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**RETELLING THE STORY OF HUA MU-LAN: MILITARY
EXPERIENCES OF UNIFORMED WOMEN FROM ONE
TAIWANESE SERVICE ACADEMY**

A Thesis in

Curriculum and Instruction

by

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ABSTRACT

This project, a qualitative inquiry founded on feminist research practices, was initiated by the enigma that emerged from observations of why cadet women's outstanding performance on an average at a Taiwanese service academy did not usually lead them to successful upward mobility in rank and a longer stay upon entering the Taiwanese armed forces. Thirteen Taiwanese servicewomen from the service academy, 7 alumnae and 6 cadets, voluntarily participated in the study. Of significance are their lived military experiences as narrated in approximately 2-hour open-ended interviews that took place between December 2004 and January 2005, as well as in informal conversations that began more than a year ago.

These women's narratives reflect the gendered inequalities in the Taiwanese armed forces and require our scrutiny. For example, military policies carefully plan the utilization of women's labor force in order not to violate the fundamentally masculine characteristic of warfare. Accordingly, this sex-based exclusion is at play through discursive practices, and so despite their capabilities servicewomen are assumed to be weak, assigned to combat support roles, and rarely granted the position of commander. These situations combine to deny women's advancement and promotion within the military, given that the commander position is not only a push toward promotion but necessary to achieve status in the higher ranks. Furthermore, the gender quota system in the Taiwanese military has continuously kept the number of servicewomen under 5%. As a result, the small numbers of servicewomen are more likely to be perceived as tokens in the armed forces.

The study reveals that the 13 Taiwanese servicewomen at times demonstrated some of the allegedly masculine characteristics required of a soldier, such as perseverance, intelligence, determination, authority, and rationality, and demonstrated feminine qualities on others. This highlights the complexity and fluidity of women's subjectivity in gender performance, and suggests that the military profession has less to do with notions of maleness and femaleness. Moreover, as the Taiwanese government seriously considers national long-term development and idealism of democracy and equality, it should employ service members based on their competence and not on sexual biological differences.

Key words: Taiwanese servicewomen, Confucianism, nationalism, subjective experiences, subject positions, the gendered division of labor, gender performance.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

In 1998, the Walt Disney Company produced a feature-length animation entitled, “Mu-Lan,” a summer blockbuster that was based on an ancient Chinese ballad dating to the fifth century A.D. It is the story of a legendary woman warrior who disguises herself as a man to serve in the Chinese imperial army in place of her father. While the legend of this mythic heroine has become popular in the West since the recent release of the Disney movie, the tale of Hua Mu-Lan has been long passed down by the Chinese through the generations. Not only has the narrative of Hua Mu-Lan fired the imaginations of many young Chinese men and women, but it also has inspired many Chinese women to challenge traditional gender roles and attempt to disrupt the notion that martial participation is only reserved for men.

Women cadets on the campus of Green Valley College, a service academy in Taiwan, have appropriated the name of the woman warrior described in the story, calling themselves “Hua Mu-Lan.” They have done so not to replace a conscripted father, but to emphasize their choice of a nontraditional career and their equal capability of participating in the armed forces. They do not disguise themselves as men or actually participate in military conflicts; however, these female cadets demonstrated gallantry and wisdom in their daily lives when I, as a civilian faculty member at Green Valley College from 1995 to 2002, had the opportunity to closely observe and interact with them.

Purpose of the Study

In dialogues with alumnae who had served on active duty and returned to the school to visit their friends and teachers, I heard about their disappointment and frustration with their military careers, but hopes and aspirations were also what they frequently articulated about being successful in the military. Notably, they argued that cadet women's prominent performance in leadership and military training on campus, as well as higher academic achievement than their male counterparts on average in course work, had not brought them success after graduation and upon entering military occupations. In these women's accounts, what they shared was that despite their intelligence, perseverance, and earnestness, they did not easily attain upper mobility in rank or in decision-making positions. According to 沈明室 (2003), to date, Taiwanese servicewomen have, in general, been peripheral to the decision-making positions and been prohibited from serving as combat personnel.

With increasing numbers of Taiwanese women in the armed forces in modern times, the imagery of uniformed women pursuing an allegedly "nontraditional" career has aroused the curiosity and imagination of the Taiwanese people. Every now and then, the conspicuous image of women soldiers receives press coverage, and public attention to the enlarging military representation by uniformed women can be seen in the headlines of many newspaper articles. *The United Daily News*, which has largest circulation in Taiwan, published articles with the following headlines: "A Woman Company Leader? Cool? (12/17/1996)," "Women Performed as Well as Men in Military Cadet Basic Training (10/09/1994)," and "Mu-Lan—A Good Company for Dinner in the Male Dominant Military? (04/27/1998)." Furthermore, the context of various discourses (pros

and cons) with regard to the issues of servicewomen's integration into the military has constantly been at play. Along with the added press coverage, the policy debate on the compatibility of servicewomen's inclusion into the armed forces has also been on the increase.

It is especially noteworthy that in less than a decade research on gender integration has mushroomed from a variety of perspectives. The research includes inquiries into the different degrees of Taiwanese servicewomen's adaptability to/influences on (benefits and shortcomings) the armed forces and servicemen's attitudes toward servicewomen. For example, 孫立方 (1998), 孫敏華 (1998 a., 1998 b.), and 蕭尤雯 (2003) investigated servicewomen's gender and family roles from a psychological perspective and suggested how servicewomen can physically and psychologically adjust to their military lives. In addition, 沈明室 (1997, 1999a, 1999b, 2002, 2003), 廖國鋒, 梁成明 (2000), 蕭維民 (2001), 孫至蕙 (2001), and 虞立莉 (2002) discussed servicewomen's roles through a militarist sociological eye and offered recommendations for policymaking. While 王雅菁 (2004) and 蔡貝倫 (2000) inquired into servicewomen's images in the media, one recent researcher, 崔艾湄 (2004) looked at women's military representation through a feminist lens and called for gender equality in the armed forces.

Notwithstanding, greater research emphasis needs to be placed on Taiwanese servicewomen's subjective experiences of everyday life. Study findings will lead to a better understanding of how these women make sense of their lives in a bureaucratic Taiwanese military community. In a military service from which women are no longer absent, better policies about gender integration are inevitable. Thus, an inquiry into

Taiwanese servicewomen's subjective experiences is an advantageous point of departure for examining not only what the military needs but also what servicewomen care about. It is the purpose of this study to critically examine these subjective experiences.

As the wife of a senior higher-ranking officer in the Taiwanese Army, an "outsider within" status provides an opportunity to scrutinize, in a sense of nearness as well as remoteness, how military discourses, policies, and the mechanisms discursively practiced in military institutions have affected Taiwanese servicewomen's careers. Moreover, an "insider out" status as a civilian woman instructor at Green Valley College provides an opportunity to have a degree of close contact with women cadets and alumnae of the academy, as well as allowing a conscious and conscientious concern for the potentiality of static career mobility and early retirement that students might face after entering the armed forces.

Informal conversations with some senior officers, all of whom were male and in charge of policy making with respect to servicewomen's career development in Taiwan, have provided an overwhelming universal explanation for the issues raised. These male senior officers noted that they strongly respected servicewomen's free choice to stay in or leave the military and seriously considered servicewomen's career growth, but they believed servicewomen's family roles as mothers/wives required childbearing and childrearing that were more important and served to prevent these women from fully committing themselves to the military and limited their access to the higher-ranking decision-making positions. Additionally, a puzzling aspect of the discourses of Green Valley College alumnae has been that while they complain about dissatisfactory career progression, these women simultaneously internalize their social roles as

wives/mothers/subordinates and accept their static career mobility and auxiliary roles to servicemen, as well as their early retirement.

While trapped in the labyrinth of diverse discourses generated by both cadets and alumnae of Green Valley College, as well as by male officers, and bewildered by the multiple subject positions taken by these people, it is clear that there is a need to unveil the myth of the military as a male-only profession and to delve into this perplexing conundrum. For example, the question of how social power in the military is exercised requires an explanation. Why are servicewomen so often complicit in their own oppression? Why are the interests of servicewomen secondary to those of servicemen? How does a woman's auxiliary role away from core combat positions in the military continue to be understood as correct, natural, and good? And how can gender relations in the military be transformed?

As a faculty member at Green Valley College, a research community conducting studies on Taiwanese servicewomen, there is an opportunity to contribute to research about servicewomen's well-being by inquiring into their subjective experiences of everyday life rather than by engaging in an objective investigation. Hopefully, this research can encourage future feminist studies on Taiwanese servicewomen. Moreover, given that patriarchy is not a universal and solitary system accounting for women's subordination (Kandiyoti, 1996), this study of Taiwanese servicewomen from a feminist perspective may generate an interpretation that is distinct from those of other countries or cultures. Furthermore, a careful examination of language processed in the armed forces, through which meanings and categories are constituted, can provide new interpretive possibilities beyond the reproduction of conventional understandings of the military.

Accordingly, the traditional connotations of servicewomen's support roles and the military as a male arena must be analyzed with care and redefined as necessary. A text that incorporates theories and servicewomen's life experiences in part reflects servicewomen's subjectivities, voices, and needs, and opens up new paths for change in the military.

Research Questions

The research inquiries are as follows: 1) What are the attractions and limitations for women who choose a military career?; 2) What strategies do servicewomen use to negotiate their unique positions in the armed forces?; 3) What kinds of processes (resistance, assent, or negotiation) do servicewomen use to deal with the conflicts and contradictions in their everyday life?; 4) How do these women construct their gendered identities including their roles of wives and mothers?; and 5) How do these women negotiate the conflicting demands made upon them by their dual roles (servicewomen and mothers/wives) on an individual basis?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant for several reasons: 1) the exploration of Taiwanese servicewomen's perceptions about pursuing military careers offers the research community sources for comparison to other groups across nations with respect to women's social roles in non-traditional arenas; 2) this study will illuminate the importance of servicewomen's roles in the military and help policymakers to take into account gender equality in order to adapt to social change; and 3) the manifestation of

servicewomen's needs through their perceptions about their careers can offer insights to advocates and supporters of gender integration or women's rights.

Main Arguments in the Study

In this research project, the main argument is that Taiwanese servicewomen's military services have been primarily viewed by the Taiwanese military institution as a function of the reserve labor force, available to supplement labor shortages among military personnel. Women's representation in the Taiwanese military is merely superficial evidence of gender equality. The Taiwanese military institution has claimed itself as an unbiased employer so that equal-opportunity employment rights appear to have been highly valued in the armed forces. It aims to impress legislators with the story that it is an exemplar for the rest of the society, and that it conducts national defense affairs for the collective's common good. Accordingly, legislators enact laws for the ever-increasing military budget, and therefore the military institution gains legitimacy in its purchases of costly weapons and waging of wars.

In actuality, the Taiwanese military institution has intentionally preserved the military as a male domain and maintained sufficient manpower for national defense. The proportion of Taiwanese servicewomen has thus never reached more than 5% of the armed forces. Through its advocacy of nationalism, the military institution encourages young men to join the armed forces and to sacrifice for the nation-state during wartime. This behavior is alleged to be associated with the symbolism that attends ultimate honor and first-class citizenship.

Also, Taiwanese servicewomen's subordinate status to servicemen is taken for granted as natural and definitive by many traditional militarists. Compared to Taiwanese servicemen, Taiwanese servicewomen have slower upward career mobility, more static job advancement, and earlier retirement. These women, in actuality, perform as well as servicemen in the armed forces. However, I argue that the belief about women's subordination to men in the armed forces emerges from nationalism and Confucianism, which are based on the notion of the gendered division of labor embodying a male/female public/private dichotomy. I also debate that servicewomen have been on the frontlines in everyday life. After they broke through the frontline and thus moved from the domestic sphere to the public one (i.e., the military), they have been on the frontlines within the military community fighting against the problems of sexual harassments, sexual assaults, and being subordinated and segregated.

I maintain that the qualification of military participation has less to do with the notion of female or male, femininity or masculinity, and more with competence and intelligence. Based on the rationale of the national long-term development and the idealism of democracy and equality, I suggest that the Taiwanese military institution should employ voluntary service members depending on their capabilities rather than sexual differences, increase the proportion of women in the ROC Armed Forces, and open more decision-making and higher-ranking positions to women who possess competence.

Chapter 2

Gender, Confucianism, and Nationalism

Seen through a feminist lens, things that are prevailing and constantly viewed as natural and conventional have indeed been socially and culturally constructed (Enloe, 2000). Under scrutiny, what is obvious in the presupposition of nationalism and Confucianism is the espousal of masculinity and masculine values. As Morokvasic (1998) pointed out, there is an interdependent relationship between nationalism and sexism, with one nurturing the other. I argue that when deconstructing the conceptualization of Confucianism and nationalism, there exists a shared fundamental constituent—the institutionalized gendered division of labor that is based on a male-female/public-private dichotomy.

In the account of Confucianism and nationalism, women are assumed to be family-oriented, femininity has been extolled as the mainstay of the nation, and men's efforts should contribute to something in the public sphere that is articulated as masculine. Under such a model, the binary oppositions of femininity/masculinity and private/public spheres are seemingly fixed and unproblematic. However, I maintain that this dichotomy is too oversimplified regarding men's and women's potentiality in performing their roles as well as the notion of femininity and masculinity. Men can be in feminine roles (e.g., male nurses), and, conversely, women can be in masculine roles (e.g., female fire fighters and warriors). Yet, in the eyes of nationalists and sexists, the above examples are viewed as exceptional cases, and as such can be ignored.

