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Title: Problematizing Military Masculinity, Intersectionality and Male Vulnerability in Feminist Critical Military Studies

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Abstract:

Recent work on the multiplicity of masculinities within specific military contexts deploys the concept of intersectionality in order to draw attention to the hierarchies present in military organisations or to acknowledge male 'vulnerability' in situations war and conflict. While it is important to examine the breadth and depth of masculinity as an ideology and practice of domination, it is also important for discussions of military masculinity, and intersectionality to be connected with the 'originary' black feminist project from which intersectionality has been born. This may indeed reflect a more nuanced and historically-attuned account of such concepts as intersectionality, but also black and double consciousness, standpoint and situated knowledges (Hill Collins 1986, 1989; Smith 1987; Harding 1986 and Haraway 1988). In particular, what happens when concepts central to feminist theorising and activism, suddenly become of use for studying dominant groups such as male military men? What are our responsibilities in using these concepts in unexpected and perhaps politically questionable ways? This article looks at recent feminist theorising on intersectionality; several examples of the use of intersectionality in relation to masculinity and the military and finally suggests some cautionary ways forward for rethinking militaries, masculinities and feminist theories.

Introduction

In June 2015, I attended a workshop hosted by the University of Newcastle on the subject of military masculinities, organised by a group of feminist scholars interested in drawing connections between Critical Military Studies (CMS) and Feminist International Relations (FIR). The main theme 'masculinities at the margins' was the organising focus and enabled those presenting and participating in the workshop to discuss how, by looking to the margins of war, scholars and civil society organisations might refocus/better understand the role and effects of gender in practices of war. When I arrived at the small workshop, I met a group of familiar faces from a growing Feminist Critical Military Studies (FCMS) community. The air was immediately comfortable and I began to catch up with old friends and colleagues and was introduced to new scholars and activists with an interest in gender and militarisation. As the workshop began, I sat at the back of a long curved room and looked around. What I noticed is that there were very few, bar myself, scholars of colour/black and ethnic minority researchers attending the workshop. While in the context of academia this is not an uncommon demographic, the absence of black women scholars reoccurred as an issue in my mind as a range of gendered topics and issues arose over the two days, including a consistent interest and dwelling on the concept of intersectionality. The geopolitical scope of the workshop was somewhat broad, and scholars travelled from, and presented on a range of work in progress dealing with the contexts of Northern Ireland to Rwanda and the Middle East. While none of the presenters was centrally concerned with 'race' in their research, critical issues

concerning ethnicity and 'race' were raised in a more indirect way. For example, the concept of intersectionality emerged in two significant ways in a variety of discussions: first as a sensitising prompt for thinking about multiple forms of difference in the study of gendered identities within the military; and second in order to understand the unequal and vulnerable position of 'marginal' militarised men within certain militarised settings. However, what was also particularly interesting was that intersectionality was used to present material on men as subjects of research and analyses. Despite this attention to the nuances of identity and power relations within military subcultures, there was not a specific focus on understanding the position of black and minority women in national militaries (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). However, this is not just a feature of this particular workshop. Instead, this is seen throughout the literature on gender and international relations which takes up intersectionality as a concept (Wibben 2016; Ackerly and True 2008); as well as the empirical case studies on black women's experiences of the military--- which are few and far between. As such, 'intersectionality without black women' or what Carbado refers to as 'colorblind intersectionality' became a central feature and point of discussion within the workshop (Carbado 2013).

This experience has led me to critically assess the use of intersectionality within FCMS and other fields of study more generally. I argue for a cautionary approach to using intersectionality in studies of international relations and militarised men that does not *also* include a focus on poor black women. In particular, I (re)politicise intersectionality for FCMS, drawing attention to the problems raised by utilising theories of oppression in sites of privileged empirical research and epistemic power. After the workshop, I grew

concerned that there was an emerging and problematic appropriation of the concept of intersectionality in FCMS and that this was contributing to a space in which *privilege is covered over*, rather than *revealed* and *challenged*. The very fact of such a limited presence of black feminist scholars at the workshop suggests that perhaps the concept of intersectionality has become detached from identity politics and those racialised subjects for whom it was written. Additionally, the use of intersectionality to discuss gendered experiences within a globally hegemonic, male-dominated, androcentric and misogynist military; an increasing focus on differences amongst and between men rather than on male privilege and power; and finally to theorise masculinity and men's experiences in conflict zones as quintessentially or even, essentially 'vulnerable', made me realise that some interrogation of the uses (and abuses) of intersectionality within the field of Feminist Critical Military Studies needed to be developed and shared with a wider academic community.

