. p. 12.; Blanchard, Jack. "Women soldiers to be allowed to fight on front line as British Army ban set for review; Defence Secretary Philip Hammond has ordered an immediate review of the historic ban following similar moves in the US, Canada and Australia." *Daily Mirror.* 8 May 2014. Accessed 14 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/british-army-set-lift-ban-3514096

is quoted as saying "roles in our armed forces should be determined by ability not gender," and that he hopes to open combat roles to women in 2016.[554] Next articles in the sample on the topic came a year later, where the prospect of women joining close combat roles is becoming even more realistic. One article calls the lifting of the ban "a huge shake-up," indicating the magnitude of the decision. Then Prime Minister David Cameron is quoted in the article, stating that "we should finish the job next year and open up combat roles to women."[555] Another article reporting the same news also delivers views of high-ranked officials. Admiral Lord West, former Navy admiral and First Sea Lord (the head of the Royal Navy) expresses his concern about admitting women into frontline roles. "There is no doubt at all that women are very, very brave," he carefully said. "But I still have some nervousness about women in the infantry and the Royal Marines, where they have to advance on the enemy, climb into a trench and kill each other." He continues, "not because there aren't some women who can do that, but in general terms, when you are looking at averages, women have one-third less upper body strength." Baron Paddick, former police chief is quoted as saying that "Decades ago police had similar concerns about armed policewomen. [They] decided not to stereotype but assess individuals. Many female officers I would rather have by my side in a physical situation than many male officers I can think of." The online article has a poll at the end, asking "should women be able to serve on the front line?" to which the result shows 63% "Yes" and 37% "No,"[556] indicating the liberal and progressive views of the audience of the paper.

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[554] D'Arcy, Scott. "Women soldiers could be allowed to fight on front line with British Army; A reviews has recommended close combat roles are opened to women but said further research was needed." *Daily Mirror.* 19 December 2014. Accessed 14 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/women-soldiers-could-allowed-fight-4837542

[555] Hooper, Ryan. "Women to fight on front line within a year in huge military shake-up; Currently around 20 per cent of all Armed Forces jobs are not open to females." *Daily Mirror.* 19 December 2015. Accessed 14 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/women-fight-front-line-within-7044170

[556] Blanchard, Jack. "Women could be fighting on the front line in the Army 'within months'; It is expected that women will be allowed to take close combat roles with the army by the autumn." *Daily Mirror.* 20 December 2015. Accessed 14 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/women-could-fighting-front-line-7048170

In July 2016, the *Mirror* published articles which report that women are to be integrated gradually into the previously closed positions, starting in November. Cameron is quoted as stating at the NATO summit in Warsaw that "it is vital that our armed forces are world class and reflect the society we live in," and lifting the ban "will ensure the armed forces can make most of all the talents and increase opportunities for women to serve in the full range of roles."[557] One of the articles is titled "Women to fight on the front line; Decisive victory in battle for equality," which signals the paper's support for the issue.[558] In July 2017, the paper published articles reporting the RAF Regiment opening its previously closed positions to women, making it the first service to open all branches to all. Then Defence Secretary Sir Fallon said that "a diverse force is a more operationally effective force," and Chief of the Air Staff also told that they "want the best and most talented individuals to join the Air Force, regardless of their gender, race or background."[559] Another article briefly tells of the news that while Defence Secretary called the news "a defining moment," Colonel Richard Kemp is quoted he "does not want [women] in the infantry," because he is concerned about "physical capabilities."[560] An article titled "Women can FINALLY join he Special Forces" was published in October 2018 as it was announced that all the roles in the Armed Forces are open to women. Then Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said that "for the first time in its history, our armed forces will be determined by ability alone and not gender." A MoD spokesman is quoted as saying "while the military does not necessarily expect large numbers of women to apply for ground combat roles, the changes are aimed at creating opportunities for individuals

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[557] Hughes, Chris. "Women soldiers to be allowed to fight on the frontline from November; Female soldiers will initially be allowed to join armoured tank units before eventually extend to the general infantry." *Daily Mirror.* 8 July 2016. Accessed 15 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/women-soldiers-allowed-fight-frontline-8380212

[558] Hughes, Chris and Glaze, Ben. "Women to fight on the front line; Decisive victory in battle for equality." *Daily Mirror.* 9 July 2016. Edition 1, Northern Ireland. p. 2.

[559] Glaze, Ben. "RAF to allow women into close combat roles for the first time; The RAF Regiment was due to open its recruitment to women by the end of next year, alongside the Infantry and Royal Marines, but the process will begin from September." *Daily Mirror.* 13 July 2017. Accessed 15 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raf-allow-women-close-combat-10793504

[560] *Daily Mirror.* "Women can fill RAF roles." 2 September 2017. Edition 1, Northern Ireland.p. 20.

from all background […]. By making all branches and trades of the military open to everyone, regardless of their gender, the armed forces are building on their reputation of being a leading equal opportunities employer."[561]

The paper also featured opinions that are against or wary of the integration of women into combat roles. As early as 2013, when the U.S. announced the repeal of the combat ban on women, the *Mirror* reported that senior members of special forces were determined to "fight" actions to allow women to serve on the front line alongside men in the UK. A senior SAS (the Special Air Services) source allegedly told the paper that "there is not a role for females in close-quarter covert ops. There is a special bond between men … we are different. Men are naturally aggressive."[562] Such objections based on the gender essentialism have been common among senior and retired officials. Colonel Kemp is known for his strong demurral over the moves towards allowing women in combat roles. In 2014 when the review of the combat ban was called, he told the Daily Mail that inclusion of women "would damage the fighting capabilities of the armed forces," "result in a lowering of a physical standards," and "harm the Army's 'warrior ethos'."[563] Another Colonel is cited in a *Mirror* article commenting that the physical and fitness standards for those combat roles must not be lowered, should women be allowed.[564] Since the discussion of whether or not to lift the combat ban on women started, no officials in the Armed Forces and the MoD ever implied the possibility that the standards for these frontline roles would be lowered. Contrarily, it had been stressed that the capability and

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[561] Smith, Mikey. "Women can FINALLY join the Special Forces as Gavin Williamson opens up all military roles from today; As of today, all roles in the military will be open to women." *Daily Mirror*. 25 October 2018. Accessed 15 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-women-can-finally-join-13479302

[562] Hamilton, Michael. "THERE'S NO ROOM FOR WOMEN IN SAS; Warning as US ends ban." *Daily Mirror*. 27 January 2013. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 32.

[563] Bond, Anthony. "Women don't have the 'killer instinct' to fight on the front line, says top former commander; Colonel Richard Kemp said that allowing women to join infantry or tank regiments would be detrimental to the military's fighting ability." *Daily Mirror*. 10 November 2014. Accessed 16 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/women-dont-killer-instinct-fight-4653620

[564] Glaze, Ben. "'Army must be tough on battle girls'." *Daily Mirror*. 20 December 2014. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 19.

effectiveness of the troops would not be compromised and there would be no quotas for women. It has been acknowledged by the MoD that not many females will be able to pass the physical tests to be in combat roles even if they are allowed to take those tests. However, lifting the ban on women was imperative as it signaled equal opportunity in the institution. In 2015, Colonel Kemp stated in an article that the move to lift the ban is the government's "obsession with political correctness, at the expense of our nation's defences." He argues that while he acknowledges the value of women in the Army, "fighting as an infantryman is the toughest job in the Army." He concludes by stating that allowing women in close combat "would undermine the cohesiveness that characterizes any great fighting force. Let us hope we do not live to rue such decision." Overall, the *Mirror* featured various views and opinions on the topic of the inclusion of women in the frontline roles, including that of support, opposition, as well as cautious ones. However, as one title "Women to fight on the front line; Decisive victory in battle for equality" exemplifies, the paper seems to stand on this issue as an advocate.

6.2. Emphasis on Femininity

The thesis has identified various forms of markers of femininity attached to the representations of female soldiers which highlight their gender and femininity while trivializing their professional identities. The examples of the markers include referring to female soldiers as girls, calling them by their first names, describing their physical appearances, and focusing on their private lives and personalities. These labels are added to the representations of female soldiers to differentiate them from male soldiers who do not need those markers as they are the norm from which nontraditional bodies clearly deviate. This section examines such markers that put emphasis on the subjects' femininity and their implications.

The *Mirror* has published a few stories about female soldiers entering beauty pageants in which the aberrance of the female bodies from the norm – male bodies – is highlighted. Calling them

'pretty' and expressions such as 'swapping army boots for high heels' are examples of the markers of femininity with which their communal traits are emphasized. The *Mirror* played a significant role in popularizing beauty contests by hosting them regularly, dating back as early as to the 1900s. Other papers followed suit and, similarly to the pin-up culture, by the 1950s, it became a popular feature in the newspapers. As Bingham suggests, the press contributed to the increasingly permissive society in which the borderline for exposed female bodies is constantly pushed, and the public scrutiny and judgement of them are no longer considered indecent but accepted as a norm.[565] A *Mirror* article is titled "Soldier swaps army boots for high heels as she bids to become Miss England; Pretty Charlotte Lawson, 22, has spent three years in the Territorial Army, but is through to the Miss Worcestershire finals, which will be held next month."[566] The word 'pretty', the first name and age emphasize the youth and physical attractiveness of the subject, which not only attract the readers' attention, but also create stark contrast to the words 'soldier' and 'Army'. The juxtaposition of the hyper-masculine image of the military and hyper-feminine pageants paints a picture of two fundamentally different lives, which are incompatible with each other and do not *naturally* coexist. The first line of the article "female soldier leaves Army to become catwalk model"[567] is evocative of an image of a woman leaving a place where she did not belong for a place where she does. By stressing the femininity of the subject and showing how it contradicts where she is and what she is, such markers effectively 'Other' the subject.

The comments the articles by these female soldiers who are entering beauty pageants seem to further reinforce the binary image. For instance, Gunner Charlotte Lawson said that "I think it

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[565] Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978.* pp. 205-6.
[566] Livesey, Jon. "Soldier swaps army boots for high heels as she bids to become Miss England." *Daily Mirror.* 15 October 2014. Accessed 13 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/soldier-swaps-army-boots-high-4440763
[567] Ibid.

surprised a lot of … my friends that I was doing this really girly thing."[568] In another article, Sapper Victoria Grinnall who is a Miss Wales contestant is quoted as saying "I might be a soldier but I like to be feminine too."[569] These statements can be inferred as slightly apologetic because of the expressions 'girly' and 'I might be a soldier but', which both imply that being feminine and going on a beauty contest are *unlike* being a soldier. These women are aware that their appearances are always subject to gaze and judgements by not only men but also by other women,[570] and that to publicly acknowledge their beauty and femininity as their strengths (e.g., entering a beauty pageant) defies their other identities as professionals – as soldiers. The dilemma they face as women in the military stems from the strongly entrenched beliefs based on the gender binary and stereotypes in society which dictate that soldiering is an agentic, masculine-coded profession. Some women are mocked as 'girly for a soldier' and 'too pretty to be a soldier', and whereas others try to become 'one of the lads' (i.e., honorary men) by suppressing their femininity, those who choose to embrace their femininity may feel the need to justify expressing it.

Another example of markers that render female soldiers hyper-visible and clearly distinguished, or Othered from their male counterparts is to sexualize them by using conspicuous language. A *Mirror* article reports a death of a female Kurdish fighter who was dubbed as "Kurdish Angelina Jolie." It tells that the soldier Asia Ramazan Antar drew media attention "over the glamorous looks and long brown hair she shares with the movie star."[571] The same story was

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[568] Ibid.
[569] Hughes, Ian. "Tank-driving soldier swaps army boots for high heels after making it to final of Miss Wales." *Daily Mirror.* 4 January 2016. Accessed 13 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tank-driving-soldier-swaps-army-7115476
[570] This is the case not just in the military but also in wider civilian society. Lookism can be considered as one of the social constructs that we have internalized to a certain extent and has influences on how we look at ourselves as well as others. The prejudice, as Etcoff points out, "operates at a largely unconscious level." For more details see Etcoff, Nancy. *Survival of the Prettiest: The Science of Beauty.* New York: Anchor Books, 2000.
[571] Lion, Patrick. "Female soldier dubbed the 'Kurdish Angelina Jolie dies' while fighting ISIS in Syria." *Daily Mirror.* 8 September 2016. Accessed 14 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/female-soldier-dubbed-kurdish-angelina-8791408

also published by other tabloid papers such as the *Sun*. It was criticized by some as a 'sexist portrayal', a story of a Kurdish woman who fought against a terrorist group reduced to a story of a beautiful female fighter who resembles a Hollywood star, as told by Western media.[572] Similarly, there are stories which solely tell of physical attractiveness of female soldiers. An article titled "Is this the most beautiful bodyguard ever?" reports a Chinese female soldier who worked at the G20 Summit as a bodyguard. The entire article is devoted to telling various speculations about her age, birthplace and hobby, as well as the fact that she was chosen as the top 10 most beautiful soldiers in the People's Liberation Army.[573] Another article published by the *Mirror* featured Ukrainian female soldiers in the midst of the confrontations between Ukraine and Russia, but the focus of the story is on the looks of those female soldiers, not on the conflict itself. Titled "Meet the lady killers," the article calls them "battle-ready beauties" and "femme fatales."[574] These articles are published online along with the photographs of the female soldiers featured in each story. Together with these eye-catching headlines, the photographs are also used effectively to attract the readers' attention, especially to the physical appearances of the women. The language that is used in these articles distract the audience from any other context or background information in the news. These women, accompanied with the attractive photographs and described with the sensational words, are already framed in certain narratives, similarly to the *Sun*'s 'sexy soldier girl' discourse, in which female soldiers are sexualized and objectified when they are presented to the readers. The ways they are portrayed always assume and are intended to provoke male gaze and curiosity.[575]

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[572] Gol, Jiyar. "Kurdish 'Angelina Jolie' devalued by media hype." *BBC*. 12 September 2016. Accessed 14 October 2020. Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-37337908

[573] Campbell, Scott. "Is this the most beautiful bodyguard ever? Chinese woman soldier leaves admirers lovestruck after appearing at G20 summit." *Daily Mirror*. 8 September 2016. Accessed 14 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/most-beautiful-bodyguard-ever-chinese-8787421

[574] Morrison, Sean. "Meet the lady killers: Elite squad of female soldiers defending Ukraine from potential invasion from Putin's Russian armies." *Daily Mirror*. 1 December 2016. Accessed 15 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/meet-lady-killers-elite-squad-9373835

[575] Berger and Naaman. "Combat cuties: photographs of Israeli women soldiers in the press since the 2006 Lebanon War." p. 275.

The reading of the *Mirror* has also found the consistent use of the markers of femininity in the representations of female soldiers. Their gender and femininity are underscored in these articles and reports while their professional anecdotes and achievements are barely mentioned. The *Mirror*'s coverage of female soldiers in beauty pageants in particular encapsulates the ways in which the incongruity between their profession and femininity is highlighted. The words such as 'pretty', 'high heels' and 'catwalk model' emphasize the stereotypically feminine traits which seem to contradict the masculine-coded profession of soldiering. Furthermore, their somewhat excusatory comments such as 'I might be a soldier, but I like to be feminine too' insinuate that soldiering and femininity are considered incompatible. The thesis postulates that it is because of the deeply embedded social constructs and societal expectations for women and soldiers are fundamentally incongruous. The military and the vocation of soldiering are to many civilians only abstract concepts and their ideas about the military are likely to be limited and inaccurate. Many would picture combat soldiers from films and shows, killing enemies with lethal weapons, when they think of an idea of 'soldier'. The societal expectations for women to be feminine and their life-giving capability are thus irreconcilable with the life-taking potentiality and violent image of being a soldier. The incongruity, the thesis argues, induces the sense of discomfort.

The deliberate distinction between the women with stereotypically communal traits and the agentic role of soldiering adds to the incongruity when these two are enacted together. As argued by system justification theory, such a differentiation is an expression of a defensive and system-justifying response to the sense of discomfort induced by the female soldiers, whose nontraditional bodies in the military defy the familiarity of gender stereotypes. The sense of discomfort is manifested in the ways in which female soldiers' identities as women are more highlighted than their identities as soldiers using various markers of femininity. These markers reduce the female soldiers to very limited subject positions which do not accurately articulate

their 'real' experiences and identities as soldiers. Such representations of female soldiers further reinforce the notion that women and soldiers are incompatible and oppositional constructs.

6.3. Difference between Print and Digital Editions

This section focuses on the different ways in which female soldiers are referred to in print and digital editions. The analysis of the *Sun* suggests that women in the military are often referred to as girls in the tabloids, and calling adult professional women girls or by their first names can potentially have a few different implications; it emphasizes their gender and femininity; it can lighten up the otherwise stern tone; it can add a casual and friendly tone; it renders female soldiers taken less seriously than their male counterparts, etc. Even when done without intentions to disrespect them, it works as Othering of women in the military, as it minimizes their professional identities and achievement by differentiating them from their male counterparts.

The *Mirror* published two versions of a same story for their online and printed edition with different titles – one calling an army recruit "female army recruit"[576] and the other "army girl."[577] When newspapers publish same stories in both printed and digital versions, they often slightly differ from one another. It is perhaps worth noting the difference in the ways the same subject is being referred to. There seems to be a tendency that calling female soldiers girls is more common in the print version compared to their digital version online. Although this observation may not be relevant in bigger samples, it appears to be more than a coincidence in the sample taken for the analysis. Here are some of the articles published as printed version;

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[576] Webb, Sam. "Female army recruit dies during tough training exercise at UK base." *Daily Mirror.* 17 September 2015. Accessed 29 September 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/female-army-recruit-dies-during-6462228

[577] Fricker, Martin. "ARMY GIRL KILLED IN TRAINING; Recruit collapses on march." *Daily Mirror.* 18 September 2015. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 18.

"KYLIE COMMENDED[578]; MILITARY CROSS FOR ULSTER GIRL WHO SAVED AFGHAN SOLDIER,"[579] "TALIBAN BLAST KILLS HERO BRIT BOMB GIRL; BOMB HEROINE[580],"[581] "Army girls stand easy,"[582] and "Gun girls take aim."[583] Conversely, here are some examples from digital version which were published on the *Mirror* website; "Memorial honours WWII hero women who kept Britain's airmen safe from Luftwaffe,"[584] "Bullet fragments recorded after body of female Deepcut Barracks soldier is exhumed ahead of new inquest,"[585] "Female RAF recruits win £100,000 compensation for injuries sustained while marching,"[586] and "Military police officer found hanged 'after Army made decision not to charge soldiers she accused of raping her'."[587] All of these articles report stories which involve female soldiers, but they deliver slightly different tones and impression to the reader. Both *female* and *girl* are labels that specify the subject's gender, which technically are not necessary in the storytelling. However, *female* gives the more neutral tone than does *girl*, not least because the latter is usually used to refer to female child, or in more casual settings (i.e., women calling their female friends as *girls*.) Not only are the subjects feminized, but they are also infantilized.[588] It is possible that the audience of the printed version of the Mirror are older

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[578] Notice also, that the female soldier is called by her first name.
[579] Beattie, Jilly. "KYLIE COMMENDED; MILITARY CROSS FOR ULSTER GIRL WHO SAVED AFGHAN SOLDIER." *Daily Mirror*. 28 March 2011. Ulster Edition. p. 16.
[580] Note the use of the word 'heroine', which further emphasize sex of the subject. If a more neutral tone was preferred and sought, 'hero' should have sufficed.
[581] Gregory, Andrew. "TALIBAN BLAST KILLS HERO BRIT BOMB GIRL; BOMB HEROINE." *Daily Mirror*. 21 April 2011. 1 Star Edition. p. 1, 6.
[582] *Daily Mirror*. "Army girls stand easy." 26 August 2012. Edition 1, Northern Ireland. p. 20.
[583] Daily Mirror. "Gun girls take aim." 7 April 2014. Edition 1, Ireland. p. 22.
[584] Lloyd, Alex. "Memorial honours WWII hero women who kept Britain's airmen safe from Luftwaffe." *Daily Mirror*. 30 January 2019. Accessed 3 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/memorial-honours-wwii-hero-women-13930278
[585] Fricker, Martin. "Bullet fragments recorded after body of female Deepcut Barracks soldier is exhumed ahead of new inquest." *Daily Mirror*. 10 September 2015. Accessed 3 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/bullet-fragments-recovered-after-body-6420979
[586] Adams, Sam. "Female RAF recruits win £100,000 compensation for injuries sustained while marching." *Daily Mirror*. 25 November 2015. Accessed 3 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/female-raf-recruits-win-100000-2848546
[587] Best, Jessica. "Military police officer found hanged 'after Army made decision not to charge soldiers she accused of raping her." *Daily Mirror*. 3 February 2014. Accessed 3 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/anne-marie-ellement-inquest-military-police-3108336
[588] Holland. "The Dangers of Playing Dress-up: Popular Representations of Jessica Lynch and the Controversy Regarding Women in Combat." p. 39.

and have more conservative views on gender compared to the audience of the digital version of the paper. Alternatively, the audience of the print version are likely to be loyal readers who are both used to and expect to see some sensational headlines which are characteristic of tabloid paper, while online articles are likely to be viewed by the wider population including regular readers and those who are not. It is plausible, then, that the language and expressions used in the digital version are toned down compared to the print version as a strategy to attract more viewers who do not prefer the typical tabloid style characterized by loud and sensational headlines.