Throughout history and across cultures, women have participated in military warfare and national movements, but they have been absent in masculine narratives. Therefore, it is not only of vital importance to retell their stories, but also, as Dowler (2001) notes, “to question their absence in the first place” (p. 168), given that social organization of nations and nationalism cannot eschew the influence of gender because gender relations operate at every level of social life. In this chapter, Confucian culture is first closely examined through a feminist eye. Second, the deconstruction of nationalism is presented through a feminist lens. Finally, Chinese women warriors through history are explored.

Chinese/Taiwanese Women in a Confucian Culture

For centuries, the belief in and practice of Confucianism has steadfastly been incorporated in Chinese people’s everyday life. Chinese history has witnessed the predominance of Confucian values in politics, culture, economy, religions, social life, and education for well over two millennia. In addition to China, a weighty influence of Confucianism on individuals, societies, and nations has also been well documented in the historical narratives of East Asian countries, such as Taiwan, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and Vietnam (Slote, 1998; Tu, 1998). Although an orthodox form of the Confucian philosophical tradition might not be easily observed today in East Asia largely due to the recent social, economic, and political changes under the impact of Western culture, the Confucian mechanisms are, to some extent, still exerted in government, education, family rituals, and social ethics (Slote, 1998).

As illustrated in the work of Tu (1998), with its representative figure, Confucius (551-479 B.C.), Confucianism is “a social ethic, a political ideology, a scholarly tradition,

and a way of life” (p. 3). The centuries-old Confucian philosophy heavily rests upon the assumption that the nation would stabilize and the community would prosper as long as the family upholds harmony and functions well (Yao, 2000). Its rhetoric greatly employs family metaphor and kinship idioms. Although it did not maliciously (according to the followers of Confucius) promote the gendered division of labor, differentiated social roles, and class hierarchy; it did indirectly suppress most women to the lowest level of social strata. Of course, there were some exceptions—a small portion of the privileged women, such as women in the imperial court, elite women, or mothers-in-law. Slote (1998) points out that:

In its traditional format, Confucianism was rigidly authoritarian and bolstered by a social matrix that was essentially totalitarian. As such, the legal (but not the psychological) power of males and rulers approached the absolute. The rights of women and children were minimal, and during various historical periods they were essentially nonexistent (pp.37-38).

A Contest of Discourses in Confucianism

What is noteworthy is that in the last few decades the concomitant heterogeneous scenarios found in reading Confucianism have come into play on the stage of theoretical contention. Some feminist critics have straightforwardly pointed to the problematic Confucian doctrines of social segregation, male authority, and class hierarchy, whereas some contemporary Confucians either have had nothing to say about these issues or have defended the philosophy. However, there is a group of scholars who have taken alternative routes to elaborate on Confucian philosophical tradition in attempts to build a conversation between Confucianism and Feminism, and between the East and the West.

For example, Woo, cited in Li (2000), upon the critique of feminist scholarship, claims that the early Confucian thinkers, such as Confucius and Mencius, with their emphasis on moral equality rather than social equality, made the role of the mother parallel to that of the father in the family and thus were obviously not sexists and misogynists even though they were apparently not supporters of gender equality. In addition, some scholars argue that the universal view of and narratives about Chinese women as exclusively passive/powerless victims undermine Chinese women's vast contributions to Chinese civilization (Li, 2000). Another group of scholars (Ivanhoe, 2000; Kupperman, 2000; Li, 2000; Shafer, 2000) highlight Confucian *jen*-ethics and care-oriented feminist ethics and show that they share common theoretical grounds despite the variances. They point out that the philosophical aspect of both theories emphasizes the notion of morality that underlies the caring among human beings as well as the individual's sense of responsibility to the family, society, and world. Also, both disprove the conceptualization of individuals as rational beings with self-interests and personal rights. More specifically, in their philosophical analyses of Confucianism, Hall and Ames (2000) propose a correlative model of Confucian sexism (masculinity and femininity are interdependent, compatible, and fluid) versus the Western dualistic sexism. Moreover, Goldin (2000) explores how in early Confucian canonical texts, such as the *Book of Odes* 詩經, *Guo Yu* 國語, and *Zuo Zhuan* 左傳, virtuous women were lauded and vicious women were blamed. In addition to Goldin, Nylan (2000) finds that Han elite women had been extolled as well educated, valorous, loyal to their families, and attentive to rituals. Both scholars thus conclude that Confucianism did not seem to be a women-oppressive practice in early imperial China. Furthermore, in her study of sexuality in early Chinese

history, Wawrytko (2000) suggests that degrading and repressive attitudes toward women only appeared later in Chinese history due to a backlash against discerned female power. Raphals (2000) contends that unlike women in the later Han, Song, Ming, and Qing dynasties, ancient Chinese women were encouraged to possess aptitudes for knowledge, wisdom, and moral reasoning. This was documented in *Gujin Renbiao* 古今人表 and *Lienu Zhuan* 烈女傳.

Women's Roles in the Patriarchal Confucian Family Structure

It is true to some extent that the above-mentioned fruitful insights into Confucianism shed important light on our reconsideration of an alternative interpretation of the centuries-old Confucian philosophy. Yet some key issues (e.g., gender and class) arising from the Confucian social paradigm have largely remained unaddressed. Quite significantly, a solid body of evidence regarding the degrading and oppressive attitudes towards women documented in Confucian canonical texts is self-evident.

Mencius (372-289 B.C.), an ancient scholar of Confucianism, asserted the Five Relationships: love between father and son, duty between ruler and subjects, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and trust between friends. From his words comes a renowned motto in daily discourse in a Confucian culture: the father teaches sons the way of being noble men; the mother teaches daughters the way of being loyal wives. After marrying, the bride is told by her own mother to be respectful and hardworking in her husband's house and to obey whatever her husband and parents-in-law want her to do (Li, 2000). Furthermore, the bride's frequent requests for help from her own parents would be viewed as a shame, implying her lack of the

virtues of diligence as well as loyalty to and respect for her husband's family. For a married woman, the husband's mother rather than her own mother is the one to whom she should pay filial piety.

The Han Confucian master Dong Zhongshu (179-104 B.C.) fused Daoism into Confucianism and maintained that the two principles, the *yin* (inferior, weak, dark) and *yang* (superior, strong, light), govern the natural function of the universe and thus everything, including human beings, is allocated into the two categories: either *yin* or *yang* (Li, 2000). Dong Zhongshu proposes that "the husband is *yang* even if he is from a humble family, and the wife is *yin* even if she is from a noble family" (*Chun Qiu Fan Lu* 春秋繁露 Bk. 11, section 43, cited in Li, p. 4).

What draws our attention is that the women-oppressive practices became extreme during the period of Song-Ming neo-Confucianism. The neo-Confucian Zhu Xi (1130-1200 A.D.) advocated the "Three Bonds," denoting the ruler's authority over the minister, the father's over the son, and the husband's over the wife. All of the rules and regulations centered on the patrilineal, patriarchal, and patrilocal family system were established for the management of the state and the family. He continued that in the Confucian translation of gender, a husband's proper pursuit is outside the home and a wife's inside the home; femininity, thus, functions as the mainstay of a nation through affective relations of the family. Accordingly, woman and man are segregated but expected to enjoy harmony based on role interdependence. Intriguing, then, is the idea of the galvanizing force of Confucian doctrines that for centuries shaped men as well as women in becoming submissively filial, loyal to their families, and attentive to sacrifices to their ancestors.

Interestingly enough, the Chinese character (祖) for the word ancestor is composed of two radicals: 示 signifying spiritual sacred alter and 且 male genitals (Yao, 2000). What then emerges from the connotation of the Chinese character 祖 is a manifestation of phallicism. Despite the difficulty in finding out if the Chinese character 祖 contains the same meaning in a matriarchal society or if another signifier is constructed to signify women ancestors, the tradition of sacrifice to ancestors, according to Yao (2000), probably shifted from a basis in a matriarchal system to that of a patriarchal one during the early years of the Zhou dynasty (1100-249 B.C.). As Rawson (1996) explains:

References to females are also evident in oracle bone inscriptions of the Shang period (c. 1200 B.C.). Mentions of a deceased mother (bi) are more numerous than those of a father or male ruler, and it has been suggested that the predominance of female names points to a matriarchal society. This situation appears to have changed during the Zhou period, by the end of which no special sacrifices seem to have been directed at female ancestors (p. 271, cited in Yao).

Nonetheless, a traditional Confucian culture is “where values were essentially identical and universally maintained, where propriety and an ethical code was precisely defined and rigidly enforced, where deviation was severely punished, and where the rewards for compliance were considered both in this world and in the next” (Slote, 1998, p. 40). What became problematic is that since the neo-Confucian period, the degrading and oppressive attitudes toward the majority of women usually translated into oppressive practice in reality.

The dogmas of Confucianism became institutionalized in the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 A.D.). Ming women who did not remarry after a husband’s death but remained widows were officially honored and formally received a plaque of “chaste widowhood”

(Li, 2000). Also institutionalized during this period and lasting until the early twentieth century, according to Li, was the practice of women's footbinding, a clear example of the regulation of the female body (Foucault, 1979). With this fashion, what was imposed upon women was the restriction of their movement. While footbinding was perceived at the time as a beauty ideal, much of this fashion clearly points to the implication that women became imperceptibly domesticated and kept in place—inner terrain.

The tradition that men take responsibilities for “external” jobs and women “internal” jobs in a Confucian culture has long been a taken-for-granted assumption. The first and foremost duty of women, mothers in particular, is to maintain harmony as well as solidarity within the household and to secure the foundations for the achievement of their husbands and offspring. Another good example might be to explain the relationship between women and harmony through the character “安”—meaning peace or harmony. The radical 宀 denotes home, and 女, a woman. Families are expected to be harmonious only when women are in homes. In actuality, the chaste and hardworking women glorified in the *Analects* and *Mencius* often appeared in the role of the mother (Li, 2000). The imagery of the virtuous mother (selflessness in motherhood) in Chinese literature sets up a perfect role model for the majority of women to use in reflexively examining and internalizing the tenets of Confucianism and then following in those laudable/exemplary women's footsteps.

In addition to Chinese literature, the stories of virtuous women versus vicious women were also presented in early Peking opera during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911A.D.). According to Huang (2004), almost one third of the main female figures in

early Peking opera (1845-1861 A.D.) were portrayed onstage as “virtuous wives, wise mothers, or young women ready to die to preserve their chastity”; however, another one third of women protagonists acted the roles of “silly women, evil or licentious women, or sirens who bewitched men” (p. 31). Quite obviously, women’s images in the Peking opera repertoire during the Qing dynasty were polarized either as bad (functioning as warning) or as good (functioning as propagandizing female role models), although the phenomenon changed remarkably during the early twentieth century.

It seems crucial to know that the underlying premise for the portrayal of prototypical women in a Confucian culture is that their contributions and sacrifices were viewed as exceedingly honorary only when bound up with the family. Women, especially mothers, were tacitly permitted to become the ruler, sometimes the dictator, exclusively within the kingdom of the household. Women who made efforts outside the realm of the home were not well perceived by both Chinese men and women (who internalized the Confucian dogmas and were socialized into gender roles). In the *Analects*, Confucius remarked on King Wu’s ten able ministers:

[The sage King] Shun had five ministers and society was well managed. King Wu said, “I had ten able people as ministers.” Confucius said, “Is it true that it is difficult to find talent? The Tang [Yao]-Yu [Shun] period was a high time for talented people. [Among King Wu’s ministers] there was a woman; so there were only nine people. [King Wu of Zhou] controlled two thirds of the country, but he still treated the Yin as the king. Zhou had the highest morals possible! (Cited in Li, 2000, p. 3)

From the above passage, one might want to ask: why nine? Is the female minister not a human being? It is crystal clear that the word “power” has been a gender taboo for women in Confucian society. Therefore, for men and women, the word power, the

signifier, designates the distinct signified. Thus, women have been assumed not to exert their power in the political arena (whereas some women have indeed had power to a certain extent, namely women in the royal court, elite women, and mothers-in-law), but their discursive exertion of power were entrenched in the domestic sphere despite the fact that their power might have been dynamic and influential.

Within Confucian social norms, what Dowler (1998) calls “a gendered dichotomy of space” has been very strict; with men were expected to develop their careers outside the home and women inside the home. This is well demonstrated in the implication of Confucius’ expression in the *Analects*: gentlemen should avoid being a cook in the kitchen. However, on the contrary, women could only bring their talents fully into play within the house, particularly in the kitchen. One then might come to understand why in the historical record, Hua Mu-Lan, who went to war in place of her elderly father but disguised herself as a man and won many battles through her gallantry and martial skills, had to change back into women’s clothing and play the regulated social role as a docile woman after she returned home from the imperial army.

Resistance from Women

Quite important is Foucault’s idea that where there is oppression, there is resistance. While most Chinese women in the imperial eras were confined to a private arena void of agency and subjectivity, some women sought ways to voice their daily experiences of subjugation as a form of communication and resistance. One example took place in the southern part of China where a prevalent form of women’s writing was circulated among women and passed on to the succeeding female generations for a long time (Zhao, 2004).

According to Zhao, the unique women's script, an alternative discourse different from men's, displayed on fine cloth handicrafts (e.g., wedding gifts, fans, handkerchiefs, and strips of paper), was specifically invented and employed by ordinary rural women in the area to narrate their fantasies, life ordeals, and yearnings for men's respect. Although this genre was trivialized by local men at the time, it was highly appreciated by these rural women and functioned as self-enjoyment, entertainment, and social interaction. They repeatedly gathered together to do embroidery in the singing hall—singing, exchanging, and passing on the women's script, in spite of their limited agency.