The article is organised as follows: first, I outline some key themes and issues raised in theorising intersectionality more generally. Following on from this, I introduce at least two ways in which the concept of military masculinity might be understood and link this to the idea of multiple differences (influenced by a sensitivity to intersectionality). I then identify some of the problems of using intersectionality in 'privileged' military contexts and contrast this with some empirical examples from recent research to demonstrate why it is important to use intersectionality with caution. I argue, through examining non-traditional militarised contexts such as peacekeeping, that while intersectionality can sensitise us to 'differences', it cannot be a proxy for

challenging the hegemonic position of militarised men vis-à-vis women in a variety of social contexts.

Introducing Intersectionality: What Relevance for Feminist Critical Military Studies?

Intersectionality is a concept, theory, and lens developed in large part by black feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw over twenty-five years ago (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). In particular, Crenshaw developed her ideas on the unique experiences of poor and working-class black women in the US context, through the influence of feminist standpoint theory, black feminist thought and critical race studies. Crenshaw highlighted in her seminal 1989 piece 'Demarginalising the Intersection of Race and Sex', the ways in which multiple axes of difference can intersect for some individuals (poor black women in particular), thereby compounding experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and importantly, oppression (Crenshaw 1989). Crenshaw's original articulation focussed specifically on poor black women, but was never prescriptive or territorial. That is, Crenshaw did not prescribe that intersectionality as a concept needed to be used in any particular way, or that it could *only* be applied to poor black women in the US. Rather, Crenshaw's theorisation stemmed from her own social position as a black woman in the US, and was influenced by the work of other black feminists who theorised: black women's everyday life and unique standpoint (Lorde 1984; hooks 1984; Collins 2000); women of colour on the margins and borders (Anzaldúa 1987; Anzaldúa and Moraga 1983; Lugones and Spelman 1993); and later by those taking up intersectionality in a more transnational manner (Brah and Phoenix

2004; Alexander and Mohanty 1997; Grewal and Kaplan 1994; Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992).

Since Crenshaw debuted intersectionality in 1989/1991, there have been a number of critically important responses and attempts to expand her theorisation. Some notable developments include intersectionality not only as a field of study but as an analytical strategy or sensitivity (Cho *et al.*, 2013); as a buzzword that should be used with caution (Davis 2008); a methodology (McCall 2005) and a research paradigm (Hancock 2007). The expansion of the field of intersectionality has seen its way into Feminist International Relations in particular with the publication of Ackerly, Stern and True's 2006 book *Feminist Methodologies for International Relations* and Wibben's recent edited collection *Researching War: Feminist Methods, Ethics and Politics* (2016). In this sense, intersectionality is fast becoming a centrally important concept to be used within a range of feminist scholarship, and thus it is not surprising to see it emerging in the burgeoning field of Critical Military Studies or Feminist Critical Military Studies.

Despite the growing visibility of intersectionality in gender and IR, the concept has remained surprisingly absent in studies of military personnel and in military sociology which is so oft concerned with stratification, hierarchies and order within military organisations. Work paying attention to women and ethnic minority integration into regular forces has grown in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Israel---however this literature does not engage directly with feminist theories of intersectionality at all. In related fields of feminist peace research, feminist scholars such as Cynthia Cockburn have had a greater interest in, and return to, feminist and

gender theories such as standpoint (Cockburn 2010); experience (Kronsell and Svedberg 2012; Sylvester 2013); intersectionality (Ackerly and True 2008) and masculinity (Zarkov 2011; Duncanson 2015). This body of work suggests that feminist and gender theories can move across and between disciplines and fields of study and help to *continually challenge power relations* at work within militarised and male-dominated contexts and processes.

Importantly, little of the intersectional 'turn' in FIR and now FCMS has paid attention to contemporary critiques and cautionary tales in intersectionality as a field of study itself as my reflections of the workshop highlights and which is demonstrated in the absence of the term in early feminist IR work. However, two recent trends in responding to the expansion of academic scholarship on intersectionality are worth discussing in more detail here. The first main criticism is the invisibility or erasure of black women in intersectionality research (Jordan-Zachery 2013). This is where intersectionality is invoked to understand women's multiple oppressions, but black women are directly or indirectly re-marginalised in these accounts. That is, black women never feature as the central category or group of women under study. The second critique is that referred to as 'feminist originalism' where a tendency to possess intersectionality and dictate where and when it should be deployed within feminist research is seen to be a backlash against the more frequent application of intersectionality (Falcón and Nash 2015; Nash 2016). Several scholars writing on intersectionality have suggested that the concept is increasingly used in contexts where the history of the concept is unacknowledged, black women scholars or intersectionality theorists are not

acknowledged or cited and/or where black women are eclipsed within the research and analysis. What good is intersectionality then, if it is used in such an exclusive manner? This is a point I take up later in the article in relation to how we might understand the limits of intersectionality and the ethical and political consequences of using intersectionality in FIR and FCMS.