6.4. Comparison with the Sun: Same Stories, Different Impressions

Choosing four different newspapers has allowed the thesis not only to recover various representations of female soldiers circulated by the media but also to conduct comparative analyses between the papers. The thesis has found that the *Sun* and the *Mirror*, though both tabloid papers, are as different from each other as they share some commonalities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Sun* is simply more sensationalist and vulgar in their choice of words and expressions. The differences are to some extent explicable considering their allegiances to the two rivaling political parties, and thus attracting and catering to their respective audiences. The *Mirror*, although it does have many characteristics in common with the *Sun*, as typical tabloid papers, such as working-class people as its targeted audience, plenty of colored photographs, celebrity gossips and sports contents, it strikes as less sensationalistic and vulgar compared to the *Sun*. It is especially evident in the ways in which women – not just female soldiers but women in general – are depicted and discussed in their articles. Even after the Page 3 girls were scrapped from their paper, the *Sun* continues to print large photographs of young models and actresses in bikinis on the third page, and this fact alone seems to be suggestive enough of their attitude towards women. It is not to suggest, however, that the

Mirror is not complicit in sexualizing and objectifying women as well as reproducing certain toxic discourses. The next two sections offer a comparative analysis of the two tabloid papers.

Firstly, there are a few stories in the samples that are published by both the *Sun* and the *Mirror*, which provide a very perspicuous comparison between the two. First article reports MP Penny Mordaunt becoming the first female Defence Secretary. The piece published by the *Sun* is titled "Penny makes a big splash,"[589] which puns on the historic appointment of the first female Defence Minister and a reality TV show she appeared a few years back. MP Mordaunt is referred to by her first name alone. The same story published by the *Mirror* on the other hand is titled "Penny Mordaunt first woman defence secretary after Gavin Williamson sacked."[590] As argued by Clark, "[n]aming is a powerful ideological tool … Different names for an object represent different ways of perceiving it."[591] Calling someone by their first name alone and referring their full name give very different impressions; it would be more appropriate to refer to someone either by their last name or by their full name in formal contexts, if abbreviating their titles. Calling first names always gives more casual tones and can sometimes implicate less respect to the subject. It is also more commonly done when the subject is a woman; headlines such as 'Gavin is sacked' or 'Gavin makes history' would be unusual. Page also points out that "the most frequent form of identification [for women] is by first name alone"[592]

Another story covered by both papers tells of a scandal on a naval submarine involving a male commander and a younger subordinate female officer. The incident was sensationalized due to the facts that intimate relationships on board are not allowed and that the commander was married with children. There are three pieces published by the *Sun* on this particular incident

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[589] Dathan. "PENNY MAKES A BIG SPLASH; IN."
[590] Bartlett, Nicola. "Penny Mordaunt first woman defence secretary after Gavin Williamson sacked." *Daily Mirror.* 1 May 2019. Accessed 19 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-penny-mordaunt-first-woman-14980776
[591] Clark (1992) in Page, Ruth. "'Cherie: lawyer, wife, mum': contradictory patterns of representation in media reports of Cherie Booth/Blair." *Discourse & Society* 14, no. 5 (2003): p. 563.
[592] Ibid. pp. 564-5.

found in the sample. All of them have quite eye-catching and sensational titles; "Nuke sub skipper's fling axe; NAVY SCANDAL; 'AFFAIR WITH OFFICER',"[593] "DAS BOOTY CALL: Nuclear submarine skipper axed for 'fling with woman officer' in international waters,"[594] and "SUB GIRL 'JOKE CAPTAIN' Sub sex scandal girl 'dressed in captain's uniform during boozy horseplay."[595] Words such as 'scandal', 'affair' and 'booty call' combined with the use of capitalized letters functionally attract the readers' attention. The same story by the *Mirror* is titled "Nuclear submarine captain stripped of command over 'inappropriate relationship' with junior officer named."[596] Compared to the *Sun*'s sensationalistic approach, the tone of it is much more subdued. Whereas the *Sun* is much more focused on the female officer and the affair *she* had, the *Mirror* keeps the subject the male commander and *his* affair, and the gender of the 'junior officer' with whom he had an affair is not mentioned. By calling the female officer 'sex scandal girl', the *Sun* evokes one of the major themes that emerged in the analyses, the 'sexy soldier girl' discourse, in which women in the military are often portrayed sexualized and objectified, rendered them stripped of their professional identities.

Finally, the story of the deaths of British soldiers in Afghanistan was covered by both papers and found in the sample. The incident occurred in Helmand, Afghanistan in 2012 where Corporals Channing Day, 25, and David O'Connor, 27 were shot dead during a patrol. Again, by comparing the titles published by the *Sun* and the *Mirror*, one can notice slight differences

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[593] Jehring, Andy. "Nuke sub skipper's fling axe; NAVY SCANDAL; 'AFFAIR WITH OFFICER." *The Sun.* 2 October 2017. Edition 2, Scotland. p. 19.

[594] Jehring, Andy. "DAS BOOTY CALL: Nuclear submarine skipper axed for 'fling with woman officer' in international waters." *The Sun.* 2 October 2017. Accessed 22 October 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4591201/nuclear-submarine-skipper-axed-fling-woman-officer/

[595] Leo, Ben and Sandeman, George. "SUB GIRL 'JOKE CAPTAIN' Sub sex scandal girl 'dressed in captain's uniform during boozy horseplay." *The Sun.* 15 October 2017. Accessed 22 October 2020. Available at https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/4687220/rebecca-edwards-stuart-armstrong-hms-vigilante/

[596] Smith, Mikey. ""Nuclear submarine captain stripped of command over 'inappropriate relationship' with junior officer named." *Daily Mirror.* 2 October 2017. Accessed 22 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/nuclear-submarine-captain-stripped-command-11277448

in similarities. The piece by the *Sun* is titled "GIRL WHO LIVED FOR THE ARMY IS KILLED; Channing and patrol pal die in 'friendly fire'"[597] and the one by the *Mirror* "'ALL CHANNING EVER WANTED WAS TO BE A SOLDIER AND A MEDIC'; Parents remember daughter shot dead by Taliban."[598] Both articles use the markers of femininity discussed in the previous sections such as using first name (Channing) and calling her 'girl', but there are still slight differences. The first part of *Mirror*'s title is a quote from the parents of Corporal Day, in which they refer to their own daughter by her first name, which is quite different from how calling women by their first name alone is used as a label to emphasize their gender. The *Sun*'s title also partially contains a quote from the parents (they are quoted as saying that "she has died doing what she lived for"[599]), but the word 'girl' has been added by the writer. As already examined several times, calling professional women girl(s), regardless of their young age, is belittling and disrespectful, especially in such a solemn context and when their counterparts are not called boy(s).

6.5. Comparison with the Sun: On Similar Topics

The above examples show a direct comparison between the two newspapers on the exact same stories. It is also possible to observe differences in their reporting and writing styles by looking into their articles on similar topics, such as gender policies in the military. This section focuses on some of the prevailing subjects published by both papers and examine their similarities and differences.

In regard to the military's gender policies, the two papers share a similarly skeptical standpoint. Gender policies here refer to the smaller new rules and regulations the Armed Forces have

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[597] Willetts, David. "GIRL WHO LIVED FOR THE ARMY IS KILLED; Channing and patrol pal die in 'friendly fire'." *The Sun.* 26 October 2012. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 9.
[598] McKeown, Lesley-Anne. "ALL CHANNING EVER WANTED WAS TO BE A SOLDIER AND A MEDIC; Parents remember daughter shot dead by Taliban." *Daily Mirror.* 20 December 2012. Edition 1, Northern Ireland. p. 20.
[599] Willetts.

introduced in an effort to make the institution more inclusive and gender neutral, and not to the bigger debate on the inclusion of women on the front line, which have been addressed in separate sections in this chapter as well as in the previous chapter. For instance, when the MoD introduced gender-neutral bathrooms in the headquarters, both papers quoted a comment by Colonel Kemp, calling the gender-neutral loo "shocking" and "political correctness."[600] The *Mirror* also cited a female staff telling that she does not go to the new gender-neutral toilet because they are "too smelly" and dismissing the new policy as not "sensible" and is "just daft."[601] Another instance is when the RAF announced their plan to ask their female personnel not to wear skirts on parade, again in an effort to make the Service more inclusive. The paper quoted one of servicewomen saying that "everyone's livid. We've been wearing skirts since World War II. It feels like political correctness. The world's going mad."[602] The analyses has revealed that the *Sun* and the *Mirror* share somewhat similar outlook on issues such as gender-neutral toilets and uniforms of the Armed Forces, in which more critical opinions are cited and there is an overall undertone of slight skepticism and sarcasm.

The *Sun* and the *Mirror* are distinguished from each other in other instances; an example is the ways in which they present female pioneers, who, as women, come to hold positions that were previously occupied exclusively by men for the first time or to achieve something unprecedented. As noted in the previous chapter, the *Sun* seems to mostly refrain from their usual facetious and flippant tone on this matter, delivering the news as matter of fact without unnecessary comments on their appearance or mockery. Yet there are a few articles in which the paper refers to senior female officials by their first names alone and calling pioneering

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[600] Hamilton. "ARMY TOP BRASS GET GENDER-NEUTRAL LOOS."; Rayment, Sean. "Female staff shun MoD's new £15k gender-neutral toilets for being too smelly." 28 December 2019. Accessed 24 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/female-staff-shun-mods-new-21177430
[601] Rayment. "Female staff shun MoD's new £15k gender-neutral toilets for being too smelly."
[602] Sassoon, Louise. "RAF 'to ban women from wearing skirts in bid to make service more inclusive'." *Daily Mirror.* 28 February 2017. Accessed 24 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raf-to-ban-women-wearing-9931650

female soldiers 'girl(s)'.[603] Conversely, the *Mirror* is consistent with the description of female pioneers in the military. There are 12 articles found in the sample on the topic and 11 of them refer to the women as 'first female (their respective positions)'.[604] The *Mirror*'s attitude toward female soldiers seem to vary, from being respectful to being flippant, which seem to depend on the age and rank of the subjects, while the *Sun* is consistent in depicting women in facetious manners.

6.6. Conclusion

This chapter has provided a twofold analysis of a tabloid newspaper the *Daily Mirror*; a reading and analysis of the texts from the paper on how they deliver various topics, and a comparison between their reporting style and that of another tabloid paper featured in this thesis, the *Sun*. The differences between the two papers are as anticipated in terms of their political stances as they seem to generally follow and endorse the views of the political parties they support. Compared to the broadsheet papers, however, the tabloid papers exhibit a more balanced and

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[603] Willetts. "SUE IS 1st WOMAN GENERAL."; Dathan. "PENNY MAKES A BIG SPLASH; IN."; Kay. "It was just a scratch – CAPTAIN KATE PHILIP; 1ST ARMY GIRL TO LOSE LEG TALKS TO THE SUN."; The Sun. "Marines girl's first."

[604] The Daily Mirror. "First female Drum Major." 19 August 2017. Edition 1, Northern Ireland. p. 24.; The Daily Mirror. "First female combat lead." 23 March 2019. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 4.; Hughes, Chris. "First female submariners pass muster." *Daily Mirror.* 5 May 2014. Edition 1. Northern Ireland. p. 14.; Kefford, Ali. "Sub hunting with first female commander of major Royal Navy warship." *Daily Mirror.* 13 January 2014. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/real-life-stories/royal-navy-commander-sarah-west-3016527; Hartley-Parkinson, Richard. "First female Red Arrow pilot to marry Squadron Leader despite telling RAF bosses they were not in a relationship. *Daily Mirror.* 28 January 2014. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/red-arrow-pilots-marry-after-3069293; Keegan, Simon. "First female submariners in the history of the Royal Navy appointed." *Daily Mirror.* 4 May 2014. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/first-female-submariners-history-royal-3496847; Rahman, Sophia. "Meet China's first female fighter jet stunt pilots who made history with a jaw-dropping display." *Daily Mirror.* 12 November 2014. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/meet-chinas-first-female-fighter-4615185; Hughes, Chris. "RAF appoints first female bomber squadron commander." *Daily Mirror.* 7 January 2015. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/raf-appoints-first-female-bomber-4936692; Jones, Tony. "First female soldier to command troops guarding Queen at Buckingham Palace is focused on 'staying humble'." *Daily Mirror.* 26 June 2017. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/first-female-soldier-command-troops-10689651; Taylor, Rebecca. "Female US Marine smashes glass ceiling to become first woman to complete famously grueling officer training." *Daily Mirror.* 26 September 2017. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/female-marine-smashes-glass-ceiling-11239738; Jolly, Bradley. "Female soldier comes within two miles of becoming UK's first woman paratrooper." *Daily Mirror.* 2 March 2019. Accessed 26 October 2020. Available at https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/female-soldier-comes-within-two-14077612

impartial reporting specifically on the topic of women's inclusion in combat roles. Both the *Sun* and the *Mirror* present different views in the debate without inclining to or favoring either side. Compared to the *Sun*'s usual sensationalistic and flippant style of writing and reporting, one may think the *Mirror* is a more 'decent' tabloid. However, what the analyses of the two papers have revealed is the similarities they share in patterns in which women are depicted. The nuanced discourses which emerged from the analyses of two tabloid papers about women in the military are compelling, firstly because they suggest that, despite the political and ideological differences of the papers, there are common threads in the ways women in the military are typically represented in the mainstream media. It is also significant because as two of the most widely circulated media outlets in the UK, those discourses presented by them have significant influences on the audience in affecting, shaping, or changing their views and opinions. It is the overarching picture of interrelationship between military and civil discourses apropos of women in the military that this thesis is concerned, and the role of media is vital. Just as much as the military and civil society are not mutually exclusive, the relationship between the media and society is also fundamentally interdependent.

The thesis has identified the markers of femininity in various forms, which underscore the gender and femininity of female soldiers while minimizing their professional identities and achievements. It is argued that the usage of these markers is a form of Othering and detachment, in which female soldiers are denied their professional identity and rendered hyper-visible as women. The thesis suggests that such a deliberate differentiation of female soldiers from their male colleagues by highlighting their gender and femininity is a subtle defensive reaction, a struggle to maintain the status-quo of the gendered stereotypes and 'gender-appropriate' roles.[605] The thesis also argues that these markers are a manifestation of the sense of discomfort

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[605] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.

engendered by the incongruity between the femininity and communal traits of female soldiers and the agentic, masculine-coded profession of soldiering. The differentiated ways in which male and female soldiers are depicted in the media bear similarities to how athletes are often portrayed. Harris and Clayton found that the coverage of female athletes in tabloid papers is significantly smaller than that of male athletes, and when they are featured, they tend to be limited to "female-appropriate" sports such as tennis, swimming, and golf.[606] They also point out that the accomplishments by female athletes tend to be trivialized.[607] Moreover, they argue that through sexualization and emphasizing femininity of their physicality as well as glamorizing such representation, "masculinity is constructed and maintained."[608] In other words, highlighting femininity of female athletes and trivializing their achievements work together to perpetuate the gendered myth of 'female-appropriate' sports and its implications that sports is a masculine-coded domain in which women are only associated with 'girly' feminine-coded types of sports, and their physical attractiveness is made more visible than their athletic skills and achievements. Similarly, the ways in which female soldiers are portrayed in the media often highlight the femininity of them if not objectifying them, emphasizing 'female-appropriate' elements such as their interests in 'girly' clothes, makeup, and hobbies. Such markers of femininity, the thesis argues, render the subject positions of female soldiers ambiguous by underscoring their identities as women while trivializing their professional identities as soldiers, in an attempt to confine them to the traditional notion of women, coaxing them into *their place*.

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[606] Harris, John and Clayton, Ben. "Femininity, Masculinity, Physicality and the English Tabloid Press." *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 37, no. 3-4 (2002): pp. 403-4.
[607] Ibid. pp. 407-8.
[608] Ibid. p. 411.

Chapter 7: The Daily Telegraph (Print & Digital 2010-2019)

The *Daily Telegraph*, also known as the *Telegraph*, is a British broadsheet newspaper and considered as one of the quality newspapers along with the *Guardian* and the *Times*. It was founded in 1855 as the *Daily Telegraph and Courier*.[609] The paper has invariably supported the Conservative Party, [610] and the personal connections between the editors and the Conservative Party and its general right-leaning stance led the paper to be dubbed as *Torygraph*.[611] It is well known that then Prime Minister Boris Johnson worked for the *Telegraph* as a journalist in the 90s whose articles were renowned for their Euroscepticism. The paper supported the Leave campaign during the 2016 Brexit referendum and endorsed Johnson during the 2019 Conservative leadership election. The data shows that the *Telegraph* readers also shows "unambiguous" preferences over Brexit which align with that of the paper.[612] According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), the *Daily Telegraph* sold 317,817 copies in December 2019.[613] Monthly readership of the paper on average consists of 2,683,000 for the print edition, 3,719,000 digital edition accessed from desktop, and 15,671,000 accessed from mobile/tablet devices, according to the Publishers Audience Measurement Company (PAMCo).[614]

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[609] Britannica. "The Daily Telegraph."

[610] Prestwich and Barr. "United Kingdom."

[611] Made popular by a satirical magazine Private Eye, the nickname for the paper was awarded due to their perennial support for the Conservative Party. Tréguer, Pascal. "'Torygraph', and other newspaper nicknames." *Word histories.* Accessed 26 February 2021. Available at https://wordhistories.net/2020/05/03/torygraph-newspaper-nicknames/

[612] Taylor, Ros. "What do British newspaper reader think about Brexit?" *LSE.* 12 July 2019. Available at https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/brexit/2019/07/12/what-do-british-newspaper-readers-think-about-brexit/

[613] Audit Bureau of Circulations. "The Daily Telegraph." 16 January 2020. Accessed 24 December 2020. Available at https://www.abc.org.uk/Certificates/49627521.pdf Note that the data from December 2019 is the latest one available on the ABC website.

[614] Publishers Audience Measurement Company. PAMCo 2 2020 Apr' 19 – Mar' 20 Mar' 20 Comscore data. Accessed 24 December 2020. Available at https://pamco.co.uk/pamco-data/latest-results/
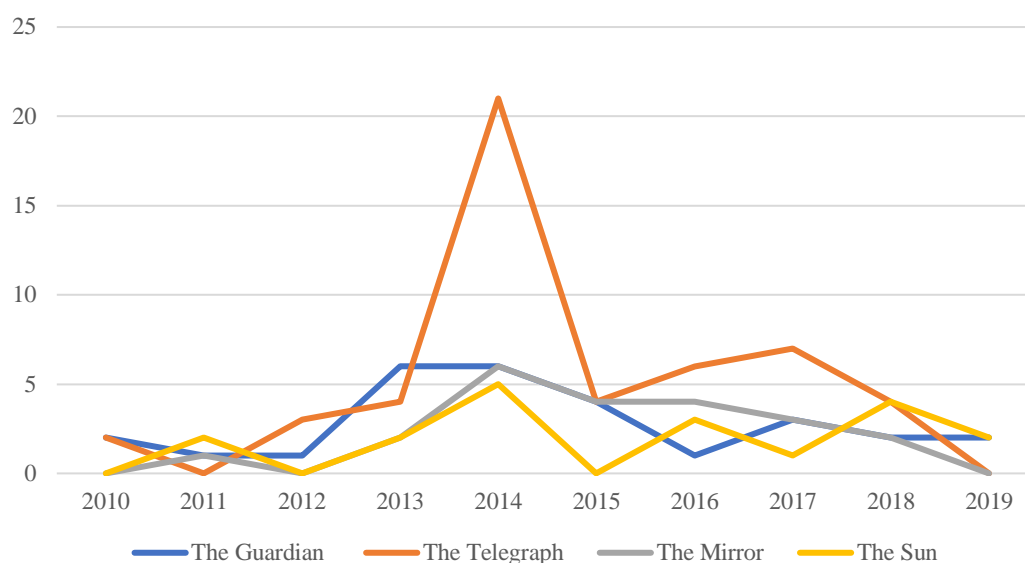
7.1. Women on the Front Line

As shown in *Figure 3,* 2014 was a significant year regarding the discussion of inclusion of women in combat roles in the media. It was the year then Defence secretary Hammond welcomed the prospect of opening the ground close combat roles to women,[615] followed by the publication of "Women in ground close combat review paper" by the MoD.[616] To reiterate the discussion in the Methodology chapter on data collection and sampling for this thesis, these graphs and the correspondent analysis are specific to the particular set of samples gathered for the present research. It is not the intention of the thesis to assert claims to truth or generalizability of the analyses, but to offer an interpretative account of representations of female soldiers within the limited scope of the samples. The graphs are intended to visualize the differences and similarities between the papers that are found in the samples. This section examines the ways in which (the idea of) female combat soldiers are portrayed and delivered to the audience by the *Telegraph*.

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[615] MacAskill, Ewen. "Women set to get green light for combat roles in the British army." *The Guardian.* 8 May 2014. Accessed 29 December 2020. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/may/08/women-set-for-combat-roles-in-british-army

[616] Ministry of Defence. "Women in ground close combat (GCC) review paper." 19 December 2014. Accessed 29 December 2020. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/women-in-ground-close-combat-gcc-review-paper

Figure 3

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2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016 2017 2018 2019

——— The Guardian ——— The Telegraph ——— The Mirror ——— The Sun

Numbers of publication – Women on the frontline

7.1.1. Women on the Front Line: Plain Reporting

Among the articles on the topic published by the *Telegraph*, about half of them are reporting

of announcements and decisions made by the government and the Armed Forces officials, and

the other half is dedicated to editorials and opinion pieces. The former tends to be more

objective in tone and deliver news as matters of fact, whereas the latter is more focused on

subjective and personal opinions and views. Since they each give quite different impressions,

and because there are simply a number of pieces covering the topic, they will be divided into

two segments. This portion will review the former, plain reporting. The first article in the

sample on this topic is published in November 2010, which reports that the ban on women in

combat roles is to be maintained, following the review[617] published by the MoD.[618]

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[617] Ministry of Defence. "Report on the review of the exclusion of women from ground close-combat roles." 1 November 2010. Accessed 5 January 2021. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/women-in-combat
[618] "Front line ban for women continues; News Bulletin." *The Daily Telegraph.* 30 November 2010. Edition 1, Scotland. p. 2.