Nonetheless, from the early twentieth century onward, particularly after the demise of the Qing dynasty (1911), along with the establishment of a democratic government (the Republic of China) and the introduction of feminist scholarship, Chinese women's agency has been, to a certain extent, expanded at the ideological and structural levels, and in everyday social interaction. Since then, Chinese women have progressively moved from the "private" space to the "public" space, seeking opportunities in education and the labor force like those available to men. Some women have endeavored to "cross the gender line" and have stepped into a corollary male domain that has consistently been reserved for men, such as military careers.

Han Ethnic Group and Nationalism

Since early childhood, Chinese people are educated through folk tales, everyday social interactions, and formal education that they are the offspring of the Dragon clan. This clan certainly designates the Han ethnic group, the so-called "one big family" fused through the interconnection of kinship relations regulated by Confucian dogmas. The

dynamics of the metaphysical notion of “dragon”, which signifies an ethnic symbol of rich heritage, dramatically bind Han people together in forging collective identities. Yet, the symbol of the dragon, in fact, embodies the patrilineal, patriarchal, and patrilocal family system practiced in everyday life. The system, based on the Confucian paradigm that highlights the gendered division of labor, male authority, and class hierarchy, has been managed to maintain social norms and order and thus to bolster an ethnic collectivity.

Yuval-Davis (1997) points out that the social organization of the “premodern” nation is not completely different from, although is not exactly the same as, that of the “modern nation-state” (p. 81). Furthermore, although the notion of nationalism is basically viewed as a modern phenomenon, its conception dates far back to the eras of imperial China. Despite the alternation of dynasties, Chinese history has primarily evidenced the development of the Han ethnic group, who have lived along the Yellow River and the Yangtze River and predominantly shared Confucian culture. The grandeur and duration of Chinese culture (i.e., Confucian culture) has metaphorically been linked with the immensity and infinite length of the two rivers; and the metaphors have not only been written in texts but also articulated in daily discourses. The historical accounts of the nation have also documented the numerous battles that have attended its guarding territories and sovereignty against other ethnicities. As a consequence of ethnocentrism, all that does not share the heritage of the essential culture (Confucianism) and the essential language (mandarin) have been marginalized and classified as barbarian. The promotion of nationalism is self-evident in Chinese history.

Who Defines Nationalism?

Across cultures and through history, the assumption of the transcendental nature in nationalism is prevalent in public and in intellectual society. It is taken for granted that the commitment to one's nation overrides those to one's family, community, religion, and the like. This supposition has also been predominant for thousands of years in China.

What is so frequently heard is a Chinese maxim that goes like this: the benefits of the nation take precedence over those of the family and the personal, given that if the nation falls apart, there is no family. However, who can provide the definition of "nationalism"?

Why should individuals' identification with the nation and loyalty to its claims be universal and identical? In rejecting the presumption from some social theorists, Day et al. (2004) write:

Benedict Anderson's conception of the nation as a fraternity (*sic*) bound together in a 'deep horizontal comradeship' (1983, p. 16), like Gellner's image of an 'anonymous impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomized individuals' (1983, p. 57) suggests that nationalism does away with significant social differences, or subordinates them to its domination. As members of the nation, it appears, all people are alike in the way in which they identify with and respond to its appeal, and participate in its fortunes and catastrophes. Hence the generality of much of the discussion of national identity, which deals with the relationship between the nation as a collectivity and the individual, without much consideration of any intervening factors. Such an approach is deeply at odds with a normal sociological understanding of how people are shaped by their social relationships and group memberships (pp. 109-110).

What is problematic, however, is that the essential view on nationalism from privileged males excludes concerns about such interrelated variables as race, ethnicity, class, and gender in the formation of national identity. The reality, however, is that not every individual in a nation is blind to differences in the above-mentioned issues, nor

does everyone occupy privileged status and react to national collectivity to the same degree. It seems crucial to know that the interlocking issues, gender issues in particular, may be experienced on a day-to-day basis. More importantly, as Walby (1997) succinctly indicates, “gender cannot be analyzed outside of ethnic, national, and racial relations, but neither can these latter phenomena be analyzed without gender” (p. 195). Day et al. (2004) cite Allen’s (1998) view and argue that “men could be taken as representative of the non-gendered subjectivity of human beings, whereas women more often were defined in relation to men, as mothers, wives, sisters, and daughters” (p. 110).

It is traditionally taken for granted that management of a nation and involvement in a national movement is men’s work, and specifically of the male elites; women are assumed to belong to the domestic arena. A gendered public/private dichotomy clearly institutionalizes men’s and women’s working spheres; however, the public sphere usually refers to the political sphere to which men belong. As Dowler (2001) delineates, “the nation is expressed through the recording of the actions of the public sphere rendering it as masculine” (p. 168). And to penetrate the matter further, Yuval-Davis (1997) notes, “the construction of the boundary between the public and the private is a political act in itself” (p. 80). While many women have moved from the private space to the public space and their agency has expanded (but women’s agency varies in degrees and across cultures; for example, women in Scandinavian countries are thought to have much more autonomy), it is not uncommon to see the proverbial advocate of nationalism encourage women to properly play the support role to bolster the foundations for their husbands’ achievement and their nation’s solidity.

The army serves as the machine used by a nation-state to guarantee its sovereignty. In a sense, the army is the institution that, as Sasson-Levy (2003) rightly points out, is “most closely identified with the state, its ideologies, and its policies” (p. 442). Hegel’s theory of the warfare state has become a mainstay in the canon of political thought. He postulates that through war not only does the state proclaim its sovereignty but it also achieves recognition of its political strength—“the political manhood” (Elshtain, 1987, p. 75). The nation-state not only wields absolute power to legitimately employ its military forces within its territory, but also, as clearly stated in Clausewitz’s theory (Elshtain, 1987), attempts to mobilize a large, national army in the form of a compulsory conscription of all male citizens of a certain age. That military service is seen as a citizen’s duty is still prevalent in many parts of the globe. In Taiwan, the nation mandates a compulsory conscription whereby all physically fit males are called upon for a period of one and a half years of military service at age 18.

In the West, for a nation and its army to mobilize gallant soldiers who are ready to kill and sacrifice in military conflicts, and to “establish collective identities by legitimizing racial, gender, class, and ethnic stratification (Sasson-Levy, 2003, p. 442), the notion of first-class citizenship is more often than not associated with participation in combat. More sophisticatedly, the association is justified by a eulogy of either fulfilling a citizen’s obligation or sacrificing for the collective’s common good. Even though, for example, U.S. soldiers who fought in the Gulf War see the military as their professional career rather than a citizen’s duty (Yuval-Davis, 1997), national monuments where sacred and patriotic national warriors are commemorated continuously function as “a reminder that, when necessary, the nation warrants the supreme sacrifice” (Day et al.,

2004, p. 89). Despite the fact that combat duty involves risking of life, it is rewarding, for combat experience helps in promotion and advancement within the military. Nevertheless, the military's rigid gender division of labor naturalizes men's while denying women's combat positions, regardless of the fact that the boundary between combat and support has blurred in modern warfare, and numerous women, such as nurses, tanker navigators, etc, are deployed to the battle-front but maintain non-combat status. Hence, the social construction of men as natural warriors has repeatedly remained a fact. Furthermore, servicewomen are not only deployed to the frontlines of the theater of war, but they are also on the frontlines in everyday military life, courageously resisting the problems of sexual harassments, sexual assaults, and being subordinated.

Trivial Women, Great Men?

In the discourses of nationalism and sexism, women's movement from the private sphere to the public sphere poses a threat to social order and the nation's solidity. Under a nationalist scenario, women are expected to play their primary roles in child-bearing and child-rearing. They are the mothers of the nation, who produce its next generation. They also act as preachers, who pass on the nation's cultural heritage to the next generation in order to foster national identity and collectivity. Paradoxically, on the one hand, women's bodies are confined and exploited, but on the other hand, women's imagery is very often presented in national propaganda campaigns through the mass media during wartime as well as in peacetime. Yuval-Davis (1997) points out that "women are often constructed as the cultural symbols of the collectivity, of its boundaries, as carriers of the collectivity's

‘honor’ and as its intergenerational reproducers of culture” (p. 67). Day et al. (2004) cite

Morokvasic (1998):

Women often embody the nation, they are bearers of its honor and love. In nationalist discourse woman is either the mother of the nation or the sex object. She is either a protector and regenerator of the collective or a possession of that collective. Their symbolic images have been used by the media [in] getting the nation ready to face the enemy (p. 75).

In actuality, mothers and wives are not the only roles played by women. Women’s representation in national affairs as evidenced in political, economic, and military accounts has been somehow downplayed and trivialized. Women’s agency has indeed been cloaked in canonical texts (Dowler, 2001). For example, through time and across most known human societies, women warriors are only briefly mentioned in historical texts, narrated as legends, or even ignored and undiscovered. While the history of including women in the military is a long one, the myth of the male soldier has made female soldiers hardly visible, and the glorification of the merits and legacies of the hero has overshadowed the glorification of those of the heroine.

In public discourses, in Taiwan as elsewhere, the majority of women are articulated as feeble, dependent, and nurturing and thus as not belonging in the military; men are “by nature warriors, commanders, protectors of the weak, and fighters for justice”—the cadre of the armed forces (Jones, 1997, p. 8). As conventionally believed, men fight for their nations, and women stay home to keep the hearth burning (Enloe, 1988). Yet, as Dowler (2001) insightfully notes, national solidity “is constructed of the actions of both men and women,” and it is necessary to “rewrite women back into this conflict as both mothers and warriors” (pp. 168-169).

Historical Accounts of Chinese/Taiwanese Women Warriors

At a commonsense level, the military has been taken for granted as a quintessentially male arena that cultivates an image of “real fighting men”. Women naturally belong to the domestic sphere. Yet, the participation of individual women warriors in warfare has been well documented in Chinese literature. These women are described as being as brave as men fighting in the battlefields, although they were still to some extent mythic figures in Chinese history. However, from the early twentieth century onward, the visibility of women soldiers in public has increased despite their continual auxiliary roles in the military.

Women Warriors in Imperial China

According to Xiaolin Li (1998, as cited in De Pauw), Fu Hao, a general during the Shang dynasty who lived around 1200 B.C., was the earliest known woman warrior whose martial activities were inscribed on bones and tortoise shells and buried with her in her tomb, which was excavated in 1976. As 王雅菁 (2004) notes, during this time the queen and the emperor’s concubines were allowed to join hunting and martial activities with the emperor. This phenomenon probably can be explained in the work of Yao (2000) which states that prior to the Zhou dynasty (1100-249 B.C.), imperial China was a matriarchal society, as is evidenced by oracle bone inscriptions mostly delineating the mother’s merits rather than the father’s.

The most renowned woman warrior in Chinese military history is Hua Mu-Lan, who lived in the third century A.D., replacing her conscripted father in the army (Jones, 1997). Hua Mu-Lan received military training from her father (a sergeant) and mastered martial

skills and strategies. When she recognized that her father was too old to go into battle and her brother was too young to fight, Hua Mu-Lan took her father's place on active duty and adopted a male disguise, serving in the imperial army for approximately twelve years and receiving promotions and rewards from the emperor. The historical record documents that no one discovered her female status until she returned home from the army. In addition to the historical account, her legendary story and her gallantry were also narrated in Chinese poetry as well as in plays. Moreover, the Disney cartoon "Mu-Lan", released a few years ago, vividly depicts the mysterious tales of this woman warrior in Chinese history; therefore, the story of this heroine has become known throughout the world.

Moreover, the youngest castle defender in Chinese history is Xun Guan during the Jin dynasty (De Pauw, 1998). Born into a military family, Xun Guan at the age of thirteen broke away from the besieged castle on her own to seek assistance while her father defended the castle. She later successfully recovered her father's territory. Less than a century later, authorized by her father, the emperor of the Tang dynasty, Princess Ping Yang (d. 623 A.D.), at the age of twenty-three, organized the first all-woman army in Chinese history; she dressed as a man and defended her family against her father's enemies (De Pauw, 1998). Additionally, Yang Paifeng and Mu Guiying also figured in the female martial history of the Song dynasty by valorously defending the northern frontiers of China for the emperor (Jones, 1997); their legends have become popular scenarios in Chinese literature and Chinese operas. Finally, in the Ming dynasty (1368-1645 A.D.), Chin Liang-Yu, a woman warrior and a renowned writer, fought alongside her husband, won numerous battles, and rose to the rank of division commander (Jones, 1997).

It is also noteworthy that in the mid-nineteenth century Chinese peasant farmers established an independent nation known as Tai Ping Tian Guo in an attempt to overthrow the Qing dynasty (De Pauw, 1998; Jones, 1997). During this period of time, thousands of women were involved in the revolution and served at all levels in the forces, even in combat. Additionally, in the early twentieth century and among several other women, Chiu Chin was known as a fighter for freedom and democracy in the revolution against the late Qing dynasty (Jones, 1997). Joining the nationalist political party, she secretly planned a rebellion against the Empress Ci Xi, but was apprehended later and executed. She is remembered as an example for all Chinese women who fight for their nation.