In what ways should intersectionality be used? Is it acceptable, for example, for intersectionality to be utilised where its political and historical roots have not been appropriately acknowledged? I argue, that it is disingenuous and highly problematic to use intersectionality merely as a way of capturing multiple differences and their effects on individuals. Intersectionality is centrally about *intersecting oppressions* or systems of oppression (Crenshaw 1989; 1991). It is already plural and it is interested in the points of intersection, not just the additive or cumulative effects of adding together differences.

In contrast, feminist scholars such as Nash have argued that an *origin narrative* of intersectionality has emerged, where the concept becomes territorialised in such a way that it is seen to belong only to certain 'authentic' spaces and disciplines. Some scholars suggest that intersectionality should not be exported beyond its original setting---and it is this that Nash takes issue with (Nash 2016). This would mean that intersectionality would always need to be tied to the study of poor black women and this was never Crenshaw's explicit wish. Nash's evaluation of responses to intersectionality suggest that the concept itself is not benign. Rather, there is a politics to the use of intersectionality itself. In this way intersectionality is more than a

'buzz-word' as Davis argues, it is a whole field of theory and politics (Davis 2008). This does not mean that intersectionality can only be used to study a very limited range of individuals, rather what it suggests is that when 'radical' or revolutionary theories of emancipation (from patriarchy, capitalism and racism) become detached from those marginalised within these very structures of power, they may end up serving the interests of the ruling class.

In this section I have briefly outlined the central meaning and use of intersectionality, suggested its adoption into relevant fields such as FIR, and some of the ways in which intersectionality has been further theorised and challenged by a range of scholars. In the remaining sections I intend to return to these issues and debates in regard to militarised contexts more generally.

From Military Masculinity to Militarised Masculinities

The purpose of the section is to better understand how scholars use military masculinity. While the concept has been pluralised and used critically across a range of work within IR, political and military sociology, anthropology, geography, organisational studies, gender studies, and critical military studies, it has taken varied forms in the transnational and global research on gender and militarisation over the years (Enloe 2006; Titinuk 2008; Higate 2003; Dietrich 2012; Belkin 2012). While it has helped scholars to explain gendered practices within a range of militarised contexts, currently it is predominantly used to explain *contradictory* practices. The most recent conceptualisation focuses on the ways in which military masculinities are formed based on challenging and colluding gender norms and expectations.

In fact the workshop attempted to engage with the complex range of masculinities present inside the margins of the military as an institution and subcultural field. Recent work on military masculinities includes research on conscientious objection and fraternal bonding to acts of torture and ranges to include vigilantism---demonstrating that military masculinity is pliable, plural, and practiced in contingent and contradictory ways in many empirical contexts. Despite its temporal and spatial flexibility, military masculinity is now ubiquitous in academic scholarship and I discuss three issues with military masculinity as a starting point for further discussions about intersectionality.

First, two key works have influenced the development of the concept of militarised masculinity and masculinities, and I acknowledge the specific contribution of two scholars. First Enloe has encouraged scholars to pay attention to the process of militarisation rather than focus narrowly on the ideology of militarism in her ground-breaking work on gender and international relations (Enloe 1991). In this work, Enloe develops further her concept of military masculinity when thinking about the ways in which military institutions are sites of the production of both culture and gender. Here she suggests that gender roles are given opportunity and space to play out, as well as to produce extremes---hyper military masculinity being one example. She also points to the ways in which certain forms of martiality (exclusively associated with men) is hyper-valued within most societies and how this contributes to the glorification of men's participation in violence and war. In thinking about military masculinity, it is not surprising then that feminist scholars such as Enloe, began to think about the *process* of

socialising that takes place in militarised settings (Enloe 1983, 2000). Thus the social, constructed, contingent, fluid and multiple ways in which individuals are produced as gendered subjects, given a prescribed set of gendered roles, and how those individuals identify themselves, and perform gender within military institutions and settings has been afforded critical attention (Enloe 2000, Whitworth 2004, Higate 2003; Parpart 2015; Zalewski and Parpart 1998; Belkin 2012).

Early conceptualisations of military masculinity focussed almost exclusively on formal military settings---that is on national and state militaries. In general, military masculinity tends to be utilised in a range of feminist scholarship as a 'thing' that is carried, possessed or produced as an object through military socialisation and found within military culture (except Enloe 2003). As such, it was seen, in the early inception, as a singular form of gendered practice---following on from Connell's early conceptualisations of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, 1995, 2005). Of course the ways in which military masculinity has evolved as a conceptual lens and a site for empirical research means that there is no single definition, nor is it confined to feminist theorists alone. Military institutions now consistently analyse their own gendered and racialised cultures---although very often this is for improving efficiency and effectiveness in military operations. Further theorisations include that of Dudink, Hagemann and Tosh (2004) Parpart and Zalewski (2008) Belkin (2012), Whitworth (2004); Masters (2005); and Duncanson (2009, 2013, 2015). However, it was Paul Higate's edited collection (2003) that took up the challenge of further theorising military masculinity. In particular the work engages with Connell and other