As *Figure 3* shows, there are a relatively high coverage of the topic in 2014 across the papers. This high volume of coverage was largely due to the propitious remark by General Sir Peter Wall, then Chief of the General Staff, where he stated that lifting the combat ban on women was "something we need to consider seriously,"[619] which was then strongly supported by then Defence Secretary Phillip Hammond. In his statement, Hammond used a discourse which would be repeated by the officials continually thereafter; that whether or not people are considered fit to fight on the front line should be determined by their "fitness not gender."[620] It was repeated by his successor Michael Fallon when he announced later in the same year that women were to be allowed in close combat roles, after a study ordered by Hammond cleared concerns regarding potential effects women could have on unit cohesion. He stated, "roles in our Armed Forces should be determined by ability not gender." [621] The *Telegraph* also published a piece penned by Fallon himself in which he reiterated the same discourse again; "by ensuring ability, not gender, determines who succeeds, we are giving everyone a chance to compete for any military role. I hope we will see our brave servicewomen as part of an agile, fully flexible force, … not because they are women, but because they are truly the best of the best."[622] The same discourse was again repeated by Hammond's successor Gavin Williamson four years later.[623]

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[619] Fifield, Nicola. "Women could be given combat duties; Fit to fight." *The Daily Telegraph.* 7 April 2014. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 11.

[620] Hope, Christopher. "Women could join SAS in equality drive; Fighting is about fitness, not gender, says Hammond." *The Daily Telegraph.* 9 May 2014. Edition 1, Scotland. p. 1, 4.

[621] Farmer, Ben. "Women 'in front-line combat roles by 2016'. *The Telegraph.* 19 December 2014. Accessed 27 January 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11302533/Women-in-front-line-combat-roles-by-2016.html

[622] Fallon, Michael. "The Armed Forces will open all roles to women – including combat." *The Telegraph.* 20 December 2014. Accessed 28 January 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11305184/The-Armed-Forces-will-open-all-roles-to-women-including-combat.html

[623] Merrill, Jamie. "Women now able to join the SAS as defence secretary opens up all roles in Armed Forces to both sexes." *The Telegraph.* 25 October 2018. Accessed 28 January 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/10/25/women-men-now-have-full-parity-armed-forces-defence-secretary/

One of the findings which emerged from the reading of the Telegraph articles on the topic is that in pieces dedicated to reporting policy changes and announcements by officials as matter of fact, comments by opponents which object the repeal of the combat ban on women, expressed by sometimes unidentified sources are presented disproportionately more often than favorable views. For instance, the paper added in an article on David Cameron ordering full integration of women in combat units a sentence which read "fears have been raised that women will be unable to cope with the physical demands of close ground combat operations, while there have also been concerns their presence could damage the 'cohesion' of units in battle."[624] This statement does not reflect the government's official standpoint as it was after the MoD released the review which concluded that women do not affect unit cohesion, though concerns about physiological aspect remained at the time. Another example is when the paper cited a comment by a Conservative Party peer who served in the Territorial Army arguing it was "simply ridiculous" to maintain combat effectiveness with women in units, and that it was "even more ludicrous" to allow women in the Royal Marine Commandos,[625] but did not present any counterargument to the comment.

Finally, in the piece published in 2018 in which then Defence secretary Williamson officially announced that all roles in the Armed Forces were open for women, the *Telegraph* inserted once again a comment by Colonel Kemp who argued that "the new policy would 'cost lives' as it would 'lead to divisiveness' and undermine teamwork."[626] They brought him up despite the fact that many studies had concluded by then there is no statistical evidence that showed the presence of female soldiers in close combat units was detrimental to unit cohesion or

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[624] Ross, Tim. "British Army's women soldiers to go into combat." *The Telegraph*. 20 December 2015. Accessed 28 January 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/12060225/British-Armys-women-soldiers-to-go-into-combat.html

[625] Farmer, Ben. "RAF ends last block to women serving on front line." *The Daily Telegraph*. 14 July 2017. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 6.

[626] Merrill, Jamie. "Female soldiers allowed to fight on the front line and join SAS." *The Daily Telegraph*. 26 October 2018. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 13.

combat effectiveness. Even though he had been a prominent voice that opposed the policy change, his arguments on unit cohesion were no longer valid or relevant. These subtle interpolations of remarks and statements that weigh in on one particular side, this thesis suggests, are a reflection of the paper's, and its audience's posture in the topic. It is highly plausible that the paper's wary and skeptical approach to such a radical change was aligned with its conservative readers' views. The tendency stands out as these pieces are not editorials or opinion pieces where views expressed there are more likely to be subjective and less neutral. The analyses of the *Sun* and the *Mirror*, as discussed in previous chapters, have found that their reporting of the topic is relatively neutral and balanced, presenting both sides of the debate. Although tabloid papers are generally considered to be less reliable compared to broadsheet papers, the analysis has found that the broadsheet newspapers can be more biased and inclined to favor certain views. Whether intentionally or not, by presenting views of one side more than the other, newspapers signal their political stances while reporting news.

7.1.2. Women on the Front Line: Opinion Pieces

This section focuses on editorials and opinion pieces on the same topic, often characterized by the use of definitive and deterministic language such as 'should' and 'should not'. Among the articles published by the *Telegraph* regarding the topic, about half is considered as 'opinion pieces' due to the characteristics of the language and their distinct stance. In 2013, the *Telegraph* published a piece in which a former female officer argued that women should not be allowed in combat roles. Major Judith Webb, according to the article, claimed that female soldiers would not be able to meet the fitness standards of infantry roles and allowing them into such roles *would* degenerate the standards. However, the title "Army 'has dropped fitness standards to allow more women to join'"[627] is misleading as it gives the impression that the

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[627] Rojas, John-Paul Ford. "Army 'has dropped fitness standards to allow more women to join'." *The Telegraph.* 24 January 2013. Accessed 1 February 2021. Available at

standards had already been compromised. Considering the narrative that allowing women in combat roles would most likely lead to deterioration in the fitness standards and effectiveness of units was one of the most favored arguments among the critics of the policy change, the title is not only inaccurate but also deceivingly sensational. A former editor and a long-time columnist of the *Telegraph* wrote an opinion piece weighing in on the debate, which also has a rather eye-catching title; "This Equality obsession is mad, bad, and very, very dangerous."[628] Such titles are deliberately devised to be eye-catching and perhaps are satisfying to see for some, as newspapers essentially customize them for their readers, some of the titles can be considered misinformation.

In 2014, when the discussion on the inclusion of women on the front line became more active than ever, the *Telegraph* published an article outlining the key points which are considered in the debate such as unit cohesion and physiology. The piece by the paper's then defence correspondent exemplifies the paper's general stance on the topic; first, it cites the lack of 'killer instinct' as one of the concerns. The article does not cite the source, but this 'women lacking killer instinct' claim was made originally by Colonel Kemp.[629] The assertion lacks evidence to support, yet such an unofficial and unsubstantiated claim is listed as 'key points' of contestation. Although other points raised such as unit cohesion and female physiology were included and considered as valid factors in several studies published by the MoD, it suggests that the *Telegraph* values Colonel Kemp's personal account despite its evident flaw. Second, the article makes actively a case for the opponents of the debate by presenting their 'fears' 'worries' and 'concerns' while barely introducing counterarguments by the advocates.[630] In

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https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/9823312/Army-has-dropped-fitness-standards-to-allow-more-women-to-join.html

[628] Moore, Charles. "This Equality obsession is mad, bad and very, very dangerous." *The Daily Telegraph*. 2 February 2013. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 24.

[629] Bond. "Women don't have the 'killer instinct' to fight on the front line, says top former commander."

[630] Farmer, Ben. "Brave choice: a woman's right to fight on Frontline." *The Daily Telegraph*. 6 December 2014. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 8.

stark contrast, an article penned by then Women's Editor of the *Telegraph* sends a completely different message. In a rather buoyant tone, the article gives the audience a list of reasons why women should be allowed on the front line. It even calls out Colonel Kemp's views for being "overused, unproved" and "wrong-headed."[631] These two articles sending a conflicting signal may be an indication of an internal divide within the paper regarding the topic.

Many media outlets provide their audiences with a wide range of views and opinions to maintain diverse coverage. However, the analysis has found that pieces published by the *Telegraph* about the topic distinctively lean towards the opposing side of the discussion while favorable views are only sparsely covered. A 2015 article is titled "Male Commandos don't want women fighting on the front line. Here's why" and describes the result of a survey, in which the majority[632] of males in American special forces said they did not want women in special operation forces.[633] Albeit interesting, the title seems misleading as it does not reveal the survey was American. Moreover, the relevance and applicability of a survey in the American forces to the British forces are not discussed. The titles of articles written by Colonel Kemp are as eye-catching and perhaps even more conspicuous. One is entitled "Our Army front-line is no place for women" [634] and the other "Putting women on the front line is dangerous PC meddling. We will pay for it in blood."[635] He argues that the grueling task of infantry is beyond capability of females, and that he knows of "many (infantrymen)" who

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[631] Barnett, Emma. "Women to fight on the frontline. Now the battle really begins." *The Telegraph.* 6 December 2014. Accessed 1 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11276724/Army-front-line-Women-are-to-fight-on-the-front-line.-Now-the-battle-really-begins.html

[632] 85% among over 7,600 personnel who participated in the survey.

[633] Sanghani, Radhika. "Male Commandos don't want women fighting on the front line. Here's why." *The Telegraph.* 11 December 2015. Accessed 2 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/politics/male-commandos-dont-want-women-fighting-on-the-front-line-heres/

[634] Kemp, Richard. "Our Army front-line is no place for women." *The Daily Telegraph.* 6 April 2016. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 14.

[635] Kemp, Richard. "Putting women on the front line is dangerous PC meddling. We will pay for it in blood." *The Telegraph.* 5 April 2016. Accessed 2 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/04/05/putting-women-on-the-front-line-is-dangerous-pc-meddling-we-will/

would leave if women joined. He is certain that degeneration of the standards is "precisely what is going to happen." However, much of his claims are based on his personal conviction – he maintains that "women *will* often become the weak link … the men *will* have to take up the slack."[636] He also asserts that "other than the equal opportunities, the Government has failed to put forward any arguments for lifting the ban," but this claim is simply incorrect as the MoD had published research which concluded otherwise.[637] Therefore, it would be safe to say that the *Telegraph* seems to hold Colonel Kemp and his opinions in high regard, even when his views are questionable, and the paper values the dramatic effect of his often contentious views in their headlines.

7.1.3. Women on the Front Line: Innate Course of Progression or Political Correctness Gone Too Far?

The well-rehearsed rhetoric used by the officials to justify the full integration of women in the Armed Forces such as "allowing [women] to be combat troops would make us look more normal to society"[638] by Sir Wall and "it is vital that our Armed Forces … reflect the society we live in"[639] by David Cameron signifies stark yet delicate and nuanced contrast to the voices of those who firmly opposed to the idea of allowing women into combat roles. The seemingly completely opposite discourses revolve around the same concern – political correctness. The term 'politically correct' is defined by the Cambridge Dictionary as "avoiding language or behavior … that could be offensive to others, especially those relating sex and race."[640] In addition, Moller notes that the notion of political correctness refers to "a system for moulding

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[636] Ibid. Emphasis added.

[637] Ministry of Defence. "Women in ground close combat (GCC) review paper."

[638] Fifield, Nicola. "Female troops may get right to fight on front line." *The Telegraph*. 6 April 2014. Accessed 22 January 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/10748024/Female-troops-may-get-right-to-fight-on-front-line.html

[639] Farmer, Ben. "Women will be allowed to fight in ranks of SAS; Nato summit; Female recruits possible as Prime Minister urges Armed Forces to open up opportunities in all roles." *The Daily Telegraph*. 9 July 2016. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 18.

[640] Cambridge Dictionary. "politically correct." Accessed 25 January 2021. Available at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/politically-correct

public discourse," [641] as political correctness is what Fairclough calls a "cultural intervention"[642] rooted in a concern that a certain discourse is inhibiting or discriminatory against a certain group, through which a new norm is established. Though often used sarcastically as a word with negative connotations and implications that being politically correct (or PC) is being unreasonably excessive and vexatious, the original meaning only promotes more sensibility to avoid causing any offense to particular groups of people. In other words, as society progresses towards equity and removing systematic and structural barriers to all people, it will inevitably learn and acknowledge what used to be accepted may no longer be tolerated. As Moller puts it, "political correctness thus represents the evolution of public standards … and promote[s] the interests of historically oppressed groups."[643]

The example of a society moving towards such a direction is the UK lifting the ban on women in combat roles in 2018,[644] following the examples set by other countries. It may have been a case in which pressure and desire to emulate and keep up with the close allies motivated the decision, it was nonetheless considered and promoted as creating equal opportunities. The remark by then Defence secretary Hammond that he wanted the UK to follow the footsteps of other nations such as "the Americans, the Australians, even the French"[645] to allow women in combat roles highlights the pressure faced by the government at the time to keep pace with their military allies. Among those countries the UK had been particularly cautious in making the decision to lift the ban on women in combat roles. It could be argued that one of the factors that eventually drove the shift in attitudes in the government was the desire to appear aligned with other countries in terms of equality policies. Studies published by the MoD in 2002 and

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[641] Moller, Dan. "Dilemmas of Political Correctness." *Journal of Practical Ethics* 4, no.1 (2016): p. 2.
[642] Fairclough. "'Political correctness': the politics of culture and language. p. 22.
[643] Moller, Dan. "Dilemmas of Political Correctness." p. 7.
[644] National Army Museum. "A timeline of women in the Army."
[645] Hope, Christopher. "Women soldiers could be allowed to join SAS." *The Telegraph.* 9 May 2014. Accessed 25 January 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/10817250/Women-soldiers-could-be-allowed-to-join-SAS.html

2010, concluded that due to the potential risk of harming cohesion in combat units should women be allowed in, women should remain excluded from those roles.[646] It has been pointed out that after Australia removed the combat ban on women in 2011 followed by the US in 2013, however, it became increasingly inevitable that the UK needed to follow these nations.[647]

The other side of the coin is when the term PC is used as a pejorative by critics. Once the subject becomes "a default norm against advancing ideas,"[648] the implications of the term political correctness depend on which side one is inclined to defend. As Fairclough points out, "'political correctness' and being 'politically correct' are, in the main, identifications imposed upon people by their political opponents."[649] Moreover, the critics of political correctness are often on the right,[650] opposing the liberals' attempts to introduce new ideals and standards. The example of the UK progressing towards eliminating obstacles for women in the Armed Forces was no exception – although it was led by a Conservative government – this was met with a wail of woes of some of the Conservatives, who effectively deployed the tactic labeling their adversaries 'PC'. According to the *Telegraph*, 'opponents' of the changes claimed that the plan was "purely 'political'."[651] What is observed here is a clear struggle between two discourses; one trying to alter a frontier of a public discourse and the other resisting, defending the old one. The *Telegraph* demonstrates their wary and critical position as a paper toward the issue through their coverage of the inclusion of women in combat roles. The paper sympathizes with the conservative opponents of the debate who express their concerns and disapprobation while only scarcely featuring assenting views. The objections are characterized by a perception of

[646] Ministry of Defence. "Report on the review of the exclusion of women from ground close-combat roles."
[647] RUSI. "Women in Combat: British Band of Brothers May Soon Be History." *RUSI*. 9 May 2014. Accessed 25 January 2021. Available at https://rusi.org/commentary/women-combat-british-band-brothers-may-soon-be-history
[648] Moller, Dan. "Dilemmas of Political Correctness." p. 7.
[649] Fairclough. "'Political correctness': the politics of culture and language. p. 21.
[650] Loury, Glenn C. "Self-Censorship in Public Discourse: A Theory of 'Political Correctness' and Related Phenomena." *Rationality and Society* 6, no. 4 (1994): p. 429.
[651] Ross. "British Army's women soldiers to go into combat." *The Telegraph*.

'lack of fit', a view which is inferred by the observation that more men than women indeed hold roles in the military, and hence, women must be unfit for these roles.[652] Moreover, such observation in the military in particular, validates the gender stereotypes which assign communal roles to women and agentic roles to men, further reinforcing the belief that women and soldiering are incompatible.[653]

7.2. Emphasis on Femininity

This section examines the use of the markers of femininity by the *Telegraph*, which highlight female soldiers' gender and femininity and differentiate them from male soldiers. As discussed in the previous chapters, the tabloid papers often focus on the fact that the subject is a woman, stressing their feminine traits like their physical appearances. The similar use of the markers of femininity is also found in the broadsheet papers. The thesis argues that these markers render female soldiers hyper-visible and Othered, differentiating them from their male colleagues. It detaches the women from their professional identities as soldiers in the way to which male soldiers are never subjected. It is indicative of the newsworthiness of female soldiers as unusual and unconventional bodies in the masculine space. The *Telegraph* is not an exception when it comes to the emphasis they put on the gender of female soldiers in various contexts. Though they refrain from referring to female soldiers as *girls* and calling them by their first names as tabloids often do, they routinely highlight the gender of the soldiers by labeling them "female

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[652] Heilman. "Description and Prescription: How Gender Stereotypes Prevent Women's Ascent Up the Organizational Ladder."
[653] Wood and Eagly. "Biosocial Construction of Sex Differences and Similarities in Behavior." p. 57.; Wood and Eagly. "A Cross-Cultural Analysis of the Behavior of Women and Men: Implications for the Origins of Sex Differences." p. 702.

soldier (or officer),"[654] "woman soldier,"[655] and "military mum."[656] Although the thesis has found that such a labeling is mostly a standard practice to simply differentiate women from men, not every story involving female soldiers requires the gender of the soldiers to be specified. Yet the gender of female soldiers is always emphasized, and the contrast of the words 'female' and 'soldier' seems to draw the readers' attention. As noted in the previous chapters, the ideas of women and soldier are not commonly associated with each other because of the traditional gender norms and societal expectations for men and women. Words like 'female' and 'women' in the contexts of military especially stand out due to the sharp contrast between femininity and soldiering, in which the markedness of the female bodies is accentuated and rendered hyper-visible.

The incident which killed Corporal Channing Day along with her male colleague in Afghanistan in 2013 was widely reported in the British media and many related pieces are found in the samples published by each newspaper. Corporal Day was with her male colleague Corporal David O'Conner when they came under fire, which tragically killed both. However, the media seemed to be fixated on the fact that a *female* soldier died, and it evidently was reflected in the stories they published. For example, all of pieces published by the *Telegraph* regarding this specific topic which were found in the sample have titles that include either female or woman, most of which do not mention Corporal O'Conner.[657] When just glancing at

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[654] Nicholls, Dominic. "Female soldier to command infantry troops having passed Brecon course." *The Telegraph.* 22 March 2019. Accessed 14 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2019/03/22/female-soldier-command-infantry-troops-having-passed-brecon/
[655] Harding, Thomas. "New inquest over woman soldier who claimed rape." *The Daily Telegraph.* 9 August 2012. Edition 2, National Edition. p. 11.
[656] Sanghani, Radhika. "Military mums pose with babies to normalise breastfeeding." *The Telegraph.* 14 September 2015. Accessed 14 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11863219/Breastfeeding-military-mums-pose-with-babies.html?placement=CB4
[657] Just to list a few; Farmer, Ben. "Female medic Cpl Channing Day killed on way to teach first aid to Afghans." *The Telegraph.* 10 September 2012. Accessed 15 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/10300297/Female-medic-Cpl-Channing-Day-killed-on-way-to-teach-first-aid-to-Afghans.html; Swinford, Steven and Farmer, Ben. "'Friendly fire' kills British woman soldier in Afghanistan." *The Telegraph.* 25 October 2012. Accessed 14 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9634690/Friendly-fire-kills-British-

the titles, many of them give the impression that the female soldier was the sole casualty. The incident that killed Corporal Sarah Bryant and three of her male colleagues two years prior was also reported in the similar way in which her death was especially and disproportionately highlighted.[658] Deaths of female soldiers may be even more unusual and shocking to some as the number of female soldiers' deaths is indeed considerably fewer than that of male soldiers. It was suggested that the British public is yet ready to accept deaths of female soldiers by Major Webb when she opposed the inclusion of women in combat units.[659] Millar found the different ways in which female and male soldiers are commemorated after their deaths and suggests that while male soldiers' deaths are unfortunate yet "normatively acceptable," for men are "the legitimate agents and casualties of violence," deaths of female soldiers are harder to be accepted as such, for women are not appropriate subject of violence.[660] The thesis posits that the sense of discomfort is evident in the ways in which their identities as women are made more prominent than their professional identities as soldiers and their deaths are highlighted as an atrocity. As Millar points out, the subject positions of female soldiers are rendered ambiguous and contested in the current normative structure within which the public understanding of soldier and women are constituted. The word *soldier* may seem neutral enough, but it is not – it is strongly associated with male gender; note that male soldiers are almost never referred to as *male soldiers.* Just as soldiering as an occupation was long considered masculine, the English word also seems to be closely identified with male gender and masculinity.[661]

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woman-soldier-in-Afghanistan.html; "Woman soldier 'shot dead by Afghan police'." *The Daily Telegraph.* 11 September 2013. Edition 3, National Edition. p. 12.

[658] Harding, Thomas. "SAS officer's warning of Land Rover risk ignored by the MoD; Female soldier died after Afghan forces were told to 'get on with it'." *The Daily Telegraph.* 2 March 2010. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 9.

[659] Rojas. "Army 'has dropped fitness standards to allow more women to join'."

[660] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." pp. 762, 764.

[661] *Miles,* soldier in Latin, is a masculine word.