As Li (1998, as cited in De Pauw) notes, women warriors can be found in all time periods of Chinese history, serving as commanders-in-chief or female laborers/defenders in martial activities ranging from small-scale hometown defense to large-scale war. Interestingly, many of the women warriors were from the imperial families or the families of the aristocratic class, especially during early times. In addition, according to 沈明室 (2003), many ancient Chinese women warriors were raised in or married into a military family and therefore had the chance to participate in the military or militia fighting alongside their fathers, husbands, or brothers; however, they were still mythic figures in Chinese history. Usually, women warriors' martial roles are characterized by three of the four categories described by De Pauw (1998):

. . . (1) the classic roles of victim and of instigator; (2) combat support roles; (3) "virago" roles that perform masculine functions without changing feminine appearance (such as warrior queens, women members of home militias, or all-female combat units); and (4) warrior

roles in which women become like men, often changing clothing and other gender markers (cited in Goldstein, 2001, p. 60).

Contemporary Hua Mu-Lans

After successfully overturning the Qing dynasty, the nationalists established a democratic country—the Republic of China in 1911. It should be noted that in addition to Chiu Chin, a myriad of women (intellectuals, house wives, and students) joined the nationalist revolution in carrying out tasks in propaganda, fund raising, nursing, communication, transportation, sabotage, assassination, and espionage (沈明室, 2003). Later on, great numbers of women also participated in national defense, mainly fending off the invasions of Japan in both World Wars. According to 沈明室, 819 groups of women corps were established during this time. National defense against the Japanese, as 謝冰瑩 (1992) puts it, can be viewed as Chinese women’s liberation movement in that through warfare women walked out of the home and took up arms to defend their families and country and thereafter were emancipated and empowered. Despite the fact that the ideology of nationalism was probably manipulated as one of state militarist policies for using women in war in the face of insufficient manpower, more women had opportunities to move from the “private” places to the “public” places. Notably, in the wars against the Japanese, women played a variety of roles ranging from combat support personnel to combatants, even though most of women were demobilized after wartime.

In 1949, after Mao Tse-Tung established the Communist party and took over Mainland China, Chiang Kai-shek led the Nationalists to claim legitimacy of the government of the Republic of China in Taiwan. Before the ROC government engaged in a full retreat from Mainland China, more than four hundred women, mostly well-

educated and from middle-class families, were recruited and sent to the southern part of Taiwan, Ah Hou Liao. These women were then organized into Women Youth Corps and divided into three branches—political warfare, espionage, and nursing—and received training as a reserve force awaiting deployment to the battle-front and off-shore islands (吳美慧, 1995). After the Green Valley College (where this study takes place) was established in 1951, some of these women became the first female cadets. Taking the historical figure Hua Mu-Lan as their role model, the female cadets named themselves after Hua Mu-Lan and their barracks, a segregated female-only dorm, Mu-Lan Village. They, coupled with military nurses, became the first servicewomen in Taiwanese military history (沈明室, 2003).

Hua Mu-Lan, the name of an ancient woman warrior, has not only been appropriated by servicewomen who attended Green Valley College specifically, but also all Taiwanese servicewomen as a whole. From the 1990s onward, the Taiwanese government has promulgated policies and began to recruit women into the positions of officers and non-commissioned officers to fill in the armed forces personnel. Three years later in 1994, military academies opened their doors to include women (蔡貝倫, 2000). Notably, the legislation enacted in 1959, which required volunteer active servicewomen to retire no later than age 45, was repealed in 1995 (虞立莉, 2002); women from then on have been able to lengthen their military careers. Moreover, in 1996 the first female battalion commander in the Army and the first female pilot in the Air Force were appointed; and in 1998 the first captain commander of the Navy was appointed. Outstanding female cadets graduated from the ROC Army Academy and Naval Academy (虞立莉, 2000) and joined

the military on active duty for the first time. One year later, the first woman deep-sea explosives disposal specialist finished her training in the U.S. and returned to Taiwan. More importantly, in 2002, the first female major general was appointed, which made women's dream of reaching the stars a reality.

Nowadays as the number of women represented in the military increases, the deeply held assumptions and beliefs about war as an essential male activity and the military as a male dominated territory have confronted stringent challenges that call for fundamental change in the armed forces. Today, even though the narratives of resistance to women's participation in the armed forces are still predominant in the governmental apparatus, military personnel, and the public in Taiwan and elsewhere, gender integration in the military has become a hardly believable but necessarily acceptable reality, and uniformed women have turned into spectacles under the glaring spotlight. Since the Taiwanese government has mostly adopted the U.S. military system, servicewomen make up about 5% of military personnel in Taiwan. Whereas Taiwanese servicewomen's military roles have expanded from the early 1990s onward, they are still banned from units of the infantry, artillery, armored corps, and military police, and their gendered roles of childrearing and childbearing continue to constrain their chances for promotion and advancement (沈明室, 2003).

Summary

In conclusion, nationalism is obviously not an exclusively male preoccupation, and the military is actually not a male-only preserve. Yet, women's performances in the public sphere are downplayed and veiled. It may be argued that male elites' insistence on

the rigid, mutually immune and formalized gendered division of labor in Confucianism and nationalism occurs at the expense of the consideration of interrelated issues of class, ethnicity, and gender that operate on a day-to-day basis. Most notably, nowadays, military service has become a profession that is greatly associated with competence rather than nationalism. Neither womanhood nor manhood has much to do with competence. Moreover, there is a suggestion that masculinity and femininity flow in a continuum rather than remain static and bipolar extremes. There are capable and competent servicemen and also similarly able servicewomen. Furthermore, Chinese and Taiwanese women constantly construct and reconstruct their identities through everyday experiences that are gendered, even though the orthodox form of Confucianism does not predominantly remain. Currently, not only are Taiwanese servicewomen now standing at the intersection of the concerted cultural values of the East and the West, but they also are situated in a westernized, modernized, institutional, and bureaucratic military. What needs to be investigated is how they experience their military careers. What subject positions are available for them? And what can the study of servicewomen's subjective experiences tell us about gender relations in the military?

Chapter 3

Contentious “Truths” about Servicewomen

This feminist research project is a qualitative inquiry. This study of a group of Taiwanese servicewomen is not an attempt to reject Taiwanese scholars’ interpretations of the relationship between Taiwanese uniformed women and the military, but rather is an exploration to uncover these women’s plural voices to attain an in-depth comprehension of why they have taken up multiple subject positions to make meaning of their military services, realize the conflicts and contradictions in their daily lives, and understand how power relations are discursively exerted in the Taiwanese military.

The Taiwanese government in most part models the U.S. military system, including the integration of women into the military. Despite this attempt, Taiwanese servicewomen’s military roles have not been extended as much as have those of American women in uniform. In U.S. military history, the endeavors of feminist scholars and activists inside and outside the military have become one of the important factors in helping U.S. servicewomen expand their representation in the armed forces. In this sense, situating the starting-point for this research on a group of Taiwanese servicewomen in a review of dynamic insights into uniformed women in American feminist critique is unavoidable. In this chapter feminist perspectives on servicewomen in the context of the United States are first reviewed. Following that, a poststructuralist approach that may investigate servicewomen’s gendered identities is discussed, given that this feminist study was sparked by poststructuralist insights into the complexity and fluidity of

women's subjectivity in gender performance, and the discursive exertion of power relations in societies. Finally, feminist research that scrutinizes an essential military masculinity is analyzed.

Feminist Perspectives on U.S. Servicewomen

Basically, the main lines of contemporary feminist debate regarding women, the military, and war have split into two different strands of thought, even though it is difficult to always draw a boundary line between the two. The two camps of feminist theorists have been given different names by researchers: care-ethic feminists and justice-ethic feminists (Peach, 1997); feminist antimilitarists and feminist egalitarian militarists (Feinman, 2000); and women's rights groups and women's liberation groups (Tong, 1998). Interestingly, although the two feminist approaches have evolved from common roots in the second-wave women's movements in an attempt to dismantle patriarchy within the military, they have taken up opposite positions to tackle the issues concerning the military/war and women and to place these concerns under public scrutiny, as well as to empower women in the knowledge of militarism.

The two camps of feminist scholarly inquiry are concerned with notions of the nature of military culture, citizenship, human rights, and women's family and combat roles. Central to their critique is the discourse from traditional militarists who assert that women are not suitable for the military mainly because they lack the physical and psychological qualities of men, such as aggressiveness, physical strength, stamina, willingness to endure extreme physical danger, and readiness to kill. Yet, at one end of the debate line, feminist egalitarian militarists (inside and outside the armed forces)

support women's full inclusion into the military and affect congressional legislations by lobbying to secure servicewomen's equal rights and attempting to break down the barriers for women inside the taken-for-granted male-dominant military. At the other end, however, feminist pacifists favor women's exclusion from the military. Through activism, they (outside the armed forces) endeavor to restrict the power of the military institutions by disdaining the military masculine culture, protesting war and violence, and seeking non-violent alternatives to war. Coupled with the transformation of military technologies and strategies since the Vietnam War, globalization of the economy, and the broader social changes that spur equal access to the armed forces for women, feminist movements from these two camps and their critical insights into the armed forces add the most important factor to the partial change in the masculine nature of military (Feinman, 2000). In the following sections, we examine the theoretical framework and the limitations of the two approaches to the relationship between the military and women.

Feminist Pacifists (Feminist Antimilitarists /Care-ethic Feminists)

The feminist pacifists' theoretical inquiry into the relationship between women and the military/war is grounded in the conceptualization of the notion of "ethics of care" proposed by "cultural" or "difference" feminist theorists; in this line of analyses, the values and virtues of women—"caring, responsibility, and relationality"—are articulated in opposition to those of men—"justice, rights, and autonomy" (Peach, 1997, p. 106). To feminist pacifists, the notions of morals and motherhood are used politically in feminist activism to fight against the military and militarism. Drawing on Carol Gilligan's theory (1982), they argue that women's ability to care and their experiences as mothers who

give birth and nurture human life have made them peacekeepers and peace-lovers rather than aggressors and war stimulators. In the following section, a broad analytical framework for the feminist pacifists' approach is based on the discussion in the work of Freinman (2000), Peach (1997), and Tong (1998). The limitations of this approach are also discussed.

Women: The Oppressed

Feminist pacifists have identified patriarchy's sex/gender system as the primary reason for women's oppression. Moreover, they suggest that the interlocking oppression based on sex, gender, class, sexual preference, national origin, and ethnicity is also discursively at play within the patriarchal system. They charge that patriarchal society uses certain biological traits as a basis for constructing men's and women's gendered roles and designates males as the dominant and females as the subordinate. At the center of their discussion has been the question of why gender-related behaviors that are socially constructed are defined by biological sexual differences.

Feminist pacifists believe that the gender system embedded in the patriarchal essentialism attributes everything, including human beings, into dichotomous categories in everyday life—inferior femininity (passive, protected, emotional, and private) and superior masculinity (active, protector, rational, and public), as well as self (male) and other (female). According to their argument, while gender hierarchy is hardly visible, it is rooted in everyday practices and exerts a dynamic influence on human being's behaviors; therefore, the socially/culturally discursive construction of gender makes women internalize a sense of inferiority to men. In her book *Of Woman Born*, Rich (as discussed

in Tong, 1998) proposes that patriarchy determines “not only women’s gender behavior but also their gender identity through force, direct pressure... ritual, tradition, law and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor” (p. 83). According to feminist pacifists, the view of gender as difference and binary opposition has been used to buttress male domination and to perpetuate patriarchal ideology that contains gender bias and inequality for women and translates the ideology into the reality of women’s oppression.

Furthermore, feminist pacifists believe that the military is a patriarchal and sexist institution that accounts for servicewomen’s roles as oppressed and subordinated. In a similar tone, they continue to argue that in the military, male domination of women and violence toward women are not only revealed in a form of gendered discrimination, but in forms of sexual assault and sexual harassment due to men’s traits of violence and fear of the “other”. The fact that twenty-five servicewomen reported to Army investigators sexual abuse by their male counterparts during Desert Storm demonstrates the above argument (Peach, 1997). In this line of argument, in order to challenge the sex/gender system at its deepest roots, feminist pacifists advocate women’s refusal to participate in the military, their efforts to make use of political influence to bring about change from outside the military institution, and women’s characteristic moral assets to elaborate non-violent alternatives to war. In this regard, as feminist pacifists put it, women are then able to be liberated from male control and their sexual status or gendered roles are thus possibly eliminated.

Women: Peacekeepers and Peace-lovers

From a feminist pacifist perspective, women's predisposition to foster peacekeeping and peace-loving is associated with their experiences in child-rearing and child-bearing. Feminist pacifists assert that women have a nurturing nature (but women could not just simply be nurturers) and therefore are more protective of life than men. French (as cited in Tong, 1997) proposes female traits of "love, compassion, sharing, and nurturance" as opposed to male traits of "control, structure, possessiveness and status" (p. 55). Furthermore, female traits oriented around the ethic of care that display the qualities of "human connectedness, cooperation, and dialogue" are promoted by feminist pacifists as challenging the militarist culture of violence and destruction (Peach, 1997, p. 107). As such, care feminists reject women's military roles, especially women's combat roles. Their argument rests on the assumption that women's representation in the armed forces perpetuates patriarchy and the destructive/aggressive practices in the military. They also maintain that the advocate of women's equal rights in the military might misguide attention from scrutinizing the function and purposes of military organizations to rejoicing about the alleged gender equality in the military. Another reason for feminist pacifists to disagree with women's participation in the forces is that, as they argue, the military divests the female qualities of "care, compassion, and tenderness" from both servicemen and servicewomen and at the same time imposes on them the masculine culture of violence and killing (Peach, 1997, p. 107).