masculinity scholars and succeeded in pluralising militarised masculinity. This work expanded the concept in such a way that scholars no longer talked about masculinity within military settings as something culturally specific, socially entrenched, pathological, or always already there in the same form--- rather Higate's collection emphasises at how men [sic] become 'manly' warriors through twin processes of gender and military socialisation (ed. Higate 2003). The 2003 collection suggests that it is difficult to simply place the military and masculinity (in an additive way) together---rather both are mutually constituting. At times, in analyses it is difficult to pinpoint which is more influential--- military culture or gender culture! Importantly, Higate's collection began to pave the way for thinking about militarised masculinities in non-traditional contexts. Thus, work on masculinity amongst rebel groups, militias, gangs, thugs, terrorists and jihadis began to be developed within this sub-field (Amar 2013; Rommell 2016). This challenged the idea that military values only belonged to fields where there was a formal military setting. More contemporary work is concerned with the drone operator, the military lawyer, the conscious objector and so on (Tidy 2015, 2015a).

These two tracks of argument have been absolutely crucial to the conceptualisation and use of the term militarised masculinity/masculinities. This is because militarised masculinities mean that the fluid nature of militarisation and masculine socialisation in these frames allows scholars to focus on masculinities in practice and discourse. Rather than using militarised masculinity as an explanation for various negative developments within military settings, scholars are encouraged to probe deeper into what militarised masculinities look like and how they come into being. For example,

in Stern and Ericsson-Baaz's study of perpetrators of sexual violence, they focus on the discourses of perpetrators of sexual violence in the DRC construct as to their different motivations for such acts of brutality (Ericsson-Baaz and Stern 2012). In their research, they pay attention to the narrative strategies used by men to construct and produce themselves as fearsome and honourable military men despite admitting to being part of the perpetration of violence. Similarly, Lomsky-Feder and Rappoport in their work on models of masculinity in the Israeli context demonstrate the influence of nation on men's different constructions of masculinity (Lomsky-Feder and Rappoport 2003). Lomsky-Feder and Rappoport view masculinities as being produced hierarchically in one military context, and as being influenced by very different military experiences (Russia and Israel). Both of these scholars' use of militarised masculinity provide us with a more complex account of what motivates men to commit violence (organised or otherwise) in certain contexts, rather than assuming that it is merely an unintended consequence or unintentional by product of male embodiment or male sex roles and military culture.

Thus the work of Cynthia Enloe in challenging understandings of militarisation, and Higate's edited collection on militarised masculinities was a catalyst for rethinking military masculinities and masculinities in conflict (Kirby and Henry 2012). This in turn led to the development of work examining a range of masculinities within militarised (and not only military) settings—in particular Belkin's work *Bring Me Men*, was seminal in challenging the idea that military masculinity is a singular and homogenous outcome of military socialisation and/or military culture and that it is always

constructed in opposition to femininity and/or heteronormativity. Titinuk's challenge to narrow definitions of military masculinity (2012) went some way to challenge any tendency towards simplistic or pathological definitions by demonstrating that military organisations also revere various personal characteristics traditionally associated with femininity such as sacrifice, compassion and cooperation. Thus militarised masculinities are not constructed purely on the disavowal of all that is feminine or associated with women.

This led to two further developments. The first was a minor interest in female military masculinities (Tasker 2011). Tasker used the portrayal of female soldiers in Hollywood films to reconceptualise military masculinity without the male body---influenced by Halberstam's work on female masculinities more generally (Halberstam 1998). Tasker takes Halberstam's conceptualisation of non-normative gender and sexuality is applied to female soldiers who are depicted as occupying a parodic, mimicking or inauthentic military masculinity. In the films *Courage Under Fire* and *GI Jane*, Tasker finds evidence of military masculine space where women are able to perform gender in both conventional and unconventional ways. Actress Demi Moore, for example, labours to shed her 'femininity' by shaving her head and wearing an undershirt traditionally seen as men's attire, in order to be accepted as a legitimate soldier. Moore's character is finally accepted as a legitimate man amongst her male military peers, after she demonstrates her ability to be 'just like the men' in her squad. This work contests the scope of military masculinities by insisting not only on their plurality, but by questioning the

very constitution and production of masculinity as a social expression of gender.