Another theme that has emerged in line with the specification of soldiers' gender is that there is a difference in how female soldiers are typically described, when compared to that of male soldiers. This is not a novel discovery, as it has been discussed by Millar[662] and Ette[663] for example, that different attributes are emphasized in reporting on female and male soldiers. The tabloid papers are more overt in highlighting the gender and feminine traits of female soldiers, for instance by calling them girls and describing them with words such as sexy and glamorous. The broadsheet papers may be more subtle in their ways in which gender and femininity of female soldiers are stressed. However, it does not mean they do not put disproportionate emphases on the gender of female soldiers. In addition to always specifying the gender of female soldiers, there are other ways in which they are differentiated from their male colleagues in news stories. As also found by Ette, the language used to depict female soldiers tends to differ from the language used for male soldiers; she points out that while the mainstream media tend to focus on professionalism of male soldiers, they direct the attention to personalities and private lives of female soldiers, and several news articles seem to underpin her observation. In the article which reports the incident involving Corporal Day and Corporal O'Conner, the *Telegraph* interviewed people who knew these soldiers for comments. An acting principal from the secondary school Corporal Day attended told the paper how she excelled at sports and that she was "a very active, outgoing girl." [664] On the other hand, the paper asks Corporal O'Conner's superior officer for a comment, who tells that he was "one of the best, … utterly professional, brave, committed and humorous."[665] One might wonder why the paper did not ask Corporal Day's commanding officer for a comment and instead interviewed her schoolteacher. As Ette argues, these are signs, however subtle, that divert the reader's attention

[662] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures."
[663] Ette. "Gendered frontlines: British press coverage of women soldiers killed in Iraq."
[664] Swinford, Steven and Farmer, Ben. "'Friendly fire' kills woman soldier." *The Daily Telegraph.* 26 October 2012. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 1.
[665] Ibid.

from professional identities of female soldiers and direct it to their identities as women and civilians.

Another salient narrative is that of female soldiers fulfilling their childhood dreams. As the death of Corporal Day marked the third death of British servicewomen in Afghanistan, the *Telegraph* published an article in which they outlined the first and second mortality. Corporal Sarah Bryant was the first British servicewoman to die in Afghanistan in 2008, who is described as "married and university-educated," who had "dreamed of being a soldier from her school days," the article reads. Captain Lisa Jade Head is described as a "proper tomboy" according to her friends, and also "had always wanted to join the Army."[666] When a new recruit Megan Park died during basic training, the statement by her family in which they said that she always wanted to be in the Armed Forces, and that it was her dream job was underlined in the article.[667] Even the piece about the deaths of Corporal Day and Corporal O'Conner opens with the line that reads "a female soldier who dreamt of joining the Army as a schoolgirl has been killed …."[668] The thesis has argued that such anecdotes about personal lives, personalities and childhood dreams are also the markers of femininity which divert the reader's attention from their professional identities to their identities as women and civilians. Differentiating female soldiers from their male counterparts and refusing to recognize them simply as 'soldiers' reinforce the gender stereotypes which function to maintain the normative structure within which the current gendered power relations operate.

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[666] "Female medic was third British servicewoman killed in Afghanistan." *The Telegraph.* 24 October 2012. Accessed 17 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/afghanistan/9632823/Female-medic-was-third-British-servicewoman-killed-in-Afghanistan.html
[667] Farmer, Ben. "Young female army recruit Megan Park dies during basic training at Pirbright." *The Telegraph.* 17 September 2015. Accessed 17 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11872055/Army-recruit-dies-at-Surrey-training-centre.html
[668] Swinford and Farmer. "'Friendly fire' kills woman soldier."

Finally, there are instances in which very similar stories are delivered slightly differently, giving dissimilar impressions depending on the gender of the subject. Compare the following two cases in which Navy commanders were dismissed from their positions because they had relationships with their fellow officers. One of the commanders is female and the other is male. The article on the female Navy commander is entitled "First female warship captain stripped of command over affair allegations," and subtitle reads "Commander Sarah West, 41, is sacked as skipper of the frigate HMS Portland over claims she has a relationship with her married third-in-command." [669] The *Telegraph* articles on the male commander are titled "Navy commander relieved of duties over relationship on Trident sub"[670] and "Royal Navy submarine commander removed over claim of 'inappropriate relationship' with female officer" [671] respectively. Now, compare the language that is used in these titles; the gender, name and age of the female commander are specified in the titles whereas that of the male commander are kept vague. There are slight differences in the language used such as 'stripped' and 'sacked' as opposed to 'relieved' and 'removed', 'affair' as opposed to 'relationship'; whereas the former carry negative connotations, the latter indicate more neutrality. The descriptions of the officers with whom the commanders are accused to have had affairs are also different. 'Married third-in-command' is more specific than 'female officer' and by pointing out the marital status of the other party involved, it implicitly condemns the female commander. Notice also, that *inappropriate relationship* is written in quotation marks; the quotation marks imply alleged claims, insinuating that whether the relationship the male commander had was inappropriate is

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[669] Perry, Keith. "First female warship captain stripped of command over affair allegations." *The Telegraph.* 7 August 2014. Accessed 17 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/defence/11020480/First-female-warship-captain-stripped-of-command-over-affair-allegations.html

[670] Farmer, Ben. "Navy commander relieved of duties over relationship on Trident sub." *The Daily Telegraph.* 3 October 2017. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 11.

[671] Farmer, Ben. "Royal Navy submarine commander removed over claim of 'inappropriate relationship' with female officer." *The Telegraph.* 2 October 2017. Accessed 17 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/10/02/royal-navy-submarine-commander-removed-claim-inappropriate-relationship/

in question. These differences in the languages used are very subtle and perhaps trivial to some, but they seem to convey a little more acerbity and censure towards the female commander. It is unknown whether the authors were aware of the different language and expressions used, yet the differentiated language and expressions in these two pieces seem to plainly demonstrate unconscious bias towards women.

7.3. Comparison with the Tabloid Papers

Broadsheet papers compared to tabloid papers are generally known for their more reliable and sophisticated journalism; there tend to be fewer unnecessarily capitalized headlines, celebrity gossips, and sensational anecdotes. The differences between the two types of papers are also evident in their articles regarding women in the military. *Figure 4* shows the instances in which each newspaper a) referred to female soldiers as 'girls', b) called them by their first names, and c) mentioned their physical appearances, in their articles that are analyzed in the thesis. Except for a few instances, on a surface level, articles/reports in the broadsheet papers seem to distance themselves from the disrespectful habits of the tabloid papers. However, on a deeper level, there could be observed some ideological similarities with the tabloids which the broadsheets almost certainly would not want to admit. Namely, discourses in which women are rendered hyper-visible, distinguished from their male counterparts, detached from their professional identities using the markers of femininity are found universally across newspapers.

Figure 4
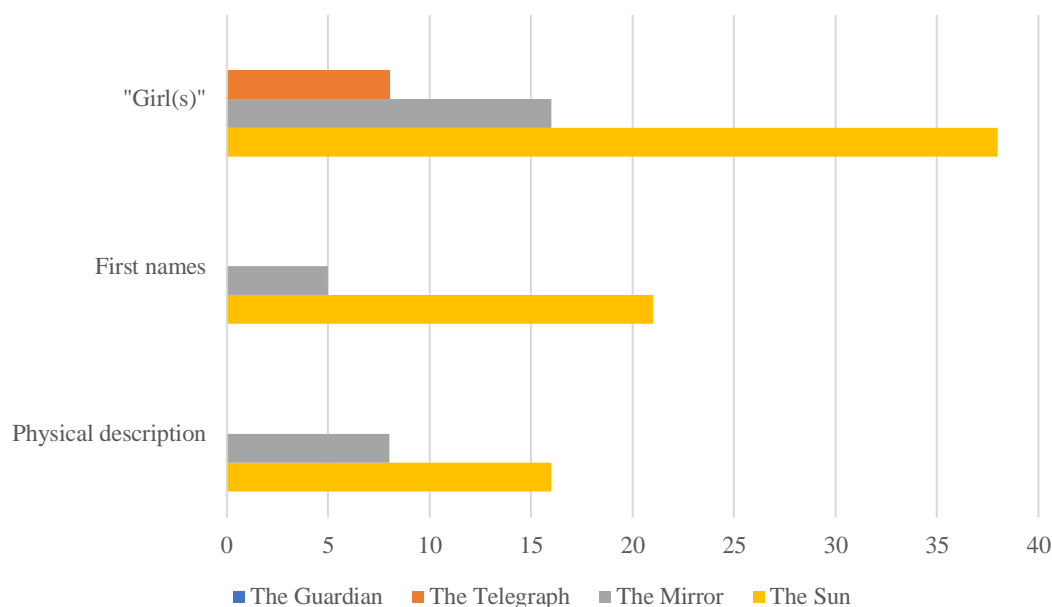
A 2013 article entitled "Israeli women soldiers reprimanded for posing in underwear" is reminiscent of the articles by the *Sun* also about Israeli female soldiers from 2012 and 2017 discussed in the analysis of the tabloid paper in Chapter 5.[672] The stark difference is of course the *Sun*'s almost childish, excited reaction to female soldiers in bikinis, and the formal and stern attitude of the *Telegraph*. The *Telegraph* article reports an incident where scantily clad female new recruits posted pictures of themselves on social media, calling it "the latest embarrassment" to hit the IDF. [673] The *Telegraph* refrains from overly sexualizing and sensationalizing the female soldiers which the *Sun* very openly does, carefully avoiding explicit description of their appearances. However, calling them an embarrassment raises a few questions; would they also call a similar event an embarrassment if the soldiers were male; are

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[672] The Sun. "Bikini babes gunbathing"; Sun Reporter. "FEMME FATALEs: Bikini-clad Israeli army soldiers pose with guns and explosives in dangerously sexy snaps."

[673] Tait, Robert. "Israeli women soldiers reprimanded for posing in underwear." *The Telegraph.* 3 June 2013. Accessed 12 February 2021. Available at https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/israel/10096047/Israeli-women-soldiers-reprimanded-for-posing-in-underwear.html#:~:text=Israeli%20female%20soldiers%20have%20been,thongs%20they%20were%20wearing%20underneath.

female soldiers in bikinis equally problematic as other examples of "embarrassments" listed in the article, for instance when a male Israeli soldier posted anti-Palestinian tweets, or when another pretended to shoot at a picture of a Palestinian boy with a rifle? These may well all be called embarrassments, but one might argue that the former is simply an indication of unprofessionalism whereas the latter are more extreme, xenophobic and hateful, in addition to being unprofessional. These are reminiscent of the Army's ambivalent attitudes towards nontraditional bodies when the institution went through the transitional period. While the Army struggled to reinvigorate its old public image by promoting diversity policies, it nonetheless exhibited double standards where female soldiers were penalized more harshly than male soldiers.

A very brief article published with a video on the *Telegraph*'s website in 2015, although no longer available online,[674] tells of a beauty pageant for female rebel fighters which was held in a Ukrainian city. The article depicts the female soldiers who "swap their military boots and camouflage fatigues for high heels and ball gowns."[675] The same rhetoric where female soldiers swap their military equipment to feminine pieces of clothing was also used by the *Mirror*.[676] As discussed in the previous chapters, the stark contrast between the military uniform and highly feminine civilian clothes seems to embody the societal gender norm which divides masculine/feminine and their appropriate roles. It puts a palpable emphasis on the feminine bodies in the masculine-coded profession and works as a strong reminder to the audience that she is in fact a woman, who is somehow occupying a men's space. The high heels are the

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[674] An online search does not seem to lead to the original article by the Telegraph, though there are websites which cite the Telegraph piece. The text of the article is available to view on Nexis Advance.

[675] Telegraph Video. "Watch: Female rebel fighters take part in Donetsk beauty pageant." 9 March 2015. Accessed 12 February 2021. Available at
https://advance.lexis.com/document/?pdmfid=1519360&crid=e5e97c8d-aeab-4e17-a02c-9d295fb26b16&pddocfullpath=%2Fshared%2Fdocument%2Fnews%2Furn%3AcontentItem%3A5FG6-9DB1-F021-648W-00000-00&pdcontentcomponentid=389195&pdteaserkey=sr0&pditab=allpods&ecomp=5zgnk&earg=sr0&prid=6992e407-59f0-4323-a51c-84a0a96c2a1b

[676] Livesey. "Soldier swaps army boots for high heels as she bids to become Miss England."

symbol of femininity which seem to signify the place to which she returns after being *misplaced* in a masculine space. Of course, these articles are essentially describing actual events, involving literal swapping of combat boots and high heels. Nevertheless, the expression necessarily stresses gender of the soldier, and paints a picture of a body that is swaying between two discrete spaces. The emphasis is necessitated simply and solely because she is a woman. These markers to emphasize female soldiers' identities as women and civilians rather than their professional identities also insinuate that her service is temporary. [677] By presenting their service as a temporary phase in their otherwise normal lives in more 'female-appropriate' roles,[678] the sense of discomfort is relieved, and the gendered constructs of soldier and women can be maintained.

Despite many differences between broadsheet and tabloid papers such as their targeted audiences and topics of interest, the similarities in the ways in which these papers routinely portray female soldiers suggest that there is a certain mould, or a discourse, to which women are expected to fit, and sometimes made to be contained. The ways in which the media depict women in the military by emphasizing their gender, femininity and personalities, rendering their identities as military personnel secondary are a manifestation of what Enloe calls *patriarchal discomfort*, as well as a coping mechanism to mitigate the very sense of discomfort felt by society. The fact that such similar patterns are found in the disparate newspapers with audiences from various backgrounds suggests that such representations of female soldiers in the media are deeply and firmly ingrained in society.

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[677] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 774.
[678] Harris and Clayton. "Femininity, Masculinity, Physicality and the English Tabloid Press." pp. 403-4.; Skeggs, Beverly. *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* London: Sage Publication Ltd., 1997. pp. 1-4.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter has offered an examination of themes and tendencies of the *Telegraph* articles concerning women in the military and a dissection of overarching and emerging threads running through the British media. As a Conservative Party supporting broadsheet paper, the *Telegraph* demonstrates a general tendency to approach new ideas and policy changes in a rather cautious manner; this was most distinctly reflected in the ways in which the topic of inclusion of women in combat roles was reported and discussed in their articles which displayed a wary and skeptical tone. The frequent appearance of Colonel Kemp also seems to underpin the paper's unenthusiastic attitude towards the issue. One of the major themes observed across all four papers is the emphasis put on the gender of female soldiers using what the thesis has identified as the markers of femininity. As this chapter has shown, highlighting their gender is not characteristic of tabloid papers and it is done constantly and consistently by all papers. This observation confirms the arguments by Millar and Ette, that female soldiers are treated in inherently different ways from their male counterparts. It is the label 'female', and the language used to describe them, which focus on their identities as women and civilians rather than their professional identities. The thesis argues that these deliberate acts of detaching them from their profession is a manifestation of *patriarchal discomfort*, a sense of discomfort felt upon observing incongruities between the perceived femininity of female soldiers and their masculine-coded profession. In emphasizing the gender of female soldiers and their feminine attributes, it is also a means of coping with the sense of discomfort and unease. Differentiating female soldiers from male soldiers is a demonstration of a defensive, system-justifying reaction to the nontraditional bodies of female soldiers who defy gender stereotypes. These manifestations of *patriarchal discomfort*, which are characterized by various ways of Othering female soldiers from male soldiers, however, may not necessarily always be hostile in nature. In other words, these are symptoms of unconscious bias towards women, which are permeated

in society. The thesis argues that the sense of discomfort can be experienced by all members of society, though to different extents, and it is presented in various spaces in many ways; media being one of the most salient and influential.

Chapter 8: The Guardian (Print & Digital 2010-2019)

The *Guardian* is a British broadsheet newspaper which was founded in 1821 as the *Manchester Guardian*.[679] The broadsheet paper has regularly supported the Labour Party,[680] and its readers are considered to be on center-left and liberal, often mocked by their right-leaning counterpart for being politically correct.[681] 46% of *Guardian* readers voted the Labour Party and 37% of them voted the Liberal Democrats in 2010.[682] Over 90% of *Guardian* readers favored Remain during the Brexit negotiations.[683] The paper had suffered a decline in circulation of their print edition and much losses in profit until it shifted its focus to the online edition, which has significantly widened the readership and regenerated its revenue. The *Guardian* is regarded as the second most-read and the most trusted newspaper in the UK, and with the Covid-19 pandemic pushing the growth in online readership across all newspapers in general,[684] its print and online journalism is accessed by "a record 35.6 million adults," of which the digital readership accounts for 35.2 million.[685] According to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), the *Guardian* sold 129,961 copies in March 2020.[686] Monthly readership of the paper on average consists of 2,932,000 for the print edition, 5,058,000 digital edition accessed from

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[679] GNM archive. "History of the Guardian." *The Guardian.* 11 December 2017. Accessed 8 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/gnm-archive/2002/jun/06/1

[680] Prestwich and Barr. "United Kingdom."

[681] Collins Dictionary. "Guardian reader." Accessed 8 March 2021. Available at https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/guardian-reader

[682] Wilks-Heeg, Blick, and Crone. "The political affiliations of the UK's national newspapers have shifted, but there is again a heavy Tory predominance."

[683] Taylor. "What do British newspaper readers think about Brexit?"

[684] Mayhew, Freddy. "Covid-19 prompts record digital audience for UK national press with 6.6.m extra daily readers." *Press Gazette.* 17 July 2020. Accessed 8 March 2021. Available at https://www.pressgazette.co.uk/covid-19-prompts-record-digital-audience-for-uk-national-press-with-6-6m-extra-daily-readers/

[685] GNM press office. "New data shows Guardian is the top quality and most trusted newspaper in the UK." *The Guardian.* 17 Jun 2020. Accessed 8 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/gnm-press-office/2020/jun/17/new-data-shows-guardian-is-the-top-quality-and-most-trusted-newspaper-in-the-uk; Ofcom. "News consumption in the UK: 2020 report." P. 36.

[686] Audit Bureau of Circulations. "The Guardian 16 April 2020. Accessed 24 December 2020. Available at https://www.abc.org.uk/Certificates/49813528.pdf

desktop, and 20,087,000 accessed from mobile/tablet devices, according to the Publishers Audience Measurement Company (PAMCo).[687]

8.1. Women on the Front Line

The topic of the integration of women in the military, especially the discussion of whether they should be allowed in combat roles have been extensively reported across the media outlets in the past decade. As we have seen, all newspapers chosen for this research published a variety of stories regarding the issue. The *Guardian* as a left-leaning and liberal newspaper is entirely favorable and enthusiastic about the formal inclusion of women in the military. The analysis did not find any piece expressing opposition or concerns. The unambiguity of the paper's attitude draws a stark contrast to other three papers, where mixed views are presented, and internal divisions are discernible at times. The paper-wide, general tone is 'why not (allow women in combat)?' It seems that for the paper and its audience, the idea of officially integrating women on the front line is regarded as a norm, rather than a radical social convention replacing the old one on which other papers struggle to take sides. Perhaps the article titled "Fear of the unknown" exemplifies the paper's attitude, in which it posits that "the reasons (the UK will not lift the ban) boil down to a problem with men, rather than women."[688] The piece contends that the MoD is asking an impossible question, because we will not know what happens if women join the combat roles until they do. "The military will only find out if it gives them a chance. So the ban stays."[689]

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[687] Publishers Audience Measurement Company. PAMCo 2 2020 Apr' 19 – Mar' 20 Mar' 20 Comscore data. Accessed 24 December 2020. Available at https://pamco.co.uk/pamco-data/latest-results/

[688] I think that it may be worth noting that the author is a man. Hopkins, Nick. "Fear of the unknown: the real reason why the British military will stop women fighting in combat units." *The Guardian.* 24 January 2013. Accessed 25 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk/defence-and-security-blog/2013/jan/24/reason-and-uk-and-army-and-women

[689] Ibid.

One recurrent narrative that many of the *Guardian* articles seem to stress when the discussion of whether the UK should allow women on the front line was becoming a major talking point is that 'women have already been involved in combat'. As we will see, the *Guardian* has printed several articles on the US combat ban which was lifted three years prior to the UK. For instance, the article on the US ending the ban points out that the word 'official' is "the key to the news that women will be allowed into combat."[690] It reminds the readers that though it had not been 'official', American female soldiers had been practically serving on the front line as the line between combat and non-combat becomes extremely elusive in real-life situations. The article cites Sergeant Susan Sonnheim who was seriously injured in Iraq explaining that "the issue of whether women were or were not allowed into combat became irrelevant in Iraq and Afghanistan because of the nature of the insurgent enemy."[691] The piece interviews three other female soldiers who were killed or severely injured on duty, effectively highlighting the fact that whether 'official' or not, women have already been in combat, "just like the men."[692] Another article penned by the former defence correspondent of the paper also stresses that female soldiers have already been serving on the front line. Titled "Women in military combat is nothing new, just not British," the article points out that British female soldiers, if not as infantry soldiers, share "the same risk as men."[693] Despite the official review citing physiological concerns as the main justification to bar women at the time, the piece argues that the actual reason "for resistance … is cultural and psychological, a resistance in society to the idea of women being engaged in close combat with a male enemy."[694] The article taps into the

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[690] Walters, Joanna. "Pentagon's decision puts official seal on women's combat role." *The Guardian.* 24 January 2013. Accessed 25 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/24/women-military-combat-leon-panetta

[691] Ibid.

[692] Ibid.

[693] MacAskill, Ewen. "Women in military combat is nothing new, just not British." *The Guardian.* 19 December 2014. Accessed 25 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/dec/19/women-in-military-combat-nothing-new-not-british

[694] Ibid.

sense of discomfort the idea of female combat soldiers induces, and encourages the readers to question the official discourse instead of blindly accepting it.