Feminist pacifists concede the necessity of some military actions, but strongly insist on the importance of seeking non-violent alternatives to replace military conflicts. Given the belief that women's traits that focus on the ethic of care are somehow better than

men's traits that focus on the ethic of justice, feminist pacifists note that women, the caregivers, are capable of transforming the masculine nature of aggression in the military by means of their nature or nurture quality. Feminist peace activists, such as those in antinuclear and antiwar groups, take this a step further, theorizing about servicewomen's roles to prove their determination to eliminate the dominant masculine culture in the military and safeguard a peaceful world.

The Military: A Patriarchal Institution where Violence is Sanctioned

For feminist pacifists, a close connection between the military and patriarchy has been manifested through the cultivation of the masculine culture of violence and the enforcement of servicewomen's subordination in the armed forces. In their view, a strong sense of male bonding within the military culture has been demonstrated in men's adamant resistance to women's inclusion as well as in the masculine behavior of aggression toward women and their adversaries. Feminist pacifists posit that a close connection between violence and war has also been displayed through the sanction and rationalization of violence in military culture, as well as through the encouragement of performing the destructive/aggressive behavior through war, the most aggressive aspect of violence.

In feminist pacifists' accounts, within military culture, the quintessential masculine equivalent to a symbol of domination/power is embodied in men's violent/aggressive behavior against women, children and the weak. Therefore, to refrain from perpetuating the masculine culture of violence in the military, unlike equal rights feminists, feminist pacifists are not interested in reforming the military system or securing legal rights for

women in the armed forces. On the contrary, they have enthusiastically promoted non-violence and peacekeeping, as well as advocating women's exclusion from the military and combat. Not only have they discouraged women's involvement in the military, but they have also encouraged men's rejection of military service or brutal responsibilities in warfare. For feminist pacifists, in order to oppose war and promote a non-violent peaceful world, it is important to utilize the assets from female moral values to restrain men's competitive/aggressive compulsions, to foster instead their cooperative capacities, and to effect change from outside the military institution.

Militarism: Immoral & Destructive

Feminist pacifists argue that the military demonstrates immorality through war, armament expansion and the militarization of the society that results in the sacrifice of lives, especially those of women and children. What matters most of all, according to these feminist scholars, is that the state relies heavily on the military for political power, places too much emphasis on martial citizenship and holds on to the ideology of militarism. In feminist pacifists' account, militarism occurs in tandem with sexism and male violence, appearing in different forms of violence ranging from military violence (rape or wife abuse and military operations against other countries), social violence (physical/sexual abuse of civilian women and children), to structural violence (appropriation of public funds from other urgent social needs) (Peach, 1997). What is problematic, as feminist pacifist theorists point out, is that military spending is too high and thus results in social and economic degradation. Feminist pacifists raise the question: should gunboat diplomacy be at the expense of human lives and human rights? Along

with their argument, feminist pacifists then propose feminist antimilitarism (often linked with ecofeminism) as an ideology in a political purpose to protest against U.S. interventions abroad, military spending, militarism, a world of violence, and the degradation/destruction of the planet. For the above purpose, the best tools are women's distinctive moral resources (appreciation of life, love, and nurturance) that stand in stark contrast to those characteristics in militarism (obsession of killing, destruction, and violence against women and children) (Feinman, 2000).

Limitations of the Feminist Pacifist Approach

It is acknowledged that feminist pacifists have made efforts to disrupt patriarchal ideology about some deeply held assumptions concerning the military and servicewomen. Yet, the limitations of the feminist pacifist approach also need reexamination. First of all, the question can be raised: *Does a feminist pacifist approach not fall into the pitfall of essentialism and dualism?* Feminist pacifists tend to claim that men and women are fundamentally different either by nature or by nurture. They assume that female traits centered on the ethic of care are somehow better than male traits centered upon the ethic of justice. However, at issue here is that while feminist pacifists challenge the essentialism of patriarchy as one that naturalizes/rationalizes/dichotomizes male's domination and female's subordination, they reinforce the essentialist notion of women as inherently more peaceful than men (women are more oriented toward nurturing and life giving and men are more oriented toward destruction and life taking), and as a result fall into the same patriarchal notion of essentialism and dualism.

More extended questions arise from the first question regarding the notion of essentialism and dualism. For example, is patriarchy universal? If not, then are all patriarchies equally immoral (women-hating, misogynistic)? Moreover, are all men oppressors/exploiters and women the oppressed/exploited? Is it necessary to polarize issues concerning gendered and social roles? And should we not reconsider the notion of “morality” and “fairness” if women claim a privileged position as “peacekeepers” and leave men fully responsible for national defense, leading to the perpetuation of the myth of women as protected by men (Stiehm, as cited in Peach, 1997)?

Furthermore, another question can be raised: *Do women totally agree with feminist pacifists' ideology and exclusively take up an anti-war position or eschew military careers?* Feminist pacifists assume that women are more peaceful than men and thus call for women to join the campaign against non-violence. In so doing, they cannot bridge the gap between their theoretical assumptions and the reality. In actuality, increasing numbers of women, as shown in Sarah Ruddick's findings (1983), for example, support military operations in times of international conflict. Also, many women, African-American women in specific, choose the military as their career (for example, the U.S. military is now about 14 % women). Nonetheless, this occurs primarily for reasons of economic necessity than other incentives (Albrecht-Heide, 1986). Furthermore, there is no correlation between women and peace in that some women do endorse war and violence and some men do propose pacifism and appreciation of life. As Tavris (as cited in Peach, 1997) argues, “by focusing on the men in power who make war (and the men in armies who fight), we overlook the women who support and endorse war, making it possible. By focusing on male violence, we overlook the men who promote pacifism and

negotiation” (p. 111). Moreover, what is at stake in the feminist pacifist approach is its ideology that centers on the exclusion of women in the military and in combat. This approach is used in both their theoretical debate as well as in political activism, which consequently could perpetuate military masculine culture rather than empower women to seek gender equality.

Equal Rights Feminists (Feminist Egalitarian Militarists/Justice-ethic Feminists)

Equal rights feminists are a group of liberal feminists (women and some men in actuality) who strive for women’s legal rights in the military, although they are not necessarily eager supporters of the military. Interestingly, they do not share common ground with feminist pacifists in theorizing the relationship between women and the military/war. In contrast to the feminist pacifist approach which is in favor of women’s exclusion from the armed forces, equal rights feminists, resting their analyses and arguments on democratizing the military, take up a totally opposite stance and argue vehemently that women should have full and equal access to the military. They want to debunk the myth that women are physically and emotionally weaker than men, as well as to disclose that women are effective soldiers who benefit the military. Basing their theoretical analysis on an ethic of justice, these enthusiastic supporters of women’s full inclusion into the armed forces believe that women can be the same as men. Inside and outside the military, they have been pressuring political and military leaders to make equality of opportunity into operative policy (Katzenstein, 1998). And, for equal rights feminists, legitimatizing women’s combat roles has especially been an urgent concern, given that combat exclusion limits servicewomen’s promotion in their careers, negates

their equal rights as citizens, leaves most of the responsibility of national defense to men, refutes servicewomen's involvement in military policy making, and perpetuates gender stereotypes that women are weak and subordinate (Peach, 1997). In what follows, I discuss women's military roles, their rights and responsibilities in the armed forces, and the nature of military culture using the work of Freinman (2000), Peach (1997), and Tong (1997). Furthermore, I explore the limitations of this approach.

Gender Differences: Unimportant Determinant for Women's Military Participation

Equal rights feminists believe that women can become like men and that the differences between men and women are really small. Also, they argue that gender inequality is socially constructed, and that the discourses of women as inferior to men, the weak, the protected, and belonging to the domestic and family are primarily based on biological differences between men and women. Following this line of debate, these feminists claim that a woman who is a wife and mother only is restricted in her development as a full human being (Friedan, as cited in Tong, 1997). Thus they insist that any woman who wants to be more than a wife and mother should be encouraged and allowed full access to social, political, and economic spheres, working side by side with men.

Equal rights feminists take this a step further, arguing that women are as capable as their male counterparts in the military. The debate rests on their assumption that sex-related differences are not an important variable in military involvement. Unlike hand-to-hand combat in war in the old days, upper body strength, which is assumed to be greater in men than in women, is less likely to be employed in modern warfare. This is due to

advances in technological developments and innovations in modern weapons. As a consequence, gallantry, intelligence, and technical skills have become crucial requirements for military participation instead. As these feminists suggest, examples of women's astounding accomplishment performed in several U.S. military operations, such as in Panama and the Persian Gulf (more than 33,000 women were deployed in Desert Shield and Desert Storm) well illustrate that women have become an integral part of the formerly exclusively male territory.

Equal Rights: Alleviation of Servicewomen's Long-standing Support Roles in the Military

Equal rights feminists base their theoretical debate on an ethic of justice and posit that it is women's right and responsibility to perform military services. They believe that denying women's full access to the military and combat duty is unjust, and assert that it is fair to enable servicewomen to receive equal rights and equal responsibilities and acquire equal career opportunities (equality in joining the armed forces, as well as in training, job assignments and benefits in the military) because democracy endows men and women with the same civil rights. In this regard, equal rights feminists believe that only by reforming the military system through legislation designed to achieve gender equality can discrimination be eliminated and women's auxiliary roles be negated.

According to equal rights feminists, cross-culturally/-nationally and throughout human history, it is an indisputable fact that women have been directly or indirectly involved in military operations, regardless of whether they have participated often in direct combat. They maintain that the presence of the imagery of female warriors has provided an emblematic threat that challenges the patriarchal social order/norms

(Macdonal, 1987). As such, the historical accounts of women's involvement in activities with respect to wars have been largely kept untold. In her book *Women in Khaki*, Rustad (1981) points out that much of the written history focuses on the record of great male military leaders/heroes, and the document of battles fought by men; in myths, folklores, poems, and ballads other than history texts, the stories of female fighters can be told.

In this vein, equal rights feminists also argue that for a long time women have served as a reserve labor force and been positioned in support roles in the military and during wartime. Women's military participation has been expanded only when the adequate pool of manpower is not available. especially during national crises. As they point out, it is clear that during WWII women widely served in the military branches of the American government to meet immediate needs among military personnel and to free men for combat. Dean (1997) suggests that it has been common in U.S. military history for women to join the armed forces temporarily when there were wars or specific personnel needs, but left the military and returned to more traditional social roles after missions were finished, thus allowing the military apparatus to maintain the status quo of manpower. Equal rights feminists continue to state that it has been typical in several western countries (e.g., UK, Germany, the U.S.) for women to leave the military and subsequently have their military engagement reconstructed as secondary or even nonexistent, in stark contrast to their ubiquitous and visible images in media coverage throughout wars. Not until the next external crisis emerges will the importance of the female presence in the military reappear in public discourses.

This camp of feminists also argue that regardless of the wide range of positions now open to women in the armed services, military policies in actuality carefully plan the

utilization of women's labor force so that it does not violate the fundamentally masculine characteristic of warfare. In her book *Warriors without Weapons*, Dean (1997) notes that "carefully crafted legislation" is an attempt to avoid "actually making women full-fledged members of the military" (p. 4). In addition, as equal rights feminists charge, the socially constructed gender stereotypical view of the military as a male-only terrain denies servicewomen official status as soldiers and veterans among military personnel. For many decades, they note, not only should servicewomen have fought alongside their male counterparts in the protection of the stability of their states, but they also have fought on their own to undo unjust legislation that does not give them full recognition as full military members. For example, because of their bizarre quasi-military status as intentionally defined by wartime policies, female military participants in World War II who were still alive, as Dean states, waited for more than two decades to receive formal status and veteran benefits (e.g., Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, the Signal Corps women, and the Women's Airforce Service Pilots).

Women's Participation in Direct Combat: Equal-opportunity Employment & First-class Citizenship

Focusing on the expansion of servicewomen's combat roles as their primary concern, equal rights feminists have endeavored to secure uniformed women's legal rights in the military, claiming that women can be good (if not better than their male counterparts) combatants. As they point out, the sex-based exclusion is still at play through discursive practices, despite the fact that the combat exclusion laws barring women from direct combat were repealed by 1996. These were replaced by the Direct Ground Combat Assignment Rule approved by then-Defense Secretary Les Aspin in

1994, which excludes women from appointment to units below the brigade level whose primary mission is to engage in direct ground combat (Sadler, 1997). There are several reasons for these feminists' support of women's full access to combat positions.

First, women's admission into combat positions would debunk the myth that women lack masculine characteristics (physically/psychologically) which makes good soldiers and thus are inferior to men, dependent on men for protection, and unable to defend either themselves or others. Moreover, women's inclusion in combat duty troubles the taken-for-granted assumption of the military as an essentially male domain.

Second, as Stiehm (as cited in Peach, 1997) notes, women's inclusion in combat duty would create a chance for women, both inside and outside the military, to give serious consideration to war and to equal responsibility in defense. Women then are able to build up their consciousness about military policies and be critical about pro or con positions towards military actions taken on their behalf. More importantly, women's knowledge and ability in military policy making can exert a "pacifying influence" on the armed forces (Ruddick, as cited in Peach, 1997, p. 105).

Third, enabling women to become full members in the military and in combat can reduce servicemen's resentment of women's exemption from combat duty and the sense of unfairness of making men shoulder the defense burdens. These feminists point out that in the military as well as in the service academies, the correlation between negative attitudes/perceptions about women and women's exclusion from combat duty has been found to be significant in studies (Peach, 1997). Devilbiss (1990) and Holm (1992) also note that women's inability to participate in combat duty used to be a good excuse for the military service academies to refuse entrance to female cadets.