The other development is found in work examining both military femininity (Ombati 2015) and masculinity, as Dietrich does in her 2012 piece on militarisation in Peru, El Salvador and Colombia. This work, along with that of scholars such Myrntinen (2013); Parpart (2016); Maringira (2015) and Stachowitsch (2015) begins to pay attention to internal differences and inequalities amongst men. What these more recent works suggest is that the study of militarised masculinities has expanded considerably and draws on a range of concepts and theories. This is why it is unsurprising that intersectionality has appeared in the literature. Masculinity scholars have looked towards feminist theory for some time now, and in order to understand the complex theoretical terrain of military and militarised masculinities, scholars have turned to 'classic' texts, including that by Crenshaw and other intersectional theorists. As such, it is not surprising that the intersectional 'turn' should now make headway within the study of men, masculinities and the military.

Critique of Recent Scholarship Employing Intersectionality in 'Privileged' Military Contexts

The aforementioned scholarship on diversity and differences in military and militarised settings draws on the concept of diversity in somewhat problematic ways. Intersectionality has not generally been theorised as a 'technology' (as has been previously outlined)---but in the scholarship

empirically located in privileged sites or on axes of identity that are assumed to be privileged (i.e. masculinity), I argue that intersectionality figures in a partial and politically incomplete way. Thus, what happens to intersectionality when it is used in militarised empirical spaces? And subsequently, what happens when intersectionality is discussed in a workshop where black women are mostly absent? What are the ethical and feminist commitments that circulate in these epistemic places? I suggest that when introducing a concept such as intersectionality to the privileged (epistemic and empirical) field of military studies, it is important to reflect on the politics and origins of intersectionality theory in the first instance and that this can go some way in maintaining or repoliticising the use of such radical concepts. In the following section, I show how intersectionality has been introduced to complicate the theorisation and understanding of militarised masculinities such as in the empirical context of Israel and in conflict zones and I raise some issues with what this means for a collective analysis of male domination and the power of men in militaries more generally.

If intersectionality can be introduced to sensitise researchers to pay attention to differences and identities as multiple and interconnected, then research interested in examining men's and women's experiences of militarisation and the military might be an ideal site. Recent research in military sociology and conflict studies has done just that (Sasson-Levy 2011; Lomsky-Feder and Sasson-Levy 2015; Myrtilinen *et al.*, 2016). While this is a welcome development in many respects, the subfield of militarised masculinities/masculinities in conflict has already undergone considerable contestation in recent times (Kirby and Henry 2012). Kirby and Henry

(2012), argue that rethinking masculinity must include an account of masculinity that does not relegate men's violence to pathological or essentialist explanations. But this recent work does not take up intersectionality centrally even though it is concerned to challenge simplistic readings of men's practices in conflict and postconflict settings. Several recent pieces of work (partially discussed at the workshop) take up intersectionality in an attempt to problematise gendered, homogenising tendencies in the work on militarised masculinities. However, this work does not sufficiently acknowledge the history of intersectionality nor does it provide a structural analysis of inequalities---something of which is central to Crenshaw's original conceptual work. In this way, then the take up of intersectionality remains partial and incomplete.

During the Newcastle workshop, Sasson-Levy presented a paper in which she invokes intersectionality and explains how studies of militarised masculinities in the Israeli context have used feminist-inspired theories of difference in order to better understand the differential position and experiences of male military personnel. This presentation was based on previously published work which outlines an intersectional approach. What is original is that Sasson-Levy contributes to the introduction (and intervention) of intersectionality into studies of militaries and as such enables a certain type of analysis which accounts for the multiple positions that military men and women occupy in the specific Israeli context. As Sasson-Levy writes:

'The scholarship on militarized masculinities thus combines intersectionality theory, by examining different groups of men

(immigrants, Mizrachim, Ashkenazim, homosexuals), with the inequality regime approach, which looks at various military locations (blue-collar, white-collar, combat). By deconstructing the monolithic conception of militarized masculinity, this research enables us to explore how the military relies on distinct constructions of military masculinity and their interdependence.’ (Sasson-Levy 2011: 85)

Sasson-Levy focuses on the structuring effects of multiple differences, with an emphasis on gender and class which she argues dictate the limits and opportunities of soldiers within a militarised society and organisation. In a stratified social context such as Israel, it is not surprising that scholars have turned to concepts such as intersectionality (and inequality), in order to understand the ways in which differences *matter*. While Sasson-Levy’s work acknowledges the roots of intersectionality in black women’s lives, and challenges patriarchy and the class system in the Israeli military context, it does not dwell on the idea of ‘intersecting oppressions’, nor does it engage substantially with the category of ‘race’. In this context, the radical potential of intersectionality to challenge power relations and to make visible the multiple forms of oppression that some individuals experience is side-lined. And while the research is focussed on social differences inside the Israeli military, the use of intersectionality could have been used to focus on the ways in which the specific actions of militarised individuals and the institution contribute to a compounding of oppressions by those subject to the power of the Israeli military in relation to those targetted and racialised as other such as the Palestinians.