The use of anecdotes is a strategy the *Guardian* employs regularly to disseminate their stance on the issue of women in combat effectively. Studies have found that 'exemplars' (anecdotes) "are used in a persuasive setting, aiming to convince readers or listeners of a certain standpoint. … [E]xemplification has a strong impact on the way people assess incidence rates."[695] Hence, presenting the 'real' voices of female soldiers (as well as male soldiers who welcome the full integration of women in all roles) renders the pieces quite persuasive. Some of articles entirely consist of anecdotes. An article entitled "Fighting for equality: the women taking on combat roles" is full of such anecdotes by female personnel of the Army. Lance Corporal Kat Dixon tells the paper that "I've been accepted into my squadron, … I'm just one of the lads really." She continues, "I think as many women as possible should give it a go. … I don't think anything should be off-limits," which the paper quotes in the subtitle of the piece.[696] When the Royal Navy decided to allow women on submarines in 2010, the *Guardian* published an article asking why there are still posts in the Armed Forces, including combat roles, that are not open to women. Its title which reads "The armed forces are considering whether to *(finally)* allow women"[697] already is indicative of its frustration. A retired submarine commander of 27 years is cited saying, in reaction to the news, that "what took you (the Navy) so long?"[698] He is confident that the research on which concerns for allowing women on submarines were based is outdated and that "the women sailors have proved themselves across the board; their

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[695] Hornikx, Jos. "Combining Anecdotal and Statistical Evidence in Real-Life Discourse: Comprehension and Persuasiveness." *Discourse Processes* 55, no. 3 (2018): pp. 324-6.

[696] Morris, Steven. "Fighting for equality: the women on combat roles." *The Guardian.* 25 October 2018. Version 1.

[697] Henley, Jon. "G2: Women on the frontline: The armed forces are considering whether to (finally) allow women to serve on submarines and in close-combat units." *The Guardian.* 23 June 2010. Final Edition. p. 6. Emphasis added.

[698] Ibid.

commitment, resolve and dedication have helped raise overall standards."[699] Such anecdotes are not only persuasive but also serve as testaments to support the paper's consistent advocacy in the topic, reiterating their standpoint; "why not?"

As it will be discussed in the next section, the *Guardian* published more international news stories than the other three newspapers in the period for this research (2010-2019). When it comes to the topic of women on the front line, the *Telegraph*, the *Mirror*, and the *Sun* predominantly focused on the UK Armed Forces, with little mentions about other countries. The *Guardian*, however, published numerous stories on the US lifting the combat ban on women and, in fact, in the sample, more than half of the articles regarding the topic are about the US military. It is noteworthy as no other paper exhibits such a high volume of articles and focus on the US news. The peak for the reporting of women on the front line by the *Guardian* shown in *Figure 3* matches when the US lifted the combat ban on women. The same figure indicates that the numbers of articles on the topic did not change as much when the UK ended its ban on women in combat. Why did the paper feature the topic in the US more than the same subject in the UK? One possible answer to that is the timing; the US changed its policy regarding the inclusion of women in combat roles a few years before the UK followed suit. As a liberal and progressive paper, they may have taken the opportunity to urge and call for the same change in the UK when the US lifted the combat ban on women by publishing many stories on the topic. In stark contrast to the ways in which the other three papers reported the topic around the same time, which can be characterized by the more cautious tone and unenthusiastic and skeptical views such as Colonel Kemp's, the overall tone of articles on the topic by the *Guardian* is unambiguously assured and propitious, and while the main questions

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[699] Ibid.

the other papers were asking were "why/how/should/can women fight on the frontline?" the *Guardian* simply asked, "why not?"

An article, promptly titled "Women should be allowed into combat now. Why the wait?" argues that the "generally conservative British public" is ready to see female soldiers in combat roles.[700] It contends that the MoD cannot make up their mind to lift the ban on women, while the public has already accepted the presence of women soldiers on the front line. The article holds that it did not become a huge controversy when a female soldier was killed in Afghanistan a few years ago, and therefore, the British public has accepted that "if women serve, as they already do, … they are going to be at risk and some of them will die."[701] The piece points out that the public response to the death of the soldier was of "sadness and regret," but not umbrage at the fact that she was there. As optimistic as it sounds, the argument that people do not have reservations about sending women to the front line simply because their reaction to the death of a female soldier was not anger and offence, and that it did not cause a lingering controversy among the public, may be a facile oversimplification. Perhaps people were being respectful in times of such an event, refraining from voicing criticisms, regardless of their beliefs on whether women should be risking their lives on the front line. There are other forms in which people can express their (dis)approval of certain issues. Identifying the sense of discomfort and consternation felt by the public is difficult, as people rarely express it out loud – sometimes they are simply unaware of it, and it is left unrecognized and un-articulated. Some people may be hesitant to concede the feeling as the issue is intertwined with other subjects such as equal opportunities that they may believe in, and yet the feeling of uneasiness conflicts with their own beliefs. The silence was taken as an agreement, but it may have been too early to tell. The analysis of the newspapers has found that there is an inherent tension between the constructs

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[700] Dejevsky, Mary. "Women should be allowed into combat now. Why the wait?" *The Guardian.* 19 December 2014.

[701] Ibid.

of soldiers and women/femininity in society and it is often manifested in the ways female soldiers are represented in the media.

8.2. International News

Another theme in the *Guardian* articles which stands out and makes a striking contrast from other papers is the number of stories which focus on international news, especially the US news. All articles examined for this thesis concern a variety of topics regarding women and military, but while the other papers mainly deal with the UK Armed Forces with occasional international news, the *Guardian* seems to be the most cosmopolitan among the four papers, allocating more room for global news. *Figure 5* shows the proportion of international news published by the four newspapers and we can observe that broadsheet papers have larger coverage of international news than that of tabloids. Even compared with the *Telegraph*, another major quality paper, the global news coverage by the *Guardian* is outstanding. The fact that the paper runs two international websites, *Guardian* US and *Guardian* Australia perhaps influences the volume in the coverage of international news for their domestic paper.

Figure 5
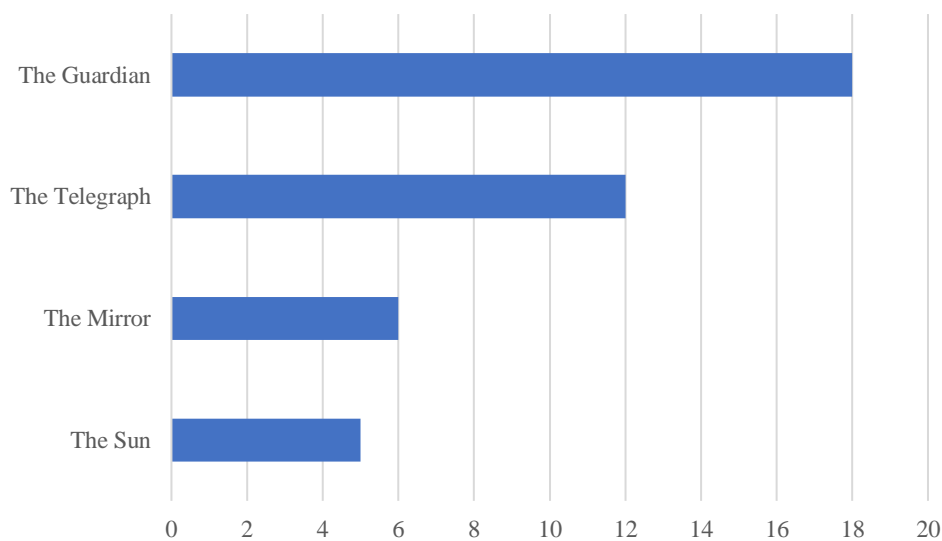
International news

A salient point in the *Guardian*'s reporting on international (mainly US) news is the abundance of anecdotes. As discussed in the previous section as well, many female personnel and former personnel are cited in the stories in both domestic and international news. An article titled "Women in combat" presents three American female veterans who served in combat in Iraq before the combat ban was 'officially' lifted. It is emphasized, through their anecdotes, that women soldiers have long been serving on the front line facing the same danger as the men. Dawn Halfaker reacts to the news that the US is ending the ban, saying "business as usual, then,"[702] indicating that the historic change in the policy is merely a bureaucratic procedure. Teresa Grace recalls the day when she fired her rifles at insurgents killing 6 to 20 enemies to cover for a fellow unit under attack. "Women should have the chance to prove themselves for any job in the military. …when I was in that firefight it was what we had trained for, and there was no issue with who was a man and who was a woman."[703] Not surprisingly, the quotes are all affirmative about female soldiers and their capabilities in combat, making compelling cases for the consistent message the *Guardian* has put out.

Another article, again on the US lifting the combat ban on women, reports on the debates it prompted on social media. Although the piece notes that the reactions have been "mixed," the anecdote it features comes from a female soldier who served in Afghanistan and is fully favorable; "I think lifting the ban is the start of changing the culture of the military in a positive way. … It's time to let these soldiers prove themselves, without regard to gender."[704] By highlighting positive anecdotes, arguably, the overall impression of the piece is somewhat

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[702] Walters, Joanna. "Women in combat: business as usual for those in the firing line." *The Guardian.* 26 January 2013. Accessed 26 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jan/26/women-combat-us-military-firing-line
[703] Ibid.
[704] Rogers, Katie. "Ban on women in combat lifted: readers and veterans debate on social media." *The Guardian.* 24 January 2013. Accessed 26 March 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/us-news-blog/2013/jan/24/us-military-ban-lifted-women-combat#:~:text=US%20news%20blog-,Ban%20on%20women%20in%20combat%20lifted%3A%20readers,veterans%20debate%20on%20social%20media&text=Since%20US%20defence%20secretary%20Leon,the%20issue%20have%20been%20mixed.

manipulated, while appearing to be neutral by pointing out the fact that reactions are varied. These commending anecdotes, coming from people directly involved in the issue, necessarily underscore the general tone the *Guardian* consistently conveys; "Why not?"

8.3. Emphasis on Femininity

The markers of femininity attached to the representations of female soldiers to highlight their gender have been found in articles across all four newspapers. The thesis has argued that such markers render female soldiers hyper-visible and Othered simultaneously and dissociate them from their professional identities while accentuating their female gender. The thesis also points out that the fact that male soldiers are never referred to as 'male soldiers' but simply as 'soldiers', which indicates that the construct of soldier is strongly associated with that of men and male gender. It is also argued that such differentiation is a defensive and system-justifying response to the potential reconfiguration of gender stereotypes and 'gender-appropriate' roles which uphold the gendered power relations.[705] Throughout the analyses of the three other newspapers in the previous chapters, the language used by the media to put an emphasis on the gender of female soldiers have been extensively observed and discussed. There are only sporadic cases in which specifying gender of the subject using language such as female and woman is crucial, such as when reporting an appointment of first female commander. Nevertheless, it is extremely common, and it can be argued that it is a standard procedure in the media to always highlight the gender of female soldiers.

Deaths of female soldiers tend to be highlighted disproportionately more even when casualties include male soldiers. As discussed in the previous chapter, several headlines with sole focus on female soldiers which exclude male soldiers who are involved are also found in the analysis of the *Guardian*. In such cases, male soldiers would get mentioned in the main texts, but their

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[705] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.

names and other details do not always appear. On the contrary, female soldiers are almost under scrutiny; the articles inspect not only their names but also their personalities and childhood dreams. A *Guardian* article reporting the incident which killed British soldiers in Afghanistan also succumbed to the same pattern of rhetoric. It reports on the "deaths of Corporal Sarah Bryant and three colleagues" and further reads that "she and three colleagues were unlawfully killed," and the online article features a large photograph of Corporal Bryant.[706] The title and the first few paragraphs focus on the female soldier and until it mentions the names of the three male soldiers, rendering the female soldier the main focus of the story. It is indicative of the rarity and unfamiliarity of female soldiers, much less their deaths. However, paying so much attention to the female soldiers can render the male soldiers involved obscured in the news articles. Without intending disrespect, it could result in failing to give these soldiers equal recognition and respect. The disproportionate focus and emphasis on the female gender thus creates a twofold asymmetry in the reporting; on the one hand, it renders female soldiers and their gender hyper-visible and hinders their professional identities as soldiers; on the other hand, consequently, it reduces male soldiers to mere 'soldiers' and 'colleagues' without names, almost invisible in the story.

The markers of femininity can be exhibited in various forms, and they often reproduce and reinforce the traditional ideas and expectations regarding gender roles. An article reporting the first female general of the Army is another example. Major General Susan Ridge was appointed to be Director General of the Army Legal Services in 2015, making history to become the highest-ranking female officer in the British Army. The tone of the piece remains celebratory and respectful from the beginning to the end. It is starkly different from the *Sun*'s article which

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[706] Gabbatt, Adam. "First female British soldier to die in Afghanistan was unlawfully killed." *The Guardian.* 9 March 2010. Accessed 3 April 2021. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/mar/09/afghanistan-inquest-female-soldier

calls Major General Ridge by her first name.[707] However, in the *Guardian* article, much of the quotation from her comment focuses on her "hugely supportive" husband and that she was "exceptionally lucky"[708] to have such a husband. She said that her Lieutenant Colonel husband has been very supportive of her career even through occasions in which two of them were posted in different locations. It is unclear whether the writer intentionally highlighted the part from her whole remark, or Major General Ridge herself dedicated much of space in her statement to mention her husband. Nonetheless, it paints an image of an *ideal* – or socially preferable and welcomed, idea of woman who manages both her career and importantly, her family, while insinuating that modesty is a desirable trait in women, even when she is highly accomplished and successful. We can be almost certain that there would be no mention about a supportive wife if the promoted General was a man. Respectable femininity provides a standard for appropriate traits and behaviors for women, against which they are criticized or praised.[709] Even when a woman achieves something extraordinary in her career, she is still expected to fulfill a 'female-appropriate' role of mother or wife. It is a quite powerful exemplar in which professional successes of women are trivialized in a way to which men would never be subjected, and her identity as a woman, wife, and mother is somehow more underscored than her professional identity, to fit her into a mould in which society expects her to be contained.

The focus of the newspaper analyses in this research have been predominantly on texts rather than images in the chapters on the civil discourses, as the database only displays the texts of news articles. However, there are a few exceptions where images are available on digital editions online which are then analyzed. Here, we have an anomaly which is just a photograph

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[707] Willetts. "SUE IS 1st WOMAN GENERAL." *The Sun.*
[708] Norton-Taylor, Richard. "British army appoints first female general." *The Guardian.* 6 July 2015.
[709] Skeggs, Beverly. *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* London: Sage Publication Ltd., 1997. p. 3.

with a caption on a print edition with no main text. It is entitled "Baby love Women on the frontline" and the caption reads "Lance Corporal Luz Lopez, 21, a US marine with the female engagement team, plays with a baby during a visit to the village of Boldoc, Helmand province."[710] Published in 2010, it was 3 years before the US officially lifted its combat ban on women. However, LC Lopez and her team, according to the article, were there on the front line in order to gain access to areas that are inaccessible to men. By printing a woman soldier dressed in camouflage, it could have been intended to show that women could be soldiers, or perhaps it was also to send a message that the US is moving towards allowing women in combat. It can only be speculated what kinds of effects this photograph was intended to have, yet the piece is reminiscent of the very similar portrayals of female soldiers in *Soldier*. The analysis of the magazine has found that when a soldier is featured visiting children in a hospital bearing toys, it is always a female soldier and never a male soldier. It was argued that photos of female soldiers with children in war-torn countries have an inevitable effect of reminding the audience of her femininity and maternal attribution. It shifts the focus off her professional identity and onto her identity as a woman. Much like the particular language to denote and highlight the gender of female soldiers that are used in newspapers, the photographs of female soldiers and children act as a powerful marker of her femininity. Some would argue that a visual image is a more compelling tool to convey a message, as images are easier to be recognized, processed and recalled than texts.[711] So, used in the context of underscoring the gender of female soldiers, it is likely that the photo struck the audience more than a textual description in the caption, leaving the impression that she is a woman with maternal traits before she is a soldier. The baby or child with whom the soldier is photographed may function to mitigate the sense of

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[710] *The Guardian.* "Baby love Women on the frontline." 10 December 2010. Final edition. p. 38.
[711] Dewan, Pauline. "Words Versus Pictures: Leveraging the Research on Visual Communication." *The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice Research* 10, no. 1 (2015).

discomfort upon observing a female soldier in the masculine-coded role of 'taking life', as the child indicate her capability of 'giving life'.

It is consistent with the analyses of media coverage of female soldiers done by other scholars that there are often these labeling and marking that render female soldiers and their gender hyper-visible. Berger and Naaman argue that "the differences in the representation of the male and female soldiers are not incidental but rather represent the deep social ambivalence towards women's service in combat roles."[712] They suggest that the coverage of female soldiers from the Lebanon War objectified them and minimized their professional and violent role as soldiers. The thesis has identified the use of language and expressions which highlight the femininity of female soldiers and argued that these markers of femininity foisted on them are manifestations of *patriarchal discomfort* and an effort to align their subject positions with the traditional notion of women. These markers, Berger and Naaman point out, are "forms that put women on a pedestal (i.e., fetishizing them), objectifying them, thus rendering them passive."[713] Although fetishization and objectification of female soldiers are only seen in tabloid papers, broadsheet papers share the routine of emphasizing their identities as women while underplaying their professional identities and achievements. It has effects of rendering them hyper-visible as women while stripping them of their identities and agencies as soldiers and depicting them to fit the subject positions of the traditional construct of 'woman'. The roles of female combat soldiers, Berger and Naaman argue, threaten "traditional notions of femininity … and thus [have] to be contained and controlled." The thesis suggests that such tactics of containment and control are done by these subtle markers attached to the representations of female soldiers.

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[712] Berger and Naaman. "Combat cuties: photographs of Israeli women soldiers in the press since the 2006 Lebanon War." p. 272.
[713] Ibid. p. 276.

8.4. Comparison with Other Papers

Notice in *Figure 4*, which indicates the numbers of instances in which the four newspapers a) referred to female soldiers as 'girls', b) called them by their first names, and c) mentioned their physical appearances, in the samples taken for this research, the *Guardian* was found to have used none of these expressions. It illuminates the differences from the tabloids whose demonstration of sexism is often blatant, and from the *Telegraph*, a quality paper whose conservatism sometimes exhibits as a faint sense of contempt for women. The *Guardian* is consistent in supporting women's roles on the front line as well as being respectful to them. The consistent attitude and unambiguous political stance are salient in the *Guardian* compared to other papers which demonstrate occasional ambiguity and conflicted views.

The comparison between the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian* is especially interesting as it illustrates the differences between the two broadsheet papers, highlighting the differences in their political postures as well as the audiences they might attract. When then Prime Minister David Cameron announced that the UK were to lift the combat ban on women at a NATO summit in 2016, the major news was published across the UK media. Like many news outlets the *Guardian* also reported on the news and cited Cameron stating that the Armed Forces should reflect the society. The article notes the ratio of female personnel in the forces and then reiterates the previously discussed rhetoric – "women are already engaged in frontline duties, including serving on submarines and as fighter pilots."[714] In contrast, the same news published by the *Telegraph* carries a slightly different undertone as the piece cites unnamed "military critics" who described the announcement as "bad error of judgement."[715] If the article cited opinions of both critics and advocates, it would have appeared as impartial, but presenting only a dismissive view, especially considering the significance of the news, a historic milestone

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[714] Mason, Rowena and MacAskill, Ewen. "UK to lift ban on female soldiers serving close combat frontline roles." *The Guardian.* 7 July 2016.
[715] Farmer. "Women will be allowed to fight in ranks of SAS." *The Telegraph.*

announced by the Prime Minister, implies the pessimistic stance of the paper on the topic. As discussed in the previous chapter, the *Telegraph* often employed such a strategy of subtly inserting skeptical and unenthusiastic views, especially in the topics related to women's integration in combat roles.

The contrast between the enthusiastic tone of the *Guardian* and the dissentious attitude of the *Telegraph* is evident. When then Defence Secretary Hammond announced the prospect of allowing women into close combat roles, the exact same news published by the two papers again carry slightly different tones. The two pieces are essentially identical, until the *Guardian* cites a quote from the Shadow Defence Secretary Corker welcoming the news,[716] while the *Telegraph* cites a comment by Tory MP Drax in which he stated that "no one doubts a woman's commitment or professionalism but, ultimately, clearing an enemy position with bullet and bayonet should remain a man's job."[717] Not only does Drax's remark strike as sexist, but it is also from three months earlier, meaning it was not a direct reaction to the news the article reports. The *Telegraph* emphasizes the fact that allowing women into combat roles would equate to admitting them to the Special Air Service, or SAS, famously known for its grueling training. This unit among the conservatives is commonly considered the last bastion of manhood and masculinity, which is reflected in Drax's utterance.

Pieces published by the two newspapers apropos of the SAS further indicate the contrasting attitudes of the two broadsheet papers towards the matter. They report on the news that the special forces unit is considering altering the entry requirements for female recruits to encourage more women to take the tests, which was not implemented after all.[718] The headlines

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[716] MacAskill, Ewen. "Ban on women in army combat units set to end." *The Guardian.* 9 May 2014. Final Edition. p. 5.
[717] Hope. "Women soldiers could be allowed to join SAS." *The Telegraph.*
[718] See "Special Forces (SAS reserve), Entry requirements." The Army. Accessed 11 April 2021. Available at https://apply.army.mod.uk/roles/infantry/sas-reserve

already are indicative of each paper's view on the news. The subtitle by the *Guardian* which reads "Female recruits could be allowed to carry lighter loads and given more times for treks to give them a fairer chance of passing"[719] sounds relatively neutral. On the other hand, the subtitle by the *Telegraph* "Elite military units face accusations of lowering standards in their efforts to sign up more women"[720] carries the tone of wary and criticism. The *Guardian* article cites the author of *SAS: Rogue Heroes* who "criticized the one-dimensional view of muscular SAS soldiers." He told the Times that the wartime SAS soldiers "weren't macho figures" with which people tend to associate the unit today. [721] With these quotes, the piece seems to emphasize that the physical strength and prowess are not necessarily all that matters. The *Telegraph* article, conversely, is very critical of the potential change to the entry requirements to the unit, noting the "concerns among former and current members of the SAS that any changes to the recruitment process could lead to a lowering of standards."[722]

The *Guardian* is the only paper among the four which did not publish any story written by Colonel Kemp regarding the inclusion of women in combat roles. [723] Though the paper is known to publish opinion pieces written by conservative voices[724] from time to time, such pieces are not found in the sample regarding the issue. The paper did, however, cited Colonel Kemp and his comments twice in the articles found in the sample, when the RAF opened up all roles to women paving the way among the three forces,[725] and when he criticized the army's

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[719] Busby, Mattha. "SAS may make entry tests easier for women: Female recruits could be allowed to carry lighter loads and given more time for treks to give them a fairer chance of passing." *The Guardian*. 3 December 2017. Version 1.