Overall, equal rights feminists assert that to mandate the combat inclusion of women grants women full rights and responsibilities. The belief of first-class citizenship is metaphorically linked to the defense of one's nation by violent sacrifice and has been assumed to primarily involve men rather than women. They note that in the eighteenth century men were assumed to be more patriotic than women (Kerber, 1990).

Following a similar debate, equal rights feminists continue to argue that in U.S. military history, taking the examples of both World Wars, servicewomen were either recognized as civilians or received quasi-military status or combat support roles. These women in uniform were excluded from combat positions during wartime, although they were virtually deployed near or within the combat zone. The notion of the gendered division of women's military roles can also apply to the status of nurses, who were rarely positioned at what was defined as the battle-front, notwithstanding their physical presence what may in fact have been the line of fire. As Francke (1997) points out, geographically, women were in the combat zone, but legally they were not. An interesting example documented by Francke illustrates the planned policy in the military. Air Force Captain Bernadette Kucharczuk, a tanker navigator who "had flown some 31 refueling missions during the air war, delivering one million gallons of gas in midair to navy and Air Force fighters stacked over the desert," was nevertheless commissioned without non-combat status. Ironically, servicewomen perform in combat missions but are not legally in combat positions despite the fact that the distinction between combat and non-combat jobs has increasingly blurred as the nature of combat has changed.

Likewise, Lawrence Korb (as cited in Beck et al., 1991), former Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower, states that "just because you're not in a combat unit doesn't

mean you won't be in combat". As in Holm's analysis (1991), in modern wars servicewomen who are deployed in rear areas are not less vulnerable to attacks than at the fronts because they are the main targets of long-range artillery and surface-to-surface missiles. Dusky (1991) also notes that servicewomen now fill a variety of dangerous roles but maintain non-combat status. For example, women on Navy sea-lift command fill jobs from aerial refueling to serving on repair ships assigned to dangerous waters. Equal rights feminists therefore conclude that as the boundary between combat and support has blurred and modern technology has developed smart button weapons, women actually can accomplish missions in combat like those currently performed by men.

Finally, equal rights feminists argue that combat exclusion restricts the number of openings available for uniformed women and, as a result, restrains the number of women who are able to participate in the military. In this regard, small numbers of servicewomen are more likely to be perceived as tokens in the armed forces. Coupled with the above restrictions, combat exclusion also denies women's advancement and promotion within the military in that combat experience is not only a push toward promotion but a necessity to achieve status at the higher ranks (Peach, 1997). In 1989, a study conducted by the General Accounting Office found that "people serving in combat specialty career fields are generally promoted more rapidly than people in non-combat specialties, and are generally promoted to higher levels"; top-ranking military personnel (e.g., Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Merrill A. McPeack and Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Carl Mundy, Jr.) have admitted that combat exclusion impede women's military careers (Peach, 1997, p. 103). In her book *Ground Zero*, Francke (1997) details the imposition of the gender quotas by the military policy that hinders servicewomen's advancement and

promotion. For example, as Air Force Captain Linda Tobin mentioned, after she finished four years of ROTC at Sacramento State College in 1987 and she was ready to enter flight training, there were only 12 ROTC flying openings for women nationwide in contrast to 1,500 for men. Stephanie Wells, NASA's only female instructor pilot, left the active-duty Air Force after 10 years of service because there were no planes left for her to fly.

Limitations of the Equal Rights Feminist Approach

Undeniably, equal rights feminist interventions inside and outside the military have become one of the major factors that have helped expand women's military roles. Thanks to the powerful insights and efforts of this camp of feminists, women currently make up about 14% of U.S military personnel, combat exclusion laws were repealed by 1996, and more than 90% of positions remain open to women in the armed forces. From the discussion by Peach (1997), Tong (1998) and Freinman (2000), three general questions highlight some of the issues relating to servicewomen that may deserve scrutiny.

1. Do biological differences matter in the military? First, pregnancy is an issue in the armed forces that equal rights feminists cannot afford to ignore. In actuality, the military women who state that pregnancy is not a problem are generally career women with no children or well over childbearing age. And according to Mitchell (1991), the services reported that in actuality 25 to 50% of women who left the military earlier than the duration signed in the contract did so due to pregnancy. Peach (1997) also points out that pregnancy maintains the major proportion of servicewomen's lost time. She continues that servicewomen's physical condition due to pregnancy and maternal leaves

bring significant inconvenience to military personnel. Also as noted by Peach, within the current U.S. military system, the tasks that the pregnant servicewoman fails to fulfill are taken up by the other members of her unit. Consequently, pregnant servicewomen increase the workloads of and probably create displeasure among her colleagues or fellow soldiers.

Furthermore, motherhood is another important concern for equal rights feminists. Evidence shows that motherhood is a primary reason for women to leave the military (Peach, 1997). Mothers in combat zones are particularly likely to have a more difficult time performing their military duties. Some U.S. enlisted women in the Gulf, especially those who were mothers, when interviewed, pointed out that it was a drastically awful idea to send them to a potential war zone (Events, 1991). Commonly, the military mandates that single parents (with the large percentage of single mothers) and dual-career military parents not be deployed to the theater of war, for these soldiers might affect military readiness, cohesion, and effectiveness (Peach, 1997). But how can we judge whether the implementation of the above policy is questionable or not? While through a feminist lens, women's childbearing and childrearing roles are socially constructed and their roles can be altered, under certain circumstances, it is still a social reality that will not be changed overnight.

2. Does the logic of citizenship in the equal rights feminist approach make sense?

What is at odds is equal rights feminists' tendency to link the sublimity of citizenship to martial service. Equal rights feminists maintain that servicewomen have long been perceived as second-class citizens due to their auxiliary military roles. As they argue, only by performing combat duty can servicewomen become first-class citizens, showing

no less patriotism than servicemen. In this sense, servicewomen are thus granted equal rights and equal responsibilities with servicemen, given that democracy should endow men and women with the same civil rights. While these feminists strategically formulate their political agenda by claiming that women's full inclusion into the military can radically change its masculine culture (i.e., brutality) and make it a more gender-neutral institution, they unreflectively adopt a male version of citizenship that is defined through national defense essentially in the form of violent conflict. In this line of thought, questions can be raised, as implied in the work of Feinman (2000), Peach (1997) and Tong (1998), when we attempt to equate male being with human being, masculine value with human value, masculinist militarism with human virtue, and martial service with citizenship—does this mean that we are encouraging militarization? Sustaining patriarchy? And taking up traditional masculine behavior?

Yet, the martial-citizenship formula utilized as a political agenda by equal rights feminists brings even more questions. We might be wondering: will equal rights feminists' argument for women's access to the military end in itself? Have servicewomen altered the military? Do equal rights feminists rely too heavily on legal remedies, thereby prejudicing men's and women's sameness and putting political rights as the first priority on their agenda (Tong, 1998)? Even though the equal rights feminist agenda partially transforms the military institution, as Feinman (2000) says, "[t]hey produce no critique of the patriarchal underpinnings of militarism, no question of how the impulses of militarism thrive on sexual domination" (p. 41). Stiehm (1989) suggests that the small numbers of uniformed women, currently around 14% of the U.S. military personnel, hardly disrupt the nature of the armed forces and on the contrary may have become more

devoted and uncritical than military men. Moreover, equal rights feminists not only fail to challenge the military's ongoing problems, such as sexism, racism and homophobia, but they also ignore the facts of U.S. military interventions abroad, tremendous military spending, and the exercise of militarism that highlights violence as effective and necessary. And it is worth pausing for a moment to consider: should equal rights feminists take the credit for helping women to secure legal rights in the military? Or, maybe "military access for women is in part symptomatic of the achievement of formal [citizen] rights, not a precursor to them" (Feinman, 2000, p. 41).

3. *Who made the decision concerning the inclusion of women in combat? Whose choice was it?* As Feinman (2000) mentions, women join the military for a plethora of reasons—a career move, higher education benefits, and so on. Other than fulfilling commissions required by the military, servicewomen are juggling, among other commitments, the roles of a wife and mother. Most of the enlisted women are in actuality not ambitious for career advancement or promotion. Therefore, equal rights feminists might want to reconsider an attack from Schlafly (1991). She notes that "all this push for women in combat is coming only from the female officers" and "the women officers are seeking their career advancement at the expense of the enlisted women who would get the heavy and dangerous work without any of the glamour of piloting planes" (p. 103). Donnelly, a former member of the Defense Advisory Committee on Women in the Services, also remarks on servicewomen's combat duty and says, "it was mainly enlisted women who were now paying the price for this social experiment" (Events, 1991, p. 94). Maybe Elshtain's words (as quoted in Tong, 1982) can remind us: "There is no way to create real communities out of an aggregate of 'freely' choosing adults"; that

equal rights feminists' emphases on "individual rights" rather than on "the common good" and on "choice" rather than on "commitment" need to occur under closed examination (p. 35).

Conclusion

As discussed above, both a feminist pacifist approach and an equal rights feminist approach have contributed some dynamic insights into the issues for servicewomen, although some limitations in the two approaches lead us to pause for thought. The two approaches, in actuality, can be considered compatible and complementary. As Peach (1997) notes, the moral perspectives on women in the military are more likely "a combination of elements of the care and justice perspectives rather than being founded on only one, completely independent of the other" (p. 114). Feinman (2000) also suggests that the marriage of the two perspectives can become a strong factor in feminist analysis to empower women and to disrupt patriarchy. The issues emerging in the military that are insightfully pointed out by the two camps of feminists can become resourceful references for Taiwanese scholars who commit themselves to the study of Taiwanese servicewomen.

Poststructuralism

Despite the fact that this feminist research project is not framed by a feminist poststructuralist approach, the powerful insights provided by poststructuralists empowered the study in scrutinizing gender relations in the Taiwanese military. Therefore, in this section a general understanding of poststructuralism is provided.

What is Poststructuralism?

In poststructural theory, subjectivity is viewed as non-unitary and continually in flux, knowledge is manifold, power relations have a discursive existence, and gender is a complex social construction. Rather than only material accounts of patriarchal structures, central to the task of the poststructuralist deconstruction of gender and subversion of gender norms is the analysis of power relations, knowledge production as well as discourses of everyday life (drawing on Foucault) that are discursively exercised within gendered groups (Alsop et al., 2002). Following this line of thought, our attention thus shifts to how hegemonic ideologies are maneuvered in the process of the social construction of gender, what implications of ideologies and truths give us, as well as why individuals take multiple and sometimes contradictory positions to render the meaning of gender. Furthermore, as Coltrane (1998) notes, “if we change the focus from physical objects to social customs, we need to pay even more attention to possible differences in meaning” (p. 2), for differences are critical and indispensable in determining meanings. Using the notion that individuals are active agents rather than passive receivers who generate a multiplicity of meanings of gender through the process of construction, reconstruction, negotiation and reproduction to make sense of their everyday gendered lives, Alsop et al. make the point in the following way:

A shift to recognizing gender as a structure of subjectivity, which can vary greatly in different social locations, means that gendering can be seen as a *process* rather than a ‘role’. To this process of gendering the role of culture and language is central. The emphasis on process shifts attention to exploration of how meaning is constantly being reproduced and negotiate, and can have unexpected and contradictory effects. This provides a framework for understanding social change and the way in which individuals, through this process of negotiation with meaning, are constituting their world (pp. 79-80).

Attention to the process in which meanings are produced by individuals also reveals how meanings can be read differently. Although meaning shapes the configuration of individuals' subjectivities, individuals also negotiate among contexts to create meaning (Nealon & Giroux, 2003). Moreover, meaning can vary depending on the contextual differences; this can be linked to the reexamination of a former Chinese tradition. Before assimilation with western culture in the early twentieth century, in Chinese culture, the color red signified prosperity and good luck for Chinese people, and was the most proper color for brides' wedding gowns; the color white, a symbol of sadness and bad luck, was most suitable for funeral clothing. However, now in Taiwan as elsewhere, brides wear white wedding gowns to denote holiness and the red wedding gown is no longer common. Hence we come to realize that how we interpret the world around us is mediated through ideas and concepts that can always be modified, and are not fixed but rather subject to contest and debate. Moreover, we become gendered subject beings (a self) in the process of negotiating, constructing and reconstructing meanings that are available to us. In a similar tone, poststructuralism highlights the self as "fragmented, constantly in a process of formation, and constituting itself out of its own self-understandings" (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 81).

Unquestionably, poststructuralist insistence on the subject as multiple, contradictory and conflicted reflects its key concern about the process of subjectification, which plays a significant role in discursive accounts of the configuration of the self. Subjectivity is formed in a process that involves consciousness and unconsciousness, and is "embodied in the bodies that are both socially and culturally produced and gendered" (Weeden, 1997, p. 173). Explicit in poststructuralist analysis of subjectification is the idea that identity is

mediated through discourses that are constantly being renegotiated and changed. As Gonick (2003) succinctly elucidates, “the process of subjectification may be seen, therefore, to occur within a matrix of reflexive relations synchronized by discourse to produce and constrain identificatory possibilities, as well as the conditions by which one might recognize a self and have that self recognized by others” (p. 11). Drawing on Benjamin, Gonick (2003) goes on to note that, “recognition is so central to human existence that its presence or absence is critical to consolidating or disrupting a sense of self” (p. 11).

In addition, as Scott (1997) notes, language is a meaning-constituting system through which meaning is constructed and cultural practices organized. Through language we make meaning of our lives, our relationships to others, and the world we live in. Thus, by analyzing the language people use, we are able to comprehend how social relations are framed. To scrutinize language and its process by which meanings and categories are constituted opens up room for new interpretive possibilities, rather than reproducing conventional understanding of the world, given that words and texts have no fixed/inherent meanings and are only significant when situated in particular contexts. Through poststructuralist analyses of a multiplicity of discourses involved in the process of the formation of women’s gendered identities, what become illuminative are women’s multiple, contradictory and conflicting positionalities in articulating dominant institutionalized definitions of femininity/gendered division of labor/motherhood, as well as the conflicts and contradictions they experience “in the context of the dominant liberal discourse of the free and self-determining individual” (Weedon, 1997, p. 5).