A second presentation, also focusing on the Israeli military context relied upon intersectionality in order to understand the experiences of professional and personal marginalisation faced by soldiers of minority ethnic origin. Kachtan's presentation, based on previously published research reflected many of the social divisions present in Israeli society with soldiers being distributed into prestigious and powerful positions inside the military organisation according to their ethnicity (Kachtan 2015). This practice, it was presented, emanates from competing forms of hegemonic masculinity where processes of ethnicisation contribute to hierarchal gender relations (masculinities). Kachtan argues that intersectionality has not been used to study differences amongst men in relation to class and ethnicity (2015). Kachtan's detailed analysis of the ways in which masculinities are distributed in the gender order challenges the idea of a monolithic military masculinity. The work also draws attention to the intersecting identities that feature within the Israeli military and that give rise to processes of ethnicisation, discrimination and preferential treatment of certain men and although not specifically focussed upon, racialisation. Yet, Kachtan's account of marginal military masculinities seems narrow in scope. Kachtan concentrates on two main axes of identity: gender and ethnicity. Although class is somewhat invoked (at least in the conclusions) it is also sometimes conflated with ethnicity. What is not explored in more detail is whether these intersecting differences matter outside of the military institutions, and whether they form the basis for oppression in society more generally. Furthermore, Kachtan could link how masculinities relate to femininities within the gender order--- after all fratriarchal relations are relevant to how male domination over

women is maintained in patriarchal cultures (this is taken up in more depth by Sasson-Levy 2011).

While the attention to multiple or intersectional differences seems to be an important development in studies of Israeli society, it is curious how little of the scholarship provides a rationale for why intersectionality is the most appropriate conceptual frame for understanding military men's experiences (of marginality or privilege). Why should the concept of intersectionality (and therefore intersecting oppressions) be used to study marginality within such a powerful and exclusive institution as the military? In both presentations and the previous or subsequent published work there is only the briefest of connections made to black feminist thought and to some of the history and context of intersectionality. Despite intersectionality sensitising the researchers to differences within gender groups and experiences of marginality, the invisibilisation of poor, 'racialised' women inside and outside of the military is not attended to in any depth. What of the Palestinian gendered subjects who remain eclipsed? Thus, how is it that Israeli female soldiers or Israeli 'ethnic' soldiers are only acknowledged to be positioned on the 'margins' within their militaries, but not at the centre, or in privileged ways in relation to 'other' women civilians?

These presentations and articles are reflective of the broader trend in how intersectionality is used. In a recent article Feder-Lomsky and Sasson-Levy invoke the concept of intersectionality (2015). In this piece, there are no explicit references to the work of US Black feminists or to Crenshaw herself. This omission is not particularly surprising as it might be that

intersectionality has become so ubiquitous and mainstreamed in academic research that it has begun to take on a quotidian feel. Has intersectionality come so far that it has left its black mothers behind? Has it been successfully co-opted into FCMS that there is no longer a requirement to remember and acknowledge its own political heritage? I suggest that recent work on intersectionality could do so much more and that future work should see a return to the origins of the concept not as a disciplinary requirement, but as a way of moving across epistemic time and space in order to engage in a transversal politics (Yuval-Davis 1997). It could, for example, make visible the hierarchical ways in which gender is manifest in a militarised society and to acknowledge the history of the concept of intersectionality without giving up the possibility to use intersectionality in politically challenging ways.

Interestingly, a similar trend is noticeable in some work on men and vulnerability in conflict affected regions (Myrttinen *et al.*, this volume). This work uses intersectionality rather instrumentally and more as a sensitising concept in the context of the highly politicised practical space of the humanitarian or conflict space. It draws attention, once again, to the idea that militarised masculinities are not created equally, and that many men experience marginalisation and a loss of power in the face of hegemonic forms of power. In another presentation, this time interested in militarised masculinities in conflict contexts, intersectionality is invoked in order to better understand men's (this time contradictory) experiences of war (Myrttinen *et al.*, this volume). In this emerging field of masculinity studies is an interest in men, masculinity and vulnerability in conflict contexts. Myrttinen *et al.*, highlight the ways in which men in militarised contexts may

be made marginal and even vulnerable in times of war, where masculinities are suddenly redesigned.