[720] Evans, Martin. "SAS may lighten the load for female recruits: Elite military units face accusations of lowering standards in their efforts to sign up more women." *The Daily Telegraph*. 4 December 2017. Edition 1, National Edition. p. 7.

[721] Busby. "SAS may make entry tests easier for women." *The Guardian*.

[722] Evans. "SAS may lighten the load for female recruits." *The Telegraph*.

[723] On the Guardian website, there are two articles written by Colonel Kemp, which were not in the sample. (https://www.theguardian.com/profile/richard-kemp) However, the pieces are not about the combat ban on women, the topic in which he tends to express more polemical views that would completely contradict with the Guardian's political stance on the issue.

[724] Examples are Colonel Kemp, Tory MP Michael Gove, etc.

[725] Weaver, Matthew. "RAF opens combat roles to women amid concern from senior officers." *The Guardian*. 1 September 2017. Version 1.

recruitment campaign featuring people from various genders, sexualities, ethnicities, and faiths, accusing the army of bowing to 'political correctness'.[726] While the numbers shown in *Figure 1* alone may not be a definitive indicator to the papers' allegiance and political stances, given Colonel Kemp's prominence in the debate, the presence of articles which mention him as well as pieces written by him, or lack thereof, seems worth noting. The sharp contrast between the stances held by the *Telegraph* and the *Guardian* especially on the topic of combat ban on women not only illuminates the differences in their political postures but also their biases in favoring and disproportionately focusing on either side of the controversy. As a result, their articles convey the clearly distinct and opposite standpoints. Conversely, the thesis has found that the pieces by the *Sun* and the *Mirror* do not show such a clear divide; both tabloid papers present the views of both sides of the debate while their own viewpoints are rather ambiguous. The tabloid papers are thus found to be more balanced and neutral in their reporting of the topic of inclusion of women in combat roles compared to the broadsheet papers which has exhibited clear inclinations to one side.

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the coverage of women in the military by the *Guardian*, the most widely read and trusted liberal quality paper in the UK. Among the four newspapers selected for this research, the *Guardian* sets itself apart from the rest with its rigid attitude towards issues surrounding women in the Armed Forces, especially regarding their inclusion on the front line. While other papers display more varied and nuanced views on the issue, suggesting there may be internal divisions within the papers, the *Guardian* consistently exhibits an unambiguously favorable position. The number of publications by the *Guardian* regarding the topic hit its peak when the US lifted the combat ban on women three years before the UK

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[726] Weaver, Matthew. "Army accused of political correctness in recruitment campaign." *The Guardian.* 10 January 2018. Version 1.

officially followed suit, and their coverage when the UK finally lifted its combat ban was almost minimum[727] in comparison to other papers who reported it as a major talking point, as though to say the decision was nothing out of ordinary. This is a further indication that the news that all roles became open to women was regarded and reported by the *Guardian* as a norm, rather than a controversial new change. However, the paper's unambiguous posture to favor the change and the lack of divergent views presented suggest a bias which render the highly contested topic seem very simple and straightforward at times. As discussed in Chapter 3, the British newspapers are not obligated to impartiality in their reporting, and the *Guardian* too is entitled to be partial and biased. But presenting a variety of views and opinions is key to balanced reporting and journalism; surprisingly, the *Sun* and the Mirror exhibit such balance and neutrality in delivering the news specifically on the topic of inclusion of women in combat roles. The reporting by the *Guardian* and the *Telegraph*, specifically with the topic of women in combat, is a case of conveying their own beliefs by excluding the opposing ideology.

As discussed elsewhere, the most salient common thread which emerged in the analyses is highlighting the gender of female soldiers using the markers of femininity. This practice is done habitually and is found in all four newspapers. The tabloid papers have tendencies to treat female soldiers less seriously than their male counterparts, for example by calling them girls and objectifying them, whereas the broadsheet papers are much more cautious not to be disrespectful to female soldiers.[728] However, if one looks for more subtle markers and labels attached to the representations of female soldiers, they can be found across all media. The words 'female' or 'woman' are always attached to female soldiers, their appearances and personalities are often mentioned which highlight their gender and femininity, while male soldiers are referred to simply as 'soldiers' and their physical features are irrelevant. These

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[727] In fact, the number of publications in 2016 with regard to the topic by the Guardian was the lowest among the four papers. See *Figure 3*.
[728] See *Figure 4*.

markers are not necessarily always disrespectful or harmful to women, ostensibly, yet they are never given to male soldiers, effectively rendering the female bodies hyper-visible and Othered in the masculine space. Such differentiations are an expression of defensive reaction to female soldiers who, despite their communal traits, occupy the agentic and masculine-coded role. The thesis argues that these markers strip female soldiers of their professional identities as soldiers and emphasize their identities as women and civilians. The thesis also argues that these are manifestations of *patriarchal discomfort*, the feeling of consternation that nontraditional bodies such as female soldiers can induce in the conventionally masculine space. Highlighting the gender of female soldiers can be understood as a means of resistance and coping mechanism to deal with a disruption of the current order, i.e., allowing women in combat roles. By projecting traditional and heteronormative ideas and expectations for the female gender onto women in the military, it may be a subliminal attempt as society to cling to the life-giving image of women while denying them the life-taking role of soldiers.

Chapter 9: Interpretation and Discussion

The thesis has examined the 'military discourse' as well as the 'civil discourse' on the representations of women in the military in the UK. *Soldier*, the "Magazine of the British Army," was selected to allow us to have a glimpse into the official narratives by the MoD, as well as the routines and lives of the personnel which are otherwise unseen by and distant to ordinary civilians. The discourses found in the magazine are not treated as the *only* true official discourse, but rather, they are analyzed as a part of – reliable and accurate nonetheless – what would be deemed as the official military discourse. On the other hand, the civil discourse was retrieved from four most widely circulated and read newspapers in the UK. As discussed in Chapter 3, the distinct partisanship of the UK press means a very diverse press system in which each newspaper expresses their political views clearly and attracts apt readers. Choosing four different newspapers enabled the thesis to conduct a comparative and in-depth analysis of British newspapers across a varied political and class spectrum. By analyzing four newspapers with very different political postures and audiences, the research has sought to illustrate common threads in the ways in which female personnel are represented by the media and consumed by the public. The civilian discourse examined in this thesis, as is also the case for the military discourse, does not represent the entirety of it; what is presented here reflects only a part of discourses that constitute social reality.

As discussed in the methodology chapter, the aim of this research is to recover the representations of women of the military in the UK society to examine how their subject positions are rendered (un)intelligible while paying particular attention to a sense of discomfort. This chapter juxtaposes these two discourses, military and civilian, unpicks the similarities and differences, and provides an analysis of the recovered representations in the UK context. The thesis has found the ambiguous attitudes toward female soldiers in society which suggests the inherent tension between the constructs of 'women' and 'soldiers'. *Patriarchal discomfort* is

manifested in the ways they are represented using the markers of femininity, rendering their existence and experiences ambiguous and contested.

9.1. On Soldier Magazine

Soldier is a magazine published by the British Army catering primarily to their personnel and is distributed to every base and barrack since 1945. This thesis analyzed every issue published between January 1980 to December 2018 totaling 662 issues. The 1980s was a significant decade for the Army as it began its transition to a more modern organization especially in terms of inclusion of women. The magazine provides invaluable insights into the history and evolution of the organization as well as unique glimpses of lives of soldiers on the ground. The interactive features such as letters from the readers and the regular short interviews with soldiers (i.e., Vox Pop/Final Word) show us faces and voices of individual soldiers, which are not only unique and useful resources but also enable us to imagine those individuals not just as a concept of troops but as more intimate persons. This section summarizes the findings from the analysis and explicates them drawing on the conceptual framework.

The thesis offers a detailed observation of the military discourse in relation to the ways in which female soldiers are represented by following the publication for 39 years. Although the period covered for the analysis of the civilian discourse is 10 years between 2010 and 2019 due to the sheer volume of the newspaper articles published, many similarities were found between *Soldier* and the newspapers. The most salient of all is the ways in which the gender of female soldiers is highlighted, using various markers of femininity. Especially the contents of *Soldier* from the 80s until around early 2010s seem to reflect what used to be accepted in these times in society in treating women, which would be deemed obsolete today. Referring to female soldiers and officers as 'girls', 'ladies', 'angels', and 'femme fatale' as well as calling their first names were commonplace, and there were regular references to their physical appearances

and insinuations about stereotypical femininity such as gentle, caring, kind and nurturing. Especially in the early stages of inclusion, women soldiers inevitably stood out in the traditionally masculine space with an overwhelming majority of men. It is suggested by the pages that it was a transitional period for all parties including female soldiers, male soldiers, and the chain of command to adapt to the new change. Although the tone is never that of disrespect or mockery, these language and expressions used to describe female soldiers indicate that they were seen and treated with a certain sense of curiosity and lightheartedness. One of the possible explanations for such attitudes is Glick and Fiske's notion of Benevolent Sexism in which women are presumed to possess stereotypically feminine traits which require protection and affection by men. The use of language such as gentle, feminine, and angels to depict the women shows characteristics of *complementary gender differentiation* which romanticizes and assigns stereotypically feminine roles to women, for their roles complement men. Calling female soldiers and officers by their first names seems to exhibit *protective paternalism* which benignly assumes women to be the weaker and subordinate gender, and it perhaps also has facets of Hostile Sexism (HS)'s *dominant paternalism* and *competitive gender differentiation* which suppose women's incompetence and subordinance to men as given.[729]

Even if there was no intention to disrespect the women, highlighting their female gender using certain language and other speech acts is a clear manifestation of sexism and an act of Othering. In emphasizing the female soldiers' gender, it makes them stand out among men and strips them of their professional identities as soldiers and imparts instead their identities as women and civilians. Imposing such a subject position on female soldiers thus soothes the sense of discomfort induced by a woman in the military uniform, for making sense of her as a woman and a civilian is more convenient and reassuring than acknowledging her as a professional

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[729] Glick and Fiske. "The Ambivalent Sexism Inventory: Differentiating Hostile and Benevolent Sexism." p. 493.; Glick and Fiske. "Hostile and Benevolent Sexism: Measuring Ambivalent Sexist Attitudes Toward Women." p. 122.

soldier just like her male colleagues, which challenges one's preconceptions of gender norms. Consistent with the literature on the representations of violent women, those who transgress the normative and ideological boundaries of 'woman' are forced into certain narratives to conceal the sense of breach felt in the patriarchal and heteronormative social order. The thesis has argued that the acts of deliberately emphasizing the gender of female soldiers and reducing them to familiar narratives of 'woman' are a manifestation of *patriarchal discomfort* as well as an indication of resistance in which female soldiers are disruptive figure in the maintenance of the extant power relations. The 'inbetweenness' of female soldiers and their subject positions ambivalently placed between military/civilian and masculine/feminine engenders *patriarchal discomfort*, to which society responds by demarcating their subjectivity and agency in their representations. Drawing on Fricker's understanding of epistemic injustice, the thesis identifies a case of hermeneutical injustice when female soldiers and their existence and experiences are rendered unintelligible through inaccurate articulations and representations.

In accordance with Fricker's analysis of hermeneutical injustice, it would not be productive to try to find a scapegoat for it, as such an injustice is created by structural prejudice embedded in the familiar and hegemonic discourses through which we make sense of our existence and experiences, for we cannot exist outside discourse.[730] Discourses are both systems in which our experiences are mediated,[731] and practices through which social meanings are (re)produced. The power that operates in such an intangible way is what Fricker calls identity power which gives the collective social imagination (e.g., prejudices and stereotypes) capacity to influence our beliefs, judgements, and behaviors. She argues that its influence is sometimes beyond our cognizance and that it can manifest *despite* our beliefs.[732] Dotson similarly suggests that

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[730] Baxter, Judith. "Feminist Post-Structuralist Discourse Analysis: A New Theoretical and Methodological Approach?" In Eds. Harrington, Kate, Lia Litosseliti, Helen Sauntson, and Jane Sunderland. *Gender and Language Research Methodologies*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008. p. 248.
[731] Ibid.
[732] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* p.15.

epistemic violence does not require intention nor capacity,[733] indicating that harm can be done without malicious intentions, or even with benign intent; anyone can become a perpetuator. Therefore, it is not to accuse the writers and editors of the magazine or the members of the Army at that time, as these contents merely reflect what was deemed appropriate in society at the time. What is more compelling is that, as it will be discussed more in detail in the next section on the civilian discourse, the same forms of sexism and hermeneutical injustice are still relevant today.

Female soldiers were not the only women who frequented the pages of *Soldier* at the time. Other noticeable female figures include pin-up girls and glamour models in the entertainment features of the magazine, as well as female models in the advertisements. These women, often in skimpy clothes and heavy makeup with big smiles, contrast starkly with the military, uniform-clad men. Some of the contents would certainly raise eyebrows today for those women were often objectified in the ways in which they were dressed, photographed, and depicted. The women are *always* white and almost always blonde, which is suggestive of the time they were published when blonde and white women were the embodiments of stereotypically attractive women. Nevertheless, these women are obtrusive examples of objectification of women and their bodies, and it is predicted by Glick and Fiske's Hostile Sexism (HS). It is a process through which women are reduced to objects without agency, autonomy, or emotion, and they argue that such an act is prompted by a fear that women might use their sexuality to usurp men's power.[734] This thesis finds that, in the specific context of women in the military, the fear is about women occupying roles which were traditionally considered men's responsibility and the realization that women may be good enough for the job and may not need men's protection anymore. As it is further discussed in the analysis of the civilian

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[733] Dotson. "Tracking Epistemic Violence, Tracking Practices of Silencing." p. 240.
[734] Glick and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." p. 533.

discourse, the thesis also suggests that such fears and other manifestations of sexism are shared not just by men but also by women.

The thesis has identified the ambivalent attitudes of the military toward women which are documented in the magazine. The period between 2000 and early 2010 is particularly intriguing as the Army struggled to reinvigorate its image as a progressive employer and yet did not quite camouflage its traditional masculinist culture and a faint sense of disdain for women. The year 2000 is historically marked with the removal of the homosexuality ban in all British Forces. Since then, *Soldier* gradually started printing features on the new policy, appealing to its progressiveness, as well as interviews with soldiers in the LGBTQ+ community. Terms such as 'diversity', 'progressive' and 'modern' are used frequently, and all interviewees share the same sentiment about how accepting and respectful their peers and commanding officers have been and praise the Army. The campaigns to refresh the old public image of the institution intensified as the debate on whether to allow women in combat roles had become heated during the 2010s, and it was duly reflected on the pages of the magazine.

However, this period saw certain ambivalence and double standard in the ways the Army handled, simultaneously, the rebranding of the organization and the treatment of its female soldiers. For example, a female soldier was dismissed due to her appearance on the *Sun*'s Page 3, which was considered as a "regrettable" action that is "damaging" to the Army's reputation by the MoD. Nonetheless, the magazine continued featuring glamour models of Page 3 on their pages. Another example is the bulletin in the magazine by the Army Health Promotion, which tells female soldiers to use protection to avoid pregnancy and STIs. Why is there not a similar statement for men? Indeed, a number of women have had to be sent home from overseas

deployments,[735] which inevitably leads to, both in the military and public, a narrative of 'this is why women should not be soldiers'. The discussion seems to always overlook the roles men play in such situations and their responsibility. There seems to be a double standard where women are blamed for their sexuality and pregnancy by which the MoD is embarrassed, while the very organization condones objectification of women as harmless entertainment, and male soldiers who caused the pregnancies faced no consequences.

The similar sense of disdain for and rejection of women and femininity, which is often suggested in the literature to be a major characteristic of military masculinity, was palpable during this period of ambivalence. Lance Corporal Wharton was the Army's poster child for the LGBTQ+ movement and gave a few interviews in *Soldier* during his time in which he praised his employer for its progressiveness. In his interview, however, he repeatedly emphasized his masculinity by stating that he loves sports and that he does not own a nail file. Wharton argued that he is gay, *but* he is not a 'pansy', implying that effeminacy/femininity was frowned upon in the Army. By underlining his toughness and masculinity, Wharton rejected identification with effeminate 'gay stereotypes' without realizing his own prejudice. The thesis suggests that his account is a testament to the changing, yet ambiguously sexist and homophobic undercurrent in the military at the time. The thesis has found significant changes in the representations of women within the military over the 39-year period, but it also located a period of transition, namely between the year 2000 and the early 2010s, characterized by the ambivalent attitudes toward women and femininity.

The thesis suggests that from the 1980s through to the early 2000s, the depiction of women in *Soldier*, both soldiers and models, is often impelled by ambivalence toward them, sometimes

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[735] Crossley, Lucy. "The maternity military: How nearly 100 female soldiers have been sent home from the Afghan front line after getting pregnant." *Mail Online.* 15 February 2014.; Drury, Ian. "200 women troops sent home for being pregnant." *Mail Online.* 16 February 2014.

in forms of Hostile Sexism (HS) and other times in terms of Benevolent Sexism (BS). There seems to have been a shift around the early 2010s in the ways in which the magazine depicts women on their pages, both in the main contents as well as in the advertisements. Specifically, their contents have shifted from a variety that includes entertainments targeting straight males, namely, involving the objectification of women in the narrative of 'sexy and a bit of fun', to a more curated and professional platform for *all* personnel. At about the same time the public demand for *the Sun* to scrap its Page 3 element was intensifying, features and advertisements which can be considered sexist were also dropped from the pages of *Soldier*. The thesis thus argues that the Army recognized the need to adjust the gendered culture and norms within the institution as certain aspects of them were being challenged in the wider society and did so by changing the ways in which women are portrayed in their official publications. The analysis of the magazine identified the sensitivity felt in the military regarding the role of nontraditional bodies in the organization over the years, as well as both the tangible and perceptual changes that were being made. Specifically, as regards the inclusion of women into combat roles, *Soldier* is both a spectator of, and a testament to, numerous debates and changes that took place in almost four decades. In addition to such tangible changes, the magazine conveyed the voices of soldiers on the ground, which indicate the gradual perceptual changes regarding female soldiers in some parts of the military.

One of the most striking implications the archive of *Soldier* signals through decades of nuanced negotiations and first-hand experiences is that gender norms, gendered culture and traditions of the military remain prevalent, as evidenced by the literature, while its outward appearance has been updated. Although at a very slow rate, the number of women in the military has increased over the years, and their presence has spread to various roles across ranks as a result. The regular feature in every issue since 1997 which presents short interviews with soldiers, Vox Pop/Final Word, suggests that personal experiences with female soldiers and officers have

had an impact on the ways male soldiers perceive their female colleagues. The recurrent narrative told by female soldiers is that male soldiers do not care about their gender as long as they are doing their job well, and that they are accepted as one of 'the lads', and many of them expressed their satisfaction with their jobs and are proud to be soldiers. As discussed in the analysis of Vox Pop/Final Word section of the magazine, more and more personnel seem to have grown confident in the abilities of female soldiers to be deployed on the front line. In addition, an interview with Army officers in 2019 suggests that "there was 'no longer a strong prevalence' of the idea that women are non-combatants."[736] These findings suggest that the representations of female soldiers in the magazine have evolved as the military has campaigned to reconstruct its public image as a hyper-masculine institution.[737]

However, these representations and projections of the military in their discourses need to be separated from the reality, from the everyday experiences of the soldiers and officers. In popular culture, masculinity, brotherhood, as well as physical and psychological prowess remain important predicates and signifiers of being a soldier. Despite the military's effort to paint themselves gender-neutral and progressive, much research evinces that the institution largely remains a hyper-masculine and sexist space in which female bodies are objectified and Othered and femininity eschewed and exploited. The thesis has focused on *Soldier* as a part of official military discourses and observed that the representations of female soldiers have significantly evolved over a few decades. However, it is important to note that the thesis does not claim that these changes in representations necessarily signal more fundamental, structural and discursive changes in the gendered nature and culture of the military. As discussed in the literature review, the normative and ideological struggles female soldiers still experience today

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[736] House of Commons Defence Committee. "Protecting those who protect us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life." p. 11.
[737] Jester. "Army recruitment video advertisements in the US and UK since 2002: Challenging ideals of hegemonic military masculinity?"

indicate that the changes in outward appearance are far easier to be made than bringing a more radical change to the patriarchal and heteronormative norms upon which the entire premise of armed forces of a modern-day liberal state is built.[738]

9.2. On British Newspapers

Whilst the analysis of *Soldier* has found gradual yet substantial changes in the ways in which female soldiers are represented in the Army, the civilian discourse found in the analyses of the four newspapers suggests more ambiguity and greater senses of discomfort and unease in the representation of female soldiers. It may seem like a counterintuitive finding that there are more misgivings about female soldiers in society than in the military, as sensitivity and understanding for gender equality have considerably increased in recent years, and activism and movements associated with #MeToo and Women's March have gained traction globally. Indeed, 97% of people in the UK answered that gender equality is important[739] and beliefs in traditional gender roles for men and women have decreased.[740] However, while many believe in and support the ideas of gender equality, the analysis of media discourses suggests that they may find the idea of female soldiers, especially in combat roles, incongruous and uncomfortable. It is consistent with Fricker's explanation of residual prejudices where discursive force operates at non-doxastic level and prejudices manifest in our perceptions and behaviors *despite* our beliefs,[741] for many of us may believe in gender equality and experience a sense of discomfort simultaneously when we, for example, read about female soldiers. Capita, a company which recruits on behalf of the Army, points out the significant role media play "in

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[738] Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.*
[739] Pew Research Center. "European Public Opinion Three Decades After the Fall of Communism." October 2019. p. 90.
[740] Phillips, D., Curtice, J., Phillips, M., and Perry, J. eds. "British Social Attitudes: The 35th Report." The National Centre for Social Research. 2018. p. 61.
[741] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* p. 36.

compounding the impression that the Army is a harder place for women to thrive."[742] The thesis has identified such – sometimes subtle and other times overt – manifestations of discomfort in newspaper reporting about female soldiers.