According to Foucault (as cited in Scott, 1997), discourses play out and compete within discursive “fields of force” and dominant discourses are claimed as the authoritative and rooted in truth (assumed to be self-evident and discoverable through scientific inquiry), and therefore legitimated not only in writing but also in disciplinary/professional organizations, institutions, and social relationships. Claiming the truth of particular discourses also means invalidating and excluding other kinds of discourses. In a large sense, it is only through a critical scrutiny of language that it becomes clear why some meanings of particular discourses have been privileged and thus become normative, while others have been obscured or faded away. The purpose of poststructuralist analyses of language is, therefore, to disentangle the abstract concept and unearth the hidden meaning in hegemonic discourses presented through metaphors and further to interpret it in material and tangible ways. From a poststructuralist perspective, we are able to detach ourselves from and be suspicious of the assumptions about truth, knowledge, power, the self, and language in contemporary social structures.

Also central to poststructuralist analyses of language is the critical reading of a multiplicity of discourses of gender that enable us to make sense of the varieties of masculinities and femininities that are present even within a single culture. This offers the possibilities of generating subversion of patriarchal hegemony and social paradigms. In this light, a poststructuralist reading of servicewomen’s multiple and localized expressions of gendered identities may serve as a possible point of entry into a close examination of the complexities of these women’s military lives, their other social positions (e.g., ethnicity, class, or sexuality) in a plethora of contexts, and how discourses

of femininity vary through contexts and over time. Yet, criticism on poststructuralism has arisen among some feminists. They pointed to the limitations of this approach.

A Crisis of the “Category” of Women?

Poststructural theory has sparked some concern about whether it threatens the project of feminism (Hennessy, 1993). One question that is frequently asked is whether poststructuralism leads to a relativism that eventually thwarts feminist political intervention. The argument centers on the issue of whether troubling the category “woman” is possible at the same time as mobilizing women as a site for the feminist political agenda. Insisting that stable identity categories are indispensable for identity-based political actions, some feminist theorists contend that the notion of the multiple, contradictory and conflicting positionalities of women’s identities signals the destabilization of the subject. They ask: can women be rallied for political action if they do not have unitary/fixed subjectivities and internal coherence that underpin a shared identity? For these theorists, identity-based politics is imperative for women in order to overcome material/structural gender inequality. They argue that deconstructionism and collective political agency is antithetical and that there is a chasm between poststructuralist theory and pragmatics.

Butler (1992) makes an insightful point about identity formation and identity-based politics. Alsop et al. (2002) summarize the concept as follows:

Butler insists that identities are constituted through the repetition of acts, deeds and corporeal styles, and that there is no stable, coherent subject in existence prior to entry into culture. As she puts it, there is no doer behind the deed; instead the doer is constituted through the doing. The subject is thus never complete or fixed but in a constant, ongoing process of negotiation and transformation. In this sense,

identity movements, rather than representing the interests of a preexisting group, actually form part of the performance—the repetition of acts—which serve to create the illusion of essential categories. By consequence political movements that coalesce around the categories ‘woman’, ‘gay’, ‘black’, etc., paradoxically serve to compound and cement the problems the group may face by reinforcing the very categories which restrict, subordinate and exclude (p. 227).

In Butler’s view, the deconstruction of identity is not a dead end for feminist activism but rather opens up the way for a reconsideration of alternative contours for political agency and resistance. Resonating with Butler, Webster (as cited in Alsop, 2002) states, “the problematic character of that category is itself constitutive of its democratizing potential. Leaving that category open, and so never understanding it to have a fixed and determinate set of references, will leave it open to challenge and therefore open to the sort of change, transformation, and resignification which feminism might seek” (p. 231).

It is in this sense (leaving the category “woman” open and understanding the complex formation of individuals’ gendered identities) that the study of servicewomen may seek the change and transformation of gendered relations in such a patriarchal society as the military in Taiwan as elsewhere. Additionally, an excerpt from Munro (1998) highlights the quintessence of feminist poststructuralism: “women’s resistance is not necessarily or intrinsically oppositional; it is not necessarily or intrinsically contesting for power. It does however, have a profound impact on the fabric of social life because of its steady, cumulative effects. It is central to the making of history, and ..it is the bedrock of social change” (p. 31). Writing about Young (1990), Alsop et al. (2002) note that to underscore the sameness in the identity-based political movement such as feminism

synchronously sets up boundaries and excludes/ignores differences. Notably, the assumption that there is a collective experience of oppression obscures difference and discards the appreciation of plurality. The women's movement in the West (represented mainly by the voice of privileged women who were white, middle-class, and heterosexual) stalled maybe "not because of differences *per se*, but because of the failure adequately to negotiate such differences" (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 226).

A Feminist Research Practice in Exploring Taiwanese Servicewomen's Subjective Experiences

This feminist research project is an attempt to scrutinize how military ideologies are conceptualized, constructed and reconstructed, as well as how military discourses discursively play out through military personnel. Conventionally, soldiers are situated in and make sense of their everyday lives through distinctively masculine military discourses that have emerged from systematic and deliberate hegemonic ideologies and also been consistently maintained (Goldstein, 2001; Ragan de Bere, 2003). It is probably worth noting that, as Woodward (2003) incisively notes, "the very process of becoming a soldier involves the construction, negotiation, and reproduction of gendered identities, and this process is critical to armed forces" (p. 43). It is also crucial to acknowledge that, as Hopton (2003) insightfully points out, "state militarist policies have traditionally played a major role in promoting and reinforcing ideologies that shape popular conceptions of what it means to be masculine and manipulate such ideologies to gain support for use of violence by the state" (pp. 111-112).

Dualism in Military Discourses

Military discourses incorporate the bipolar pairing of masculinity/femininity, reason/emotion, strength/weakness, friend/enemy, unity/diversity, autonomy/dependence, protector/the protected, military/civilian, front/home, war/peace, public/private, and the like. The first terms in each of these pairs have referred to men and the second to women; and these binary oppositions have no intermediate possibilities. Yet, the subject of my critical inquiry into these dichotomous categories is not the signifiers (words) but the signified (meanings). Far more than just the superficial meaning of words and language, it is a system of manipulation of symbolic meaning (metaphors) in the gendered discourse. At issue here is not what those mutually exclusive dualistic words are but what they represent.

As Goldstein (2002) precisely points out, “masculinity often depends on an ‘other’ constructed as feminine” (p. 251). To abject the “other” is to justify the supremacy of the “self”. In this light, masculine military cultures bring into play the constituent element—the male-female/self-other binary in gender relations that translate biologically sexual differences into the reality of men’s domination, superiority and women’s subordination, inferiority. While in historical accounts women have been mobilized in the face of a lack of manpower, they have been continually suppressed and ascribed to feminine roles (e.g., psychological war-boosters, prostitutes, nurses, typists, secretaries) in wars and in the military and these roles have long been thought of as trivial and thus ignored. Under this mode of thinking, it then comes as no surprise that masculine war narratives depict women who die in combat as just lamentable, but men as brave, honorary, and patriotic (Kovitz, 2003). While women’s sacrifice of their lives in wars is assumed to be less

significant than that of men, the images of women are too often manipulated by militarists and play a profound role specifically during wartime. For example, maternal imagery has been abused in masculine war narratives. It is not uncommon in media coverage to see a picture of an armed servicewoman sentimentally holding her baby— paradoxically, an image of “patriotic motherhood”— which yet projects a metaphor that either the Mother nation is guarding her people or men should gallantly march to battlefields, exempt women from fighting, and let them stay home to care for the young, an image of “the future” (Macdonal, 1987, p. 14).

Essential Military Masculinity

However, as Kovitz (2003) states, “the military’s masculinity has less to do with men’s essential characteristics than with what they represent in relation to the military’s mandate” (p. 6). In a similar vein of analysis, quite understandably, to legitimate the military actions, social constructions of gendered identities and masculine military culture naturalize and differentiate the distinct roles of servicemen and servicewomen in the armed forces: the role of decision making, combatants to the former, and the auxiliary, noncombatant role to the latter.

In rejecting an essential military masculinity and gendered war roles, Kovitz proposes multiple masculinities that vary in degree due to different military occupations and hierarchy in ranks. Kovitz makes another good point that:

Military masculinity is neither universal nor inevitable. Instead, a uniform military masculinity is carefully constructed through deliberate social practice as a means of operationalizing a unique mandate—waging war—through an authoritarian organization that is preoccupied with ensuring the obedience of potentially resistant practitioners. The military is an organization that values, promotes,

and engages in practices that are the inverse of those valued, promoted, and practiced in the civilian sphere (p. 9).

Yet, at a commonsense level, the notion in military discourse that manhood makes good soldiers seems very natural. What is also traditionally taken for granted as natural in the military is the punishing/rewarding system: punishment for escaping soldiers and rewards, especially nonmaterial rewards, such as “honor or prestige, special titles or memberships, political influence or leadership,” for soldiers’ accomplishments in wars or commissions (Goldstein, 2001, p. 253).

In the military, the condemnation and punishment of cowardliness is in stark contrast to the celebration and reinforcement of the socially and culturally constructed “utmost manhood”—the uniform military masculinity (e.g., stamina, endurance, patriotism, toughness, aggression, and readiness to take lives). Clearly, this functions to effectuate soldiers to imperceptibly take pride in being the seemingly selected few and feel rewarded at a psychological level and thereafter to allay their resistance to fight and fear of killing at a physical level. Soldiers in this way eschew the notion of cowardliness and antimilitarism, and the connotation of effeminacy, naivety, dishonesty, and political danger in masculine war narratives (Hopton, 2003). Analogously, in this way they build up their masculine identities. The military/war system is in turn bolstered by valorous soldiers who are willing to sacrifice on call. In actuality, masculine war narratives implicitly have a great impact on soldiers’ mechanisms and behaviors. Furthermore, as Dowler (2005) cogently states, “narratives can privilege certain actions over others” (p. 6). We might therefore want to reflexively interrogate why and how masculine war

narratives, which insinuate into public discourses, favor military operations over peace-keeping and glorify male warriors as martyrs and protectors of women and the weak.

If discourses of men as defenders and women as the protected dominate, how might we understand the experiences of those contemporary servicewomen who have participated in wars and fought side by side with men? At the core of the question lies the conception of the institutionalized gendered binary denoting that men and women have to be differentiated in order to fit into the socially constructed binary categories, functioning to maintain social norms and order. As previously stated, with servicewomen's formal representation in the military and combat due to complex social change, the distinct gender line in hegemonic ideologies has become blurred and the essential military masculinity in war narratives has encountered some challenges.

Hegemonic Gendered Social Norms

Nevertheless, to challenge hegemonic gendered social norms is not an easy task, given that mutually exclusive gender dichotomous categories of being a man or woman, coupled with race, ethnicity, and social class, are an "institutionalized cultural and social status" that mold every human being's life from birth (Lorber & Farrell, 1991, p. 8). As also stated in the work of Coltrane (1998), "gender shapes identities and perception, interactional practices, and the very forms of social institutions, and it does so in race- and class-specific ways" (p. ix). Lorber and Farrell, quoting Rubin, note that the imposition of a "sameness taboo" in every walk of life constructs the reality that men and women "are more alike than they are different" in their own gender categories which is regulated by presupposed biological differences between women and men (p. 8). In this

regard, individuals who display behaviors contradictory to their assigned gender categories would be viewed as against the gendered social norms and thus become deviants or the so-called “outliers” described on a statistical bell curve that need to be ignored. Consequently, if individuals embrace a gender identity that differs from their biological sexes, they often make their sexual markers invisible in order to live without penalty within the socially/culturally regulated surroundings. Gender, as West and Zimmerman (1991) say, “[is] the activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attitudes and activities appropriate for one’s sex category” (p. 14). And gendered identities reflect what we believe ourselves to be and how we act in everyday life, resulting in our beliefs about what it is to be men and women.

Crossing the Boundaries

Despite the seemingly fixed, natural, and uniformly gendered binary that is socially encoded, it is not impossible to cross the rigid gendered boundary line. For example, Chevalier D’Eon, described in work by Goldstein (2001), had a high profile successful career in the military and political arena in the eighteenth century. S/he eventually disclosed the secret of her adoption of the male disguise, lived as a woman for the rest of her life, but was found to biologically be a male after an autopsy was conducted. What is intriguing about this case is the suggestion of fluidity, flexibility, subjectivity and performance of gendered identity. Butler (1990) offers a way to think about this. She says, “[the] univocity of sex, the internal coherence of gender, and the binary framework for both sex and gender are considered throughout as regulatory fictions that consolidate and

naturalize the convergent power regimes of masculine and heterosexist oppression” (p. 33).

We perhaps should acknowledge that the dichotomous gendered categories are in actuality a cultural product because our identities are formed by our positioning within social structures. We also cannot afford to ignore the quality of gendered identities as subjective, for this is how we make sense of how/what/why we are—through socially/culturally made categories such as femininity and masculinity. What needs our scrutiny are the very different ways in which gender becomes constructed, as well as the multiple, contradictory and conflicting positionalities in the discursive account of the formation of gendered subjectivities. In addition, Alsop et al. (2002) correctly point out that, “gender is part of an identity woven from a complex and specific social whole, and requiring very specific and local reading” (p. 86). Therefore, it is equally important to be aware that gender study provides an important and fundamental grounding that opens up space for critical inquiry into the interlocking and overarching issues of race, class, sexuality, and ethnicity situated in a variety of contexts—historical, political, geographical, social, psychological, and cultural. Gender thereby serves as a lens through which grounded theories emerge and extend to the study of multiple as well as entangled social issues.