Drawing on the concept of 'thwarted' masculinities, Myrttinen *et al.*, argue that the pressure for men to conform and perform to hegemonic ideals of masculinity can be a source of frustration for men living in warzones (this volume). Men may be subject to militarisation and martial values in the wake of not being able to exercise hegemonic power and agency and not being able to attain the 'dividends' that male power promises (Connell 1995). However, it is not only thwarted masculinities that illustrate the marginal experiences of some men, but also the 'vulnerabilities' that men experience as a result of societal expectations. Myrttinen *et al.*, use the example of taxi drivers in Sierra Leone and Liberia, who are often assumed to be ex-combatants and therefore treated as militarised men---that is men who deserve to be doled out forms of violent 'revenge' (Myrttinen *et al.*, 2016: 8). These men, they reveal, are often marginalised because of their current and poor economic positioning. Without significant economic power, ex-combatants and poor men in conflict zones can be at risk of violence and social marginalisation. Furthermore, challenging the idea that women are only vulnerable and men only perpetrators/predators, the article focusses on the ways in which gender relations subject some men to a stigmatised or compromised social position. Another example they draw upon is that of male victims of sexual violence (Myrttinen *et al.*, this volume: 10). Here they suggest that along with thwarted masculinity, and vulnerable and stigmatised positionalities, men in conflict settings do not uniformly benefit from patriarchal structures and the gender order. Victims of sexual violence are often invisible, or fear the

repercussions for social perceptions of their maleness. And as such, Myrntinen *et al.*'s work challenges the idea of military masculinities as resulting in wholesale power, especially when examining the ways in which men face the risk of violence unevenly within conflict and postconflict societies.

When seeking to look at the margins of military masculinities, it is not surprising that scholars seek out concepts and theories which provide a complex picture and which permit making linkages and seeing points of intersection and even compoundment. In this section I have argued that while intersectionality can sensitise researchers to the complexity of militarised masculinities and the marginal position of some men, especially in conflict zones, it does not go far enough in challenging patriarchal power relations that persist. This is because masculinity is not only constructed in relation to other masculinities. And consequently, militarised masculinities are not constructed only in relation to one another. A more theoretical and politically 'authentic' account of masculinity must return in some way to the system in which militarised masculinities function---that of the gender order or regime (Connell 1995). If the main aim of the gender order or patriarchy is domination of women, then a logical extension of these analyses should be to question in what ways these new conceptualisations and empirical investigations into multiplicity challenge existing gender relations. How is the hegemony of men, in the end, contested (Hearn 2004)?

Intersectional Sensitivities in FCMS: Learning from Global South Peacekeepers

Perhaps the process of sensitisation to intersectionality (and its traditional and non-traditional uses) stems also from my own positionality as a black woman doing work on female militarised personnel (REFS). Similarly, in recent research on the everyday lives and identities of militarised peacekeepers, I have previously argued that peacekeepers are not all positioned equally within the peacekeeping economy (X 2015). In particular, in a study of peacekeepers in the UN peacekeeping operation in Liberia (UNMIL) in 2012-2013, X found that there are considerable differences between and amongst male peacekeepers, for example from West Africa and between and amongst female peacekeepers, as in the case of those from India (X 2012).

In this research, male peacekeepers from the Global South are often particularly conscious about their image and reputation within the peacekeeping space. When visiting the Nigerian Battalion stationed outside of Monrovia, I was told repeatedly by the Commander that 'his men were not involved in sexual exploitation and abuse' and that this was a result of 'strict disciplinary regimes' instituted by the leaders and 'top brass'. This statement was repeated (at least three times) throughout the interview, despite the fact that I had made clear that the objective was to research the everyday experiences of peacekeepers and their 'positive' contributions to the local communities. Nigerian peacekeepers portrayed themselves as hard-working and upstanding men, who prided themselves on a professional and disciplined working environment. By not interacting with local people other than under very regulated conditions, Nigerian peacekeepers refashioned themselves

under a more disciplined and ‘clean’ masculinity. Their accounts were continually and implicitly comparative. The Commander recounted how ‘his men’ were highly trained and professional, and he facilitated a further set of observations and interviews with a group of Nigerian peacekeepers giving Physics lessons in a local high school in Monrovia. A central concern to Nigerian male (and female) peacekeepers was to improve their reputation amongst locals and internationals, as they believed their conduct and image from previous missions (ECOMOG) was less than commendable (see also Higate and Henry 2009). Similarly, male military peacekeepers from Ghana shared with me their own versions of their distinctive masculine identities which they felt were in significant contrast to those of local Liberian men. They repeatedly told me that they believed they had a very different ‘African’ culture to Liberians and as such, saw themselves as ideal peacekeepers who were able to transfer ‘positive’ messages and ideas to local communities. One of the reasons for their insistence on distinctiveness from Liberians was that they too had an investment in presenting themselves **not** as marginalised subjects of the Global South—but as peacekeepers from an elevated and experienced position. Their accounts emphasised differences in many ways, but they actively worked to position themselves **not** at the geopolitical margins as they might casually be placed by peacekeepers from the Global North, or the UN community more generally, but at the centre. Their position as ‘marginal’ men was continuously disavowed, and as such this research finding suggests that not all those who might be positioned in intersectionally different ways are without power, or without a desire to be seen as powerful. What I am arguing here is that there is a complex relationship between identity, positionality and power and this is especially brought out in studies

of marginal military men. Intersectionality as a concept can sensitise to the fact that not all 'margins' are positioned similarly in the gender order nor are all men positioned equally in the global order. And the axes of difference that contribute to oppression may individually provide an opportunity for the exercise of hegemonic power. In this way, using intersectionality to help in the analysis of women's and men's marginalisation or vulnerability in a given context, does not always provide a full picture of the nature of power more broadly speaking.