The analysis has found slightly different stances among the four newspapers on the topic of the inclusion of women on the front line. The *Sun* and the *Mirror* in the samples both exhibited a rather neutral stance and tone, presenting both sides of the debate. Neither of the tabloid papers seem to discriminate against or lean towards one side of the debate and their editorials are not very dogmatic. It may suggest the tabloid papers' general characteristics to treat entertainments as equally (or sometimes even more) important as news reporting and political discourse. The *Telegraph* and the *Guardian*, on the other hand, display more of their own political postures through their articles. The *Telegraph* consistently echoed opinions that are wary of or against the inclusion of women in combat roles by citing many of the conservative critics including former military officers and politicians. The *Guardian* positioned themselves on the other end, ardently voicing approving views on the matter. The thesis has found that all four newspapers, though to varying degrees, use the markers of femininity to highlight the gender and femininity of female soldiers which clearly differentiate them from their male counterparts in their articles regardless of their stances on the topic. As it has been discussed, these markers reduce female soldiers to very limited subject positions which do not accurately articulate their existence and experiences but conform to the stereotypical and prescriptive ideas about women in society. Examples of the markers of femininity are summarized in *Figure 6*.

These markers, however, are not necessarily active projections of contempt for women or dismissal of their ability for the role, but rather, the thesis suggests, a customary way to differentiate women from men, perhaps an anthropologically rooted need to categorize "the

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[742] House of Commons Defence Committee. "Protecting those who protect us: Women in the Armed Forces from Recruitment to Civilian Life." p. 11.

fundamental aspects of human social life."[743] When used excessively in order to unnecessarily sexualize women, which are often seen in tabloid papers, however, it is an exhibition of sexism and lack of respect. It seems that most of the time those markers are used by default and simply to signal that the subject is female and not male. It may seem innocent enough, but such differentiation indicates that the men are the norm from which women are being Othered for their deviation. In the context of soldiering, the profession strongly associated with agency and masculinity, emphasizing femininity and communal traits of female soldiers may evoke doubts about their suitability as well as a sense of discomfort. In other words, highlighting the gender and femininity of female soldiers not only (re)produces the convenient subject positions of them as women and civilian conforming to the extant gender norms, but also puts them at discursive disadvantage where they are trapped between the normative boundaries of soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine, and their credibility is deflated consequently. [744] Following the premise of system justification theory, the thesis has argued that such differentiations between female soldiers and their male counterparts are a defensive and system-justifying reaction to the potential threat to the gender status-quo posed by the disruptive, nontraditional bodies such as female soldiers.[745]

The thesis suggests that the usage of the markers of femininity in media discourses indicates the ambiguous attitude toward female soldiers in society. It also argues that such markers are subtle but clear manifestations of discomfort felt in society in which the traditional gender norms dictate that women and soldiering are fundamentally irreconcilable (e.g., Beautiful Souls and Just Warriors). Furthermore, the sense of discomfort can be manifested unconsciously or with good intentions which has more insidious implications than more overt displays of sexism

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[743] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 761.
[744] Fricker. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing.* p. 160.
[745] Jost. "A quarter century of system justification theory: Questions, answers, criticisms, and societal applications." p. 267.

and disdain for women, for it still perpetuates the discourse in which female soldiers are represented in a way that trivializes their professional identities. The *Guardian* is a prime example of this; the paper has held a very firm, progressive stance on the issue of women's inclusion in combat roles along with any other gender equality related topics. The dominant discourse found in the analysis is that 'women have been serving on the front line for decades, so why not allow them in all roles?' Yet the analysis also found regular usage of markers of femininity, which the thesis has argued, is a manifestation of the sense of discomfort. For instance, names of female soldiers appear in headlines more than that of male soldiers, and their photographs are featured far more often than photographs of male soldiers in cases of incidents even when casualties include male soldiers. Such tactics, whether used consciously or unconsciously, draw attention to the stories more than they would have, had they deployed more gender-neutral reporting in which the gender of soldiers is conveyed more subtly. The analysis of recruitment advertisements by the UK Army by Jester also finds that the inclusion of women has been controversial and "not been embraced with open arms in the UK press."[746] The thesis posits that it shows the embeddedness and rigidity of the normative constructs and boundaries of soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine which are materialized in various social expectations for men, women, and certain professions.

As Braid points out, there is a certain social meaning attached to images of objectified young women in the media that is fundamentally different from images of young men.[747] 'Beefcake' differs fundamentally from 'cheesecake', the American slang which refers to "publicly acceptable, mass-produced images of semi-nude women"[748] in their presentation, editorial

[746] Jester. "Army recruitment video advertisements in the US and UK since 2002: Challenging ideals of hegemonic military masculinity?" p. 70.
[747] Braid. "Page Three girls – the naked truth."
[748] Meyerowitz. "Women, Cheesecake, and Borderline Material: Responses to Girlie Pictures in the Mid-Twentieth-Century U.S." p. 10.

value and popularity.[749] Imagery of often sexualized women is so commonplace that it is, in the words of the former editor of the *Sun*, "an innocuous British institution … a part of British society."[750] Like many other societies, images of women and their bodies (if not sexualized) are ubiquitous in our lives from advertisements, magazines, films and TV shows to social media, and therefore assimilated into the mainstream popular culture as well as people's perceptions. Once the press learned to capitalize on women's bodies as a highly profitable commodity in the early 1900s, the borderline kept being pushed, the images have become more explicit and sexual, and the public has become desensitized. As such, there is a wider tolerance to images of objectified women in society and even after protests like the 'No More Page 3' campaign, such images do not cease to circulate. As Bingham points out, perhaps the public has become so acquainted with the ubiquity of such images that people "stopped to think."[751] Alternatively, there may be willful ignorance behind the toleration of certain images of women among the public, even if one does not enjoy seeing such images or finds them problematic, one accepts that it is, after all, *the ways* in which women and their bodies have always been displayed and consumed. In other words, the ways and the fact that women are objectified or sexualized may be presumed and accepted as a norm due to institutionalized patriarchy and sexism. Glick and Fiske suggest that Hostile Sexism (HS) treats women as objects and Benevolent Sexism (BS) entices women to self-objectify and conform to stereotypical femininity.[752] As such, in society where such a structural power of sexism operates, images of objectified women become a familiar, if slightly uncomfortable sight.

The *Sun* is especially culpable for disseminating the 'sexy soldier girl' discourse in which female soldiers are depicted as physically and sexually attractive, fun-loving young women,

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[749] Bingham, Adrian. Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978. p. 203.
[750] BBC News. "Sun editor Dominic Mohan defends Page Three."
[751] Bingham, Adrian. *Family Newspapers? Sex, Private Life, and the British Popular Press 1918-1978.* p. 227.
[752] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 305.

without regard to their professional identity. Their tradition to send their Page 3 models to visit soldiers to 'boost morale' is reminiscent of the pin-ups that adorned the barracks during the World War II. Illustrations and photographs of sexualized women may have been accepted and even legitimized at the time, and the premise that soldiers would appreciate female nudes as a little cheeky tonic were widely endorsed especially before gays and women were allowed in the military. However, having glamour models visit soldiers and gifting them calendars full of Page 3 style nudes in the 2010s seem not only anachronistic and sexist but also inconsiderate to gay and female personnel. It is indicative of the paper's gendered stereotypes of men and women, which are being reproduced through the articles with sexualized depictions of female soldiers. Embodied in their attitudes with Page 3, the *Sun* does not shy away from printing 'cheesecake' imagery even after other papers have refrained from doing so. The tabloid even published such images of female soldiers and ex-soldiers.

The implications of the women who appeared in the tabloid papers as former soldiers are twofold: they are objectified under male gaze and meant to be an enjoyment for the heterosexual male audience. Yet crucially, they are (presumably) not forced to be dressed and photographed in the ways they are – they made conscious decisions to pose in front of camera rather with determination and confidence. The same can be said for the models who adorned the pages of *Soldier*. Glick and Fiske's notions of Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS) are useful here to unpack both the objectification of women for male gaze and the self-objectification. According to them, men who score high in HS have propensity to objectify sexualized women, denying them agency and detaching any humanly qualities from them.[753] Indeed, many of the women portrayed in the tabloid papers are highly sexualized and embody the 'sexy soldier girl' discourse which was identified in the analysis. They are often dressed in

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[753] Glick and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism Revisited." p. 533.

underwear, bikinis, or very revealing pieces of clothing, with accessories such as a khaki-colored hat, combat boots, and an ammunition belt which indicate their relation to the military. There exists a fetishization of women in the military context, which is done by sexualizing them to fit into the 'sexy soldier girl' narrative and to serve as an entertainment. These sexy soldier costumes are completely unrealistic, emphasizing their sexuality as well as vulnerability by exposing their skin which contradicts their supposed role of soldiers.

In other cases, the tabloid papers would focus on femininity and sexuality of female soldiers on active duty. Language used such as 'bikini' 'sexy' 'babes' and 'femme fatales' makes arresting headlines especially in contrast to their masculine-coded profession, often accompanied by photographs in which female soldiers smile at the camera. The analysis found that sexualization of female soldiers of foreign countries is done more blatantly compared to that of the British female soldiers. Yet, even with the British female soldiers, there is the deliberate use of language to describe and highlight their physical appearances and their personal lives. Though the degrees to which these female soldiers are objectified vary among papers, the common thread is to emphasize their identities as women and treat rather lightly their professional identities as soldiers. They are presented first and foremost as women with their femininity and sexuality underlined, rendering 'female soldier' an oxymoron.

On the other hand, behind the 'willingness' of these women personifying the fantasized and fetishized image of 'sexy soldier girl', there is a tacit exertion of BS. According to the theory, while the objectification of women motivated by HS is done in overt and vulgar ways in which women are reduced to mere objects, the objectification incited by BS is presented in a much more covert manner where women are enticed to self-objectify, appear in stereotypically feminine and desirable ways, and are rewarded for conforming.[754] The tactics of HS and BS

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[754] Connor, Glick, and Fiske. "Ambivalent Sexism in the Twenty-First Century." p. 305.

are seemingly different, but they ultimately share the same objective of keeping women in *their place*. These former female soldiers who are featured in the tabloid paper to be showcased as 'sexy soldier girl' simply could have chosen to offer photos from when they were on duty and done interviews if they wished to be regarded as former soldiers. Instead, they chose to self-objectify themselves, consciously or unconsciously, by highlighting in bold their sexuality and observing the stereotypical femininity which is desired by men who wish to assume the superiority over women. Thus, the thesis finds that the objectified depictions of women in the military in the tabloid papers are impelled by both Hostile Sexism (HS) and Benevolent Sexism (BS), and that these are likely to be motivated by the sense of discomfort induced by female bodies occupying the masculine-coded role, prompting the reactive attempt to keep them in *their place*. As long as either HS or BS is operating, hermeneutical injustice will be perpetuated, and the existence and experiences of female soldiers will remain unintelligible. Moreover, the thesis finds that sexualizing female soldiers has an insidious effect on how people recognize them, in addition to the sense of discomfort they may already feel about women in the military. The sense of discomfort or unease stems from a cognitive dissonance between personal beliefs and experiences which contradict them. The sexualized images of female soldiers can reinforce gendered preconceptions and further aggravate the sense of discomfort. Similarly, the narrative that insinuates that 'she is too pretty to be a soldier', which is frequently evident in the tabloid papers, also feeds into the sense of discomfort. Despite its ostensibly complimentary and benign tone, it divides what men and women do based on common stereotypes and proclaims that 'female soldier' is indeed an oxymoron.

The thesis has argued that such imagery of sexualized female soldiers is not only disrespectful to women and an inaccurate depiction of their roles, but also actively disseminates the fantasized 'sexy soldier girl' discourse. However, those blatantly sexual visuals are not the only means by which female soldiers are represented markedly differently from male soldiers. Texts

also reveal a great deal about discourses in which the subject positions of female soldiers are constructed and the representations of them are (re)produced. The thesis has found that the variation of the descriptors for female soldiers through which their identities are rendered intelligible and their experiences given meaning is acutely limited, especially in the civilian media and its discourses. This means that the commonly perceived identities, or the *idea* of female soldiers, which are articulated in these discourses are discerned as a singular subject position of what male soldiers are *not*. The descriptors, as the thesis has identified, are used as markers of femininity to emphasize the gender of female soldiers, which distinguish them from their male colleagues. Female soldiers are rendered hyper-visible, and their subject positions are constructed according to what they lack and differ from male soldiers.

The analysis of four popular newspapers has found the routine ways in which the gender of female soldiers is highlighted and their other social identities such as daughter, wife and mother are more emphasized than their professional identities as soldiers. It is consistent with Millar's analysis of obituaries of female soldiers in which their feminine qualities are highlighted despite their masculine-coded profession.[755] The plurality of social contexts in which they perform their apt roles requires different social identities, which arise in response and according to different situations;[756] for instance, a social identity as a Lieutenant may arise when a male soldier acts in a professional context but his other social identities as a husband or a father may become more central when he goes home. However, the descriptors regularly used for a female soldier strongly signal her social identity as a woman, a wife, or a mother, even in a professional context where her central identity is a soldier. The thesis thus argues that it is a case of hermeneutical injustice in which the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered

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[755] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 774.

[756] Fraser, Nancy. "The Uses and Abuses of French Discourse Theories for Feminist Politics." In Fraser, Nancy ad Bartky, Sandra Lee. Eds. *Revaluing French Feminism: Critical Essays on Difference, Agency, and Culture.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. p. 178.

unintelligible through the fallacious constructs and representations of them and their identities. The discursive inaccuracy in articulating the being and experiences of female soldiers is found in the media representations, which positions them as subjects in discourses in such a way that it reinforces and (re)produces the distorted images of them.

As discussed in the previous section, the analysis of the military discourse has found that a part of the sense of discomfort felt within the organization, especially when women began to be increasingly integral and visible, was a sense of unease in experiencing a disruption by the female bodies in the traditionally masculine-coded space. There could also have been a fear that the power relations between men and women could be altered, literally and figuratively, if women proved themselves to be as competent as male soldiers. Although similar narratives of 'soldiering is a men's job', 'women are not strong enough', and 'there is a special bond between men' claimed by former military officers and conservative politicians are found in newspapers, the thesis has identified different senses of discomfort in the civilian discourses. That is, the concept of the military is merely an abstract and conceptual to many people and the stereotypical images held by the wider population can differ vastly from the actual experiences of soldiers. Many would picture combat soldiers from films and shows, rather than the various jobs and responsibilities in the military such as administrative roles and cooks, which do not involve combat. The thesis posits that the discourses in the civilian media are often nuanced and ambiguous because of the stereotypical image of (combat) soldiers in addition to the normative constructs and boundaries of masculine/feminine. The societal expectations for women to embody femininity and its life-giving quality fundamentally contradict with being a soldier which (not necessarily but conceptually) takes life, and this incongruity engenders a sense of discomfort.

Highlighting the gender and femininity of female soldiers is a projection of such a sense of discomfort and an attempt to situate their subject positions in more familiar narratives as women and civilian. Emphasizing her identity as a woman over her professional identity provides a sense of relief that she is indeed a woman, a wife, or a mother, first and foremost, and her occupying a role and identity as a soldier is only temporary. Indeed, it was also found by Millar that while military service is constructed as life-long profession and achievement for male soldiers in their obituaries, it is framed as "temporary, an interruption of the normal course of their life"[757] for female soldiers. In this way, the sense of discomfort is alleviated and the stereotypical image of (male) soldiers as well as the normative boundaries of soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine are maintained. The notion of respectability is used in studying the formations of class and gender where respectability is a signifier of a certain class or gender by which people identify and categorize themselves and others.[758] Respectable femininity prescribes desirable traits and behaviors to women, "a standard to which to aspire"[759] and a moral judgement against which women are criticized and praised. Although it varies socio-culturally and evolves over time to reflect the societal gender norms, the ideas of respectability for women in the Victorian era, which include "domesticity, appropriate … behavior",[760] may still be relevant today. In a sense, female soldiers push the boundaries of respectable femininity, which many still find uncomfortable. Just as sports other than tennis, swimming, and golf are not 'female-appropriate',[761] soldiering does not strike some as a female-appropriate profession. The notion of Beautiful Souls and Just Warriors, as anachronistic as it rings today, may still be

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[757] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 774.

[758] Skeggs, Beverly. *Formations of Class and Gender: Becoming Respectable* London: Sage Publication Ltd., 1997. pp. 1-4.

[759] Ibid. p. 3.

[760] Ansari, Nighat. "Respectable femininity: a significant panel of glass ceiling for career women." *Gender in Management: An International Journal* 31 no. 8 (2016): p. 529.; Hussein, Nazia. "Negotiating Middle-class Respectable Femininity: Bangladeshi Women and their Families." *South Asia Multidisciplinary Academic journal* 16 (2017).

[761] Harris and Clayton. "Femininity, Masculinity, Physicality and the English Tabloid Press." pp. 403-4.

pertinent and ingrained in our cognizance upon which our understandings about 'woman' and 'soldier' are shaped.

The analysis found that there is a certain mould society expects women to fit in, as Weber surmised,[762] and the boundary of respectable femininity is still rigid. Coy and Garner observed in the case of a former glamour model turned businesswoman, whose social positioning as a glamour model and the stigma associated with the job kept her out of the respectability boundary, despite her other identities as author, businesswoman, wife, and mother.[763] Similarly, the sense of discomfort due to the fundamental and hermeneutical contradiction between the stereotypical understandings of femininity and soldiering, instead of the social stigma, may be keeping female soldiers out of the boundary of respectable femininity. The notion of respectable femininity reflects the societal gender norms and stereotypes, while also informing the discursive operations of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism to keep women in *their place*. As the thesis has delineated, the representations of female soldiers in the media are skewed in various ways and through multiple mechanisms, so that they are rendered hyper-visible as women rather than as soldiers. Highlighting their femininity and detaching their professional identity from their representations only perpetuate the stereotypical expectations for women and soldiers as separate and incompatible constructs and reinforce the sense of discomfort when the two are enacted together. The thesis thus argues that it is a case of hermeneutical injustice in which the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered unintelligible. It further suggests that it is an unconscious manifestation of *patriarchal discomfort* which coaxes women into *their place*, the latter spheres of the soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine boundaries.

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[762] Weber. "Preliminary report on a proposed survey for a sociology of the press." p. 111.
[763] Coy, Maddy and Garner, Maria. "Glamour modelling and the marketing of self-sexualization: Critical reflections." *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 13, no. 6 (2020): p. 663, 671.

9.3. Military and Civil Discourses

The extensive body of literature in studies of military and masculinity has focused on the so-called 'military culture' in which 'a boy becomes a man', and the process through which one (often assumed to be a heterosexual white man) is trained physically and psychologically to attain the epitome of masculinity and becomes acculturated to the characteristics of 'military masculinity'. The feminist scholars have built on these studies and observed the normative and ideological tension female bodies necessarily bring to the hyper-masculine space and their struggles to be 'fully' integrated. As such, the extant literature would predict the sense of discomfort induced by nontraditional bodies is more strongly felt in the military rather than in society, but the analyses found that there are much more subtle signs signaling the sense of discomfort and unease in society. The analysis of the representations of female soldiers in media discourses has revealed that the presence of women had been normalized gradually in the military since they were officially recognized after the WWII, whereas the normalization of female soldiers did not occur in civil discourse in the quite same way. The sense of discomfort in sending women to combat was shared between the military and society for a while, but whilst such misgivings about them eventually ceased to be expressed in *Soldier*, as the military reconstructed its public image by presenting a clean, gender-neutral narrative, the representations of female soldiers in the civil discourse indicate that the rigid constructs of masculine/feminine and the ambivalent attitudes toward them have remained uncontested. The thesis has thus demonstrated the importance of examining gendered beliefs and cultures in both the military and society, as well as the ambiguous spaces between them to better grasp the nuanced representations of female soldiers and their implications.

Although the ways in which female soldiers are represented in the military and civil discourses differ, the thesis maintains that both have insidious effects in how their existence and experiences are rendered intelligible. Not only are these representations discourses through

which the subject positions of female soldiers are constructed, these articulations are the site in which their subjectivity, identity, and experiences are mediated. Crucially, popular and hegemonic discourses reflect the power relations between social actors rather than the 'reality', where dominant meanings are constructed and "the identities of objects and practices" are fixed in a particular way.[764] Dominant discourses thus construct social reality, and certain social practices and imaginaries such as gender norms and stereotypes are also reproduced and reinforced. As a discourse analyst, therefore, it is crucial that one is able to interpret and examine the competing discourses as well as their discursive formations and analyze their power relations to uncover what order is maintained on behalf of whom. The rescue story of Jessica Lynch in which an idealized militarized femininity figure was saved from the barbaric Iraqis by male soldiers, the appropriate subject of violence, which served as a justification for the US government to continue its campaign in Iraq is a good example. The analysis of the representations of female soldiers in *Soldier* magazine at first glance seems to paint a picture of an organization which had gone through a number of changes and reforms to reconstruct itself from a masculinist and sexist place to a progressive and gender-neutral one. However, the glossy narrative it has promoted in recent years contradicts with the studies which have observed the normative and ideological struggles experienced by female soldiers. The sexist culture and qualms about the presence of women, especially in combat roles, remain prevalent in the institution, yet such contesting narratives are not present in *Soldier*. The thesis therefore argues that this is one way in which the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered unintelligible through inaccurate articulations of them and of the military.

Another way in which hermeneutical injustice against female soldiers is perpetrated by rendering their subject positions unintelligible is found in their representations in the civil

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[764] Howarth and Stavrakakis. "Introducing discourse theory and political analysis. p. 3.

discourse. As the analysis of the four newspapers has observed, female soldiers are portrayed categorically differently from their male counterparts and their representations are characterized by the use of the markers of femininity. These markers of femininity highlight the gender and femininity of female soldiers while trivializing their professional identities as soldiers. It is argued that they signal *patriarchal discomfort* in which the patriarchal gender order is disrupted by the feminine bodies occupying the masculine-coded space. As the literature on violent women has noted, those who transgress the traditional gender norms in society are repositioned in their representations and reduced to the familiar narratives of women, who are weaker, subordinate, and in need of protection, if slightly aberrant. Such responses signal the deep-seated anxiety about 'unwomanly' women, and societal inability to accept the fact that not all women necessarily conform to the gender norms and stereotypes. By portraying female soldiers as inherently feminine social actors, such as girl, mother, or wife, the sense of discomfort is alleviated, but their professional identities, agency, and accomplishments are unrecognized. As such, the thesis argues that the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered unintelligible in both military and civil discourses, and their subject positions are kept in *their place*, as women.

The thesis finds that the sense of discomfort felt when recognizing women in the military setting is shared widely in society, by both men and women. Studies show that sexual dimorphism does exist between men and women, from the reproductive systems to hormones which modulate behavior and size of the body.[765] However, external factors such as social norms and experiences also contribute to the formation of one's physical and behavioral traits. It is crucial to distinguish the biological functions which create binaries between the sexes from categories of gender with which people identify themselves and perceive others. While the

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[765] Hooven. *Testosterone: The Story of the Hormone that Dominates and Divides Us.*

former, the binary between the sexes refers to the physiological categorization and distinction between sexed bodies, the latter cannot be understood in binarism in which people are categorized into two distinct and rigid groups. Although the term is sometimes used to refer to sex, gender is a more fluid term and one's sexed body and how it is perceived by others do not necessarily match the gender with which one might identify oneself. The belief that the classifications of sex necessarily correspond to the categories of gender is problematic as it inevitably reduces gender to two groups. Such gender binarism is a socially constructed belief which prescribes appropriate traits, behaviors and roles to men and women and it is still prevalent in society. The "attachment and difficulty of separating the corporeal binary of gender" is also argued by Zalewski.[766] In fact, while the traditional beliefs in gender role divide have decreased among the public over the decades,[767] reports note that there exists the "gendered double standard" and the public sometimes expresses strong disapproval of nontraditional behaviors of men and women who do not conform to the traditional gender norms and division of labor, especially in family settings.[768] The gendered social norms such as gender roles and stereotypes are what Fricker calls the collective social imagination for they are social constructs, yet such gender norms are one of the most potent discourses through which our belief systems are consistently (re)constructed and negotiated. Such social imaginaries and the normative boundaries of appropriate masculinity and femininity are ingrained both structurally and perceptually in society and are rarely challenged. Therefore, there may be a sense of discomfort or unease when a woman takes on a traditionally masculine-coded profession, for example, for she disrupts the comfort and familiarity of gender stereotypes which uphold the current power relations. The sense of discomfort, however slight, is a reaction to a social experience which is incongruous with our perceptions of what is

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[766] Zalewski. "What's the problem with the concept of military masculinities?" pp. 203-4.
[767] "British Social Attitudes: The 35th Report." pp. 60-2.
[768] Curtice, J., Hudson, N. and Montagu, I. eds. "Family life: Attitudes to non-traditional family behaviours." In "British social Attitudes: the 37th Report." NatCen Social Research. 2020. pp. 9-10, 17-18.

'normal' or 'natural', and it is the key point of inquiry into today's gendered discourses by which so much of our systems and practices are dictated.

While acknowledging that there are limitations to the methodology and analysis in this research and it is not possible to locate every single experience and discourse, the thesis offers a unique perspective from which to investigate the positioning of female soldiers in popular discourses. Closely examining the official publication of the Army has enabled the thesis to recover several important strands of truth in the delicate ways in which the institution has negotiated reconciled with the presence of nontraditional bodies, which are revealed through histories of official discourses, first-hand experiences on the ground, as well as how female soldiers are represented and rendered (un)intelligible. The thesis has identified a sense of discomfort in media discourses, especially in the civilian discourse which is articulated and disseminated by the major newspapers. The sense of discomfort, it has been argued, is a manifestation of cultural and psychological resistance to a perceptual incongruity between the ideas of women and soldiering, induced by the 'inbetweenness' of female soldiers, whose bodies are ambivalently placed between the normative boundaries of soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine. The analysis has found that the delimited and partial representations of women in the military by the media not only reflect the hegemonic discourse about female soldiers in society which are circumscribed by such boundaries, but also perpetuate the extant gender norms that uphold the patriarchal and heteronormative social order. This thesis thus argues that hermeneutical injustice against female soldiers and the sense of discomfort can be better explained by scrutinizing the ambiguous spaces and normative boundaries between military/civilian and masculine/feminine, the oppositional yet co-constitutive domains, and bodies that occupy such spaces. The extant literature tends to focus on the military and its specific gender norms and culture as a site of investigation when engaging with puzzles that revolve around gender and military, yet the military/society and their gender norms are intimately related and influencing

each other. The seemingly rigid boundaries of military/civilian and masculine/feminine can be easily ruptured by nontraditional bodies such as female soldiers, and their ambiguous subject positions and 'inbetweenness' betray our dependence as society on traditional gender norms and ideas such as Beautiful Souls and Just Warriors.

Figure 6

The makers of femininity	Examples
'Girls'	"Gun girls take aim"[769] "Army top girl quits"[770] "1st Army girl to lose leg"[771] "Golden girl Debbie"[772] "HERO BRIT BOMB GIRL"[773]
First names	"Major Pepita is red cap boss" [774] "SUE IS 1st WOMAN GENERAL"[775] "Lesley joins team,"[776]
Physical appearances	"Pretty Charlotte Lawson"[777] "the most beautiful bodyguard ever"[778] "glamorous looks and long brown hair" [779] "young, beautiful women"[780] "battle-ready beauties"[781]
Personalities	"proper tomboy"[782] "a very active, outgoing girl"[783]
Other social identities	Married, wife, mother, friend, university-educated
Motherly figure	Photographing female soldiers with children in war-torn countries. "an angel"[784]
'Female' soldiers	Paying disproportionate attention to female soldiers' deaths even when the casualties include male soldiers. "Cpl Sarah and her three comrades were 'killed unlawfully'"[785] "Channing and patrol pal die in 'friendly fire'"[786]
Sexualization	"Bikini babes gunbathing,"[787] "BUMS OUT, GUNS OUT: World's sexiest Marine Shannon Ihrke strips off for hot military calendar wielding massive machine guns"[788]

Summary of the markers of femininity

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[769] Daily Mirror. "Gun girls take aim.". p. 22.
[770] The Sun. "Army top girl quits." 2 July 2012. Edition 1, National edition. p. 12.
[771] Kay. "It was just a scratch – CAPTAIN KATE PHILIP; 1ST ARMY GIRL TO LOSE LEG TALKS TO THE SUN." pp. 12-3.
[772] *Soldier.* August 1993. Part 16. P. 12.
[773] Gregory. "TALIBAN BLAST KILLS HERO BRIT BOMB GIRL; BOMB HEROINE."
[774] Soldier. May 1986. Part 9. p. 19.
[775] Willetts, David. "SUE IS 1st WOMAN GENERAL." p. 20.
[776] Soldier. February 2003. p. 8.
[777] Livesey. "Soldier swaps army boots for high heels as she bids to become Miss England."
[778] Campbell. "Is this the most beautiful bodyguard ever? Chinese woman soldier leaves admirers lovestruck after appearing at G20 summit."
[779] Lion. "Female soldier dubbed the 'Kurdish Angelina Jolie dies' while fighting ISIS in Syria."
[780] "FEMME FATALEs: Bikini-clad Israeli army soldiers pose with guns and explosives in dangerously sexy snaps."
[781] Morrison. "Meet the lady killers: Elite squad of female soldiers defending Ukraine from potential invasion from Putin's Russian armies."
[782] "Female medic was third British servicewoman killed in Afghanistan."
[783] Swinford and Farmer. "'Friendly fire' kills woman soldier.".
[784] *Soldier.* January 2004. p. 21.
[785] Coles. "NO EQUIPMENT, NO TRAINING, NO CHANCE; DEVASTATING VERDICT ON MoD; Cpl Sarah and her three comrades were 'killed unlawfully' says coroner."
[786] Willetts. "GIRL WHO LIVED FOR THE ARMY IS KILLED; Channing and patrol pal die in 'friendly fire'."
[787] The Sun. "Bikini babes gunbathing."
[788] Knox. BUMS OUT, GUNS OUT: World's sexiest Marine Shannon Ihrke strips off for hot military calendar wielding massive machine guns."

Chapter 10: Conclusion

The thesis has explored the ambiguous subject positions of female soldiers represented and reproduced in popular discourses through which their existence and experiences are rendered (un)intelligible. It is argued that female soldiers are portrayed fundamentally differently from their male colleagues and the markedness of their bodies in the intrinsically masculine space indicates the inherent tension between the ideas and constructs of femininity and soldiering. The thesis has argued that exploring the ambiguous spaces between military/civilian and masculine/feminine and the normative boundaries dividing them is a highly productive and consequential avenue of research in gender and militarism. The 'inbetweenness'[789] of these spheres is thus the site of its investigation in which the military and civilian construal of female soldiers is analyzed. Setting as a focal point a sense of discomfort, it has examined the representations of female soldiers, the discourse of which renders their subject positions (un)intelligible in both military and civilian media. The subject positions of female soldiers are contested and ambiguous, the analysis finds, partially due to the rigid constructions of, and societal expectations for, 'woman' and 'soldier'. It is argued that the incongruity between the perceived femininity and the masculine-coded profession engenders a sense of discomfort as female soldiers are precariously placed between soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine.

The thesis conducts a discourse analysis of the official magazine of the British Army *Soldier* and four of the most widely read newspapers in the UK, the *Telegraph*, the *Guardian*, the *Sun*, and the *Mirror* to recover the representations of female soldiers and retrieve common threads in these papers with divergent political ideologies and audiences. In doing so, the aim is to answer the research question of how women in the military are represented in media discourses. The following questions are considered to address the research question: How do the two

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[789] Bulmer and Eichler. "Unmaking militarized masculinity: veterans and the project of military-to-civilian transition." p. 175.

contesting norms of traditional heteronormativity and modern gender equality and diversity manifest themselves in discourse? How does society make sense of the 'inbetweenness' of the bodies and subject positions of female soldiers being positioned between military and civilian as well as masculine and feminine? Where do the normative and ideological boundaries of patriotism and patriarchal heteronormativity place the subject positions of female soldiers and what are the implications? By answering these questions, the thesis seeks to contribute to the literature a better understanding of how female soldiers are rendered (un)intelligible in popular discourses in relation to the deep-seated sense of discomfort induced by gendered bodies in breach of patriarchal gender norms.

The analysis of *Soldier* from 1980 to 2018 has revealed significant changes in the ways in which the Army has constructed and presented itself from being exclusively heteronormative and masculinist to being more diverse and inclusive. There have been both institutional changes such as the introductions of new policies and campaigns as well as perceptual changes characterized by the ways in which female soldiers are portrayed in the magazine and perceived by their male colleagues. As the thesis has identified, there was a period of transition during which the official narrative promoting the image of 'new Army' with more inclusive policies conflicted with the continued sexist and homophobic attitudes in its treatment and depiction of nontraditional bodies. However, the changes in the 39-year period are evident in, for instance, the language and expressions used to describe female soldiers in the magazine, as well as the positive attestations from female soldiers featured in interviews. The findings from *Soldier*, the thesis argues, are indicative of the effort by the military to align itself with the recent trends in workplace equality and diversity practices in wider society. While some of the developments the institution has seen over the years, especially the opening of every role to all regardless of gender, are notable, the progressiveness in representations may not always reflect the 'reality'. The thesis suggests that the narratives of an equal and diverse institution projected in the pages

of *Soldier* where female soldiers are given the same opportunities and treated as equals to their male colleagues may obfuscate their real, everyday experiences, such as their normative and ideological struggles to be accepted and recognized as 'good female soldiers'[790] as observed in the literature, as well as dealing with the heightened risks of facing sexual harassments, abuses and assaults.

The analysis of the representations of female soldiers in the civil discourse, in contrast, has found ambivalent attitudes toward them in society throughout the 10-year period. Whereas the presence of women in the military had been somewhat normalized gradually and their visibility has likely contributed to some of the attitudinal and perceptual changes within the organization, female soldiers are not yet a familiar sight in society. The thesis has identified the markers of femininity which are often attached to the representations of female soldiers in all four newspapers as well as in *Soldier* until around the mid 2010s. These markers vary in their forms, but they are used to highlight the gender and femininity of female soldiers while their professional identities as soldiers are trivialized. These markers render the already-visible female soldiers hyper-visible and divert the readers' attention to their feminine bodies in the masculine-coded profession. [791] The thesis argues that these markers of femininity are manifestations of *patriarchal discomfort*, a feeling which arises from the perceptual dissonance of the feminine subjects occupying the masculine space. Constructs of the feminine and the masculine in our cognizance render the social roles of woman and soldier unintelligible, and the embeddedness of such constructs is evidenced by this sense of discomfort. *Patriarchal discomfort* is patriarchal precisely because it constitutes and is constituted by the effects and

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[790] Millar, Katharine M. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." *Review of International Studies* 41, no. 4 (2015): p. 757.
[791] For examples of the markers of femininity, see *Figure 6*.

discursive force of patriarchy, which, together with the heteronormative gender norms, maintain the current social order and its gendered power relations.

The thesis argues that the representations of female soldiers in both the military and civil discourses can have insidious implications for the ways their existence and experiences are made sense by others. The updated and progressive discourse deployed by the military in recent years in which gender equality and personal development are emphasized, instead of hyper-masculinity and violence, can obscure the reality and various issues faced by female soldiers. The normative and ideological struggles of their gendered bodies to be integrated into the predominantly masculine space have been extensively studied by scholars, yet such struggles are often effectively concealed by the façade of progressiveness in the military discourse. The representations of female soldiers in *Soldier* after the transitional period the thesis has observed have become almost sterilized, carefully curated and marketed. The complete lack of ambivalence or a sense of discomfort in their representations in the military media draws a stark contrast to the civil discourse. As noted throughout the thesis, it is important to remain critical when engaging with representations, for they are not the reflections of the 'reality', but rather, constructed discourses through which social imaginaries such as gender norms and stereotypes are reproduced and reinforced. While the representations of female soldiers in the military discourse project a glossy image of the profession which obfuscates their actual experiences, the ways in which they are portrayed in the civil discourse, though in a different way, also render their subjectivities, agency, and experiences unintelligible. The thesis has found that the markers of femininity are often attached to the representations of female soldiers in the civil discourse, which highlight their gender and femininity whilst underplaying their professional identities as soldiers. These markers reduce and contain them to a singular and familiar subject position of 'woman' in an effort to mitigate the sense of discomfort induced by their feminine bodies occupying the masculine space. In both military and civil discourses,

the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered unintelligible due to the liminality of their subject positions.

Female soldiers are disruptive figures who pose a threat to the current gendered social order, for their nontraditional bodies in the masculine-coded profession of soldiering necessarily call into question heteronormative and patriarchal gender norms. The markers of femininity are used to foist on female soldiers the familiar subject positions of women and civilians and emphasize that their positions in the military are only temporary. By highlighting their identities as women and civilians and refusing to recognize them simply as 'soldiers', the sense of discomfort is mitigated. Their 'inbetweenness' is also reconciled and the rigidity of the normative boundaries of soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine which were disrupted by the impossible subject position of 'female soldier' is restored. Using these markers is also a defensive and system-justifying response to protect and uphold the agentic and masculine identities of the military. The thesis argues that the sense of discomfort induced by the marked bodies of female soldiers is a defensive and reactive attempt to coax women into *their place*, as women, civilians, and Beautiful Souls. The ambivalent attitudes in society toward female combat soldiers and their 'inbetweenness', it is argued, can help us better grasp why and how they are portrayed fundamentally differently from their male colleagues in the media. Differentiating female soldiers from their male counterparts by highlighting their gender and femininity and keeping women in *their place* (re)legitimizes and reinforces the gendered power relations and the rigid constructs and boundaries of the feminine and the masculine, which are sustained by the gender stereotypes and other gendered social norms. Through sexualizing and emphasizing the femininity of female soldiers, the gender stereotypes and the ideas of 'gender-appropriate' roles are reified. States require the military and soldiers to be aggressive and sacrifice themselves for the collective to survive, and the association between the stereotypical traits of soldiers and masculinity necessitates the military to be paradigmatically masculine.

The thesis thus posits that the notion of Beautiful Souls and Just Warriors is still relevant and embedded in society, in order to legitimize and make sense of the role of the military as well as to maintain the boundaries between soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine.

The thesis has found that the existence and experiences of female soldiers are rendered unintelligible due to discursive inaccuracy in their representations embroidered with the familiar traits of communal, feminine women. The thesis thus argues that it is a case of hermeneutical injustice in which the subject positions of female soldiers are made ambiguous and vulnerable through the fallacious constructs and representations of them and their identities. It is motivated by the sense of discomfort, in which unconscious bias towards women as well as the rigid normative constructs of a woman and a soldier are demonstrated. As illustrated by the notions of Hostile and Benevolent Sexism (HS and BS), the sense of discomfort arises involuntarily, even if one believes in and supports gender equality and women pursuing careers in the military. Our conformity to gender norms, however benign and well-intentioned, can supplement *patriarchal discomfort*. As Fricker explains, prejudices can manifest in our perceptions and behaviors despite our beliefs, and perpetration of hermeneutical injustice is thus not necessarily done intentionally. As long as discursive forces of patriarchy are operating, for instance in the forms of HS and BS, hermeneutical injustice continues to be perpetuated, and the existence and experiences of female soldiers remain unintelligible.

To return to the research question, the thesis maintains that the sense of discomfort felt in society not only explains its ambivalent attitudes toward female soldiers, or gendered bodies in breach of the appropriate gender roles in general (e.g., violent women), but it also allows for a better understanding of why female soldiers are represented in the ways they are, inordinately differently from their male colleagues. The analysis has found that the ways in which female soldiers are represented in the media are characterized by the use of the markers of femininity

to underscore their identities as women and civilians, which is argued to denote the sense of discomfort. The existence and experiences of female soldiers are thus placed precariously in between soldier/civilian and masculine/feminine, rendering their bodies a site where the two contesting norms of traditional heteronormativity and modern gender equality and diversity struggle. Discursive attempts to make sense of their 'inbetweenness' and to mitigate the sense of discomfort are done by delimiting the subject positions of female soldiers and coaxing them into *their place*, the subject of appropriate and respectable femininity. Their subject positions are saturated and contested in between the normative and ideological boundaries of patriotism and patriarchal heteronormativity in which the gendered power relations operate. 'Female soldier' is simply an impossible category under the current normative structure[792] which not only disrupts the boundaries of masculine/feminine but also threatens the fundamental grounds upon which the armed forces of liberal states like Britain are built, where specific understandings and articulations of gender are essential.[793] 'Female soldier' is thus made an oxymoron so long as the constructs of 'woman' and 'soldier' are irreconcilable and engender a sense of discomfort when enacted together.

The thesis contributes to the literature by examining the representations of female soldiers both within and beyond the military, with a particular focus on the sense of discomfort as well as the ambiguous spaces between the oppositional yet co-constitutive domains of military/civilian and masculine/feminine. Its analysis proffers an insight into the ways in which the inherent tension between the constructs of 'woman' and 'soldier', as well as the sense of discomfort induced by the 'inbetweenness' of their subject positions are routinely manifested through the representations of female soldiers in the media. Precariously placed in between

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[792] Millar. "Death does not become her: An examination of the public construction of female American Soldiers as liminal figures." p. 776.
[793] Basham. *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday experiences of the geopolitical in the armed forces.* p. 139.

masculine/feminine and military/civilian, female soldiers are in breach of the traditional gender norms and therefore reduced to familiar narratives of 'woman'. Such a singular and stereotypically feminine discourse, the thesis argues, alleviates the sense of discomfort induced by the boundaries of appropriate femininity being transgressed by female soldiers. We must continue to ask ourselves the question posed by Elshtain nearly a quarter century ago: "do the representations that symbolically define war for us continue to animate and to tap parts of the contemporary self, male and female?"[794] 'Female soldier' is rendered an oxymoron as the social construct of 'woman' is not an appropriate subject of violence, and the representations of female soldiers in the media discourses continue to obscure the discursive structure of gender subordination.

The unique conceptual framework deployed in the thesis may be used effectively in relevant research in social gender norms such as stereotypes and gender roles, appropriate modes of masculinity/femininity, and representations of gendered or queer bodies both inside and outside of the military. Since the changes regarding the inclusion of women have been made relatively recently, the thesis acknowledges that it may still be too early to examine their full effects on how female soldiers are represented in the media. As the analysis of *Soldier* has revealed, the attitudinal and perceptual changes do not happen immediately after the policy changes. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the glossy gender-neutral narrative the military promotes and the realistic experiences and struggles of female soldiers needs to be monitored continuously. It may thus be compelling to conduct similar research in 10 to 20 years' time to compare and analyze any changes in the societal attitudes toward female soldiers as well as in the ways in which they are represented in the media discourse both in the military and society.

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[794] Elshtain. "Women and War: Ten Years On." p. 454.

Incorporating interviews and surveys may also add validity and precision to the research and may be adopted by future studies in the shorter term.

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