A similar pattern can be found when thinking about female peacekeepers from the Global South. In the same research study (as above), female peacekeepers from the Philippines, Ghana, Nepal and India articulated their own elevated class position vis-à-vis local women by asserting their distinct culture. Indian women peacekeepers for example, found local women to be sexually 'promiscuous' because of their non-gender segregated cultural practices (see also Henry 2012). These female peacekeepers did not see themselves as oppressed along multiple axes of difference. Instead these women demonstrated consistently how their privilege and positions of power in their home societies enabled them to be deployed in the first place. For example, all four national groups shared that their presence was made possible by the easily and cheaply available labour of 'poor' women. The global division of labour provided an opportunity for these marginalised and militarised peacekeepers to maintain various forms of power, privilege and dividends. That is, they were able to leave their families and children at home because of the availability of poor female labourers who provide domestic and social reproductive labour while they work abroad. Here, deploying an

intersectional lens would better be used to highlight the maintenance of class and/or caste benefits, rather than to stress the relative weight of multiple differences. In fact, the idea of interlocking privileges might be particularly apt.

A final example comes from the ways in which Indian female peacekeepers adopted a form of female militarised masculinity. While this form of masculinity demonstrated their difference from traditional hegemonic forms, it enabled women to maintain themselves in positions of relative power within their national contexts. Indian women peacekeepers were highly skilled and trained in martial arts and advanced weapons training (see also Henry 2012, 2015; Pruitt 2016). They adopted *excessive* martial military identities and garnered significant salaries as a result (at least in comparison to those opting for national duty only). In doing so, these women attempted to position themselves in hegemonic ways in relation to local women, and to challenge forms of hegemonic masculinity within their national militaries. The intersections of difference for them did not result in compounding oppressions but rather they actively benefitted from the different forms of capital that they amassed through their own privileged backgrounds (see also Henry 2015).

An intersectional sensitivity to the unequal positioning of peacekeepers from the Global South in peacekeeping economies provides an opportunity to acknowledge the structural inequalities that feature in global and militarised peacekeeping. Clearly, not all peacekeepers are created equally (see Higate and Henry 2009; Henry 2012, 2015). I have argued that while

intersectionality can sensitise us to differences amongst male and female military personnel, it does not provide scholars with sufficient tools to challenge the hegemonic position of men (or some women) in a variety of national military contexts. Instead, scholars need to pay attention to the flip side of the intersectional coin, that of privileges, benefits and power gains maintained and crystallized either through the power of the military or patriarchal institution.

Conclusion: Where are the Women?¹

In very recent work, Crenshaw takes up intersectional ‘challenges’ and critiques a tendency within Critical Race Theory (CRT) to use intersectionality in order to illustrate the problematic focus on *male* victims of racialised violence as is evident in social media campaigns such as *Black Lives Matter* and slogans such as ‘I Can’t Breathe’ used in a variety of activist contexts. Crenshaw has taken up new research to return to poor black women who are also victims of police/state violence in the US through the campaign ‘Say Her Name’---which uses intersectionality to examine women’s invisibility in larger ‘post-post racial’ narratives (Crenshaw *et al.*, 2015). This work has led me to think carefully about how we deploy radical concepts like intersectionality within a field of study that itself perpetuates racial hierarchies (by the employment of black and ethnic minority scholars in IR/CMS/FCMS), and in the ongoing whiteness of syllabi concerned with gender issues in militarised contexts.

¹ See Enloe, C. (1989). *Bananas, beaches and bases* (p. 44). London: Pandora Press.

Intersectionality is not wisely used when it is only deployed to examine difference. Instead, intersectionality can help the study of military masculinity and militarised masculinities by reminding us of what is lost when we study gender and masculinities without women and without feminist inspiration. As Enloe famously asked so long ago, where are the women? I would add, where are the poor black women in the military? We know many black women are employed within the US military in much larger numbers than is generally represented in the literature analysing intersectionality and the military. If my own experiences of being marginalised, my particular standpoint, can enable me to see a variety of oppressions, silences and absences in the literature and in the practice of academia---then perhaps the next step is for scholars to take seriously intersectional research. What is desperately needed in Feminist Critical Military Studies, is a return to thinking not only about differences, but about the differences that result in multiple and intersecting oppressions for those who are already marginalised by 'race', class and gender. And for the meantime, that is not, military men.

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