The Transformation of Gender Relations

Perhaps the conceptualization of Alsop et al. (2002) can reconcile the controversy between poststructuralism and feminism. They suggest that, “collective agency as a reflexive political choice therefore need not assume shared subjectivity, but can rather be

a consequence of shared political analysis of the features leading to oppressive power relations” (p. 233). The ultimate goal of the feminist action, as Mouffe (1997, as cited in Alsop et al.) maintains, focuses on the “transformation of all the discourses, practices, and social relations where the category ‘women’ is constructed in a way that implies subordination” rather than just the endeavor in securing women’s rights (p. 235). The desire of this feminist research practice is to explore new discourses and new forms of social relationships. Davies (2000) illustrates this in her book *A Body of Writing 1990-1999*, stating:

... . The [feminist] desire for an imagined possibility of “women as a whole,” not constituted in terms of the male/female dualism. Such a move involves confronting one’s own personal identity with its organization of desire around “masculinity” or “femininity.” The desired end point of such a confrontation is to de-massify maleness and femaleness—to reveal their multiple and fragmented nature and remove from the meaning of maleness and femaleness any sense of opposition, hierarchy, or necessary difference. This is not a move towards sameness but towards multiple ways of being (p. 39).

The narratives of Taiwanese servicewomen’s lived experiences reflect what these women envision: the alternative interpretation and transformation of gender relations in the military. In reality, the tradition of an essential military masculinity or masculine military discourses is not inevitable and certainly “inevitability could be disrupted”, or at least troubled a little” (Davies, 2000, p. 12). Specifically, the foreseen achievement of gender equality in the military is a project that involves a coalition of men and women.

Cohn (1993) points out that:

[I]t is not simply the presence of women that would make a difference. Instead, it is the commitment and ability to develop, explore, rethink, and revalue those ways of thinking that get silenced and devalued that would make a difference. For that to happen, men, too, would have to be central participants (p. 239).

Summary

In conclusion, this feminist study of a group of Taiwanese servicewomen's subjective experiences is an attempt to deconstruct and disrupt military masculine culture and essential masculinity. Taiwanese servicewomen's narration of how their gendered identities were shaped offers a lens through which the circulatory practices of power relations in the military are exposed. Previous research by liberal and radical feminists on servicewomen has provided valuable insights and disclosed the myth of the military as a universally male domain, despite some limitations in their theoretical conceptualizations. Yet, these feminists' insightful perspectives on U.S. servicewomen provide food for thought as Taiwanese scholars endeavor to rearticulate and transform gender relations in the military in the Taiwanese context. Additionally, a feminist poststructuralist perspective empowers this qualitative inquiry to develop a careful and comprehensive understanding of how Taiwanese servicewomen negotiated a self within and against cultural norms and expectations when situated between western culture and Confucianism. Finally and most importantly, we should reflexively take into account the fact that the transformation of gender relations in the Taiwanese military is a grand enterprise that needs the participation of not only women but also men.

Chapter 4

Writing the Stories about 13 Hua Mu-Lans

In this chapter I delineate the research methods used in conducting this project. This qualitative inquiry was founded on feminist research practices. Readers may note that in this study I neither attempt to claim that it is universal, objective, empirical, or transcendental, nor would assert that its interpretation of the voices of Taiwanese servicewomen is definitive. Instead, my study of 13 Taiwanese servicewomen sought to understand the relationship among language, subjectivity, social organization, and power. Through the study of language used by Taiwanese uniformed women in everyday life and in their narratives, we gain a better knowledge of what subject positions these women take in the military institution, and how they negotiate their lives in a male-dominated community where power relations between men and women as well as between lower and higher ranks are discursively at play.

I invite readers to share the text recording of 13 Taiwanese servicewomen's lived stories. Through these women's narratives, readers are able to critically scrutinize military discourses that reflect the discursively practiced ideologies and social relations of the institutionalized military community. My aim is to ask questions about the transformation of gender relations in the Taiwanese armed forces. What remains important for both the researcher and the readers is to explore and examine how servicewomen make sense of the configuration of the self, and what events, beliefs, attitudes, and discourses in the military shape these servicewomen's roles.

Drawing on Simon and Dippo, Gonick (2003) points out: “Questions of qualitative data are not necessarily interested in seeking causal determinations or direct access to experience. Rather, they are formulated to investigate the character and basis of social practices that organize, regulate, and legitimate specific ways of being, communicating, and acting” (p. 56). Moreover, if there is any concern about the empirical questions in this feminist research project, as Gubrium et al. (2003) argue, “it is less with the substance of experiential reality than it is with what images of reality are produced and how they are used to signify the real” (p. 5).

Selecting Research Participants

In May 2004, I reentered Green Valley College, the research site as well as the setting in which I, as a civilian faculty member, had taught for 7 years before leaving for the U.S. to start my doctoral program in 2002. I hoped to initiate some informal face-to-face dialogues with a few servicewomen before proceeding formally with my research project the following year. I sat with two military women (the senior cadet was my former student and the other woman was my colleague, a retired major) at a corner of the campus, enjoying the gentle breeze and being surrounded by bright green mountains that were so familiar to me. I listened to them narrate their military experiences. They inspired me with their key insights into military service.

Ushered by these two women, I came to know one more cadet and two active-duty women officers on campus. My goal in the study was to find as diverse a range of participants as possible to enable me to compare the experiences of services among women who vary by generation and rank, and by areas of specialties. Using the snowball

effect, I was introduced to more cadet women on campus and several alumnae who were active-duty officers either serving at Green Valley College or somewhere else on the island of Taiwan. Finally, 12 servicewomen (of different ages, ranks, or deployed areas) became the voluntary participants in my research project. Among these women, there were 2 colonels, 1 lieutenant colonel, 1 major, 1 retired major, 1 captain, 2 senior cadets, 2 junior cadets, 1 sophomore, and 1 plebe.

In May, June, and July 2004, when these women were off duty, I spent as much time as possible with them. Thanks to technology, I was able to keep in touch with them through e-mail until I visited all 12 women again in December 2004 and January 2005 when the formal interviews were done. During this time, one major expressed her interest in participating in my project and with her the number of my informants totaled 13.

All 13 women were asked to participate in an approximately 2-hour face-to-face interview that was audio taped. They chose the time they were available and any places they felt comfortable for the interview. The interviews took place in the evening or during the day, in the women's barracks, or the campus grounds, in an after-class classroom, in the school library, in some informants' homes, and offices. They shared with me their personal experiences as a daughter/mother/wife/daughter-in-law/career woman. All 13 women were current or former cadets of Green Valley College. In the next section I provide background information on cadet women in this service academy.

Cadet Women at Green Valley College

Green Valley College was founded in 1951 by Chiang Ching-Kuo, who later became the second President of the Republic of China (R.O.C.). In 1949, after the

Communist Party took over Mainland China and set up a new government, the People for the Republic of China (P.R.C.), ROC government secured its regime on the island of Taiwan. In the beginning of the Cold War period, Green Valley College was established to recapture the mainland by training cadets who would then have expertise in political warfare against the Communist Party when serving in the military after graduation. Different from the other service academies that started with female cadet enrollment only as recently as 1994, Green Valley College has had a long tradition of integrating women students into the military academy since its first school year, although the ratio of female to male has remained 1 to 10. By the year 2005, the total number of female cadets in the school was less than 50, and they were studying in 4 departments: psychology, social work, journalism, and fine arts.

Complying with the strict school rules, female students study on campus and stay in barracks (Mu-Lan village) during the weekdays. During the day they go to classes individually, but during the evening and night they come back to the barracks that are organized as a company. One intern company commander, one intern assistant company commander, several intern platoon leaders, and several intern non-commissioned officers are selected among the students in the women cadets' company and share responsibilities within the community. This is considered an indispensable practice. Moreover, given that academic discipline and military training are equally important to them, in addition to eight semesters of study on campus, during the summer sessions of their second and third years female cadets previously took nursing, editing, and communication training in relevant military units. However, from 2000 onward, female and male cadets may take the same training programs during the summer, including parachuting and field

operations. After graduation and the awarding of their bachelor's degrees and commissions as second lieutenants, they are stationed at different bases depending on their fields of interests. Formerly, it was common for Green Valley College women officer graduates to leave the military with the rank of first lieutenant after finishing the 4-year required service, but now women are required to stay in the military for 10 years under contract. They may also voluntarily choose to remain in the armed forces after the 10-year required service, but they have to continuously move up to a higher rank before the limited years for each rank they occupy is due. If they fail to meet the requirements, they are asked to leave the military. While currently approximately 300 Green Valley College women graduates are on active duty, only one female major general is among them; she is also the only woman occupying the major general rank in the ROC Armed Forces.

Green Valley College female graduates from the 1950s through the 1980s served as propaganda officers, using radio and TV stations to conduct civil-psychological warfare against the people of Mainland China and to urge them to give up communism and embrace democracy. One group of women officers also patrolled military bases, serving as military counselors (this organization was disbanded in 2005). Since the beginning of the new millennium the implementation of new career-management rules for military personnel regulates the number of women to be deployed to various combat support units (孫敏華 et al., 2001), but many women graduates of Green Valley College still serve as staff officers with miscellaneous administrative functions in the Ministry of National Defense, the headquarters of the Armed Forces, or regiments. Military school teaching and training positions are also easily found among these women. One fact worthy of

mentioning is that unlike women graduates from other service academies, women graduates of Green Valley College are allowed to serve in several military branches—the Navy, the Air Force, and the Army.

Materials Contributing to the Study

Drawing on Mady Segal, Rustad (1982) maintains that numerous quantitative studies on servicewomen in the U.S. have been conducted by military personnel and civilians working on military contracts; thus, the military “defines what questions are relevant” (p. 138). As a result, the alleged empirical findings indeed reflect traditional militarist values and the needs of military personnel. In the U.S. as elsewhere, research (sponsored by the military institution) on women’s military roles has been “policy-oriented, descriptive, controlled by the military, and primarily attitudinal” (Rustad, 1982, p. 139); not many independent studies explore servicewomen’s subjective experiences.

This research project is an attempt to investigate the meanings of how servicewomen have constructed their identities in a patriarchal, bureaucratic, and hierarchical military society, as well as to gain an in-depth understanding of masculine military culture. In order to produce accounts and narratives that are rich in details and that will reveal local, personal, and political issues in contexts, I use transcripts from open-ended interviews, accompanied by documents (e.g., school year books, recruiting brochures, newspapers, and the ROC National Defense Report to date) and artifacts (a women’s-cadet T-shirt and the written description of ideas in design). This goal of the project is to generate a reflexive interpretation of Taiwanese servicewomen’s military experiences that brings to

light the emergent issues of gender equality in the ROC Armed Forces and echoes the desires of my informants juxtaposed with my own for gender transformation.

Transcripts from Interactive Interviewing

In a traditional, structured survey interview, the interviewee is assumed to rationally check answers on questionnaires prepared by the interviewer who is expected to generate accurate data that can be “categorized, codified, and generalized”; the interviewer is functional as a scientist and methodological specialist who remains detached from the respondent and the context (Fontana, 2003, p. 53). Moreover, survey interviews play a profound role in serving the interests of the nation-state, its institutions, and big corporations that then perpetuate social inequality (Briggs, 2003). As Foucault points out, the medical, legal, criminological, academic, and other institutions have used research outcomes for the purposes of regulation, surveillance, and control of the population. The researcher constructs forms of knowledge and practices in the contemporary social world, and is shaped by power, discourses, and differences (Gonick, 2003). The researcher should acknowledge that interviewing for knowledge production cannot be independent of the linguistic and contextual settings in which it takes place. As Gonick (2003) puts it, “knowledge production is a set of social, political, economic, historical, and ideological processes” (p. 22).

Analyzing and quoting the work of Holstein and Gubrium, Fontana (2003) rejects the traditional survey interview and notes that “the interview is situationally and contextually produced, it is itself a site for knowledge production, rather than simply a neutral conduit for experiential knowledge” (p. 56). In actuality, the interview is an

interpersonal, collaborative and communicative event; both the interviewer and the respondent engage in interactional construction of meaning in the interview context. Discussing and citing the work of Cicourel, Fontana argues that, “without the participants’ ability to share common or overlapping social worlds and their related communicative understanding, the interview would not be possible” (p. 55). Atkinson and Coffey (2003) define the interview as “occasions in which are enacted particular kinds of narratives and in which informants construct themselves and others as particular kinds of moral agents” (p. 116). According to Atkinson et al., accounts in the interview are constituted by speech acts that may be viewed as some kinds of action in their own right.

During the recording of interviews (approximately two hours for each of my informants), my informants were encouraged to freely express their feelings and thoughts. Occasionally several of the women expressed their anger and criticized some sensitive issues in the military (e.g., the current government’s policies), and I had to stop running the tape to avoid jeopardizing their careers should the tape somehow be stolen. In the interactive interviews I mainly listened empathically to my informants tell their lived stories, but I did participate in the conversation when I was asked questions or felt that I could share some of my experiences and thoughts with them. Of significance is that the interview created a chance for both my informants and I to unfold our feelings and doubts, to retrieve personal memories of past events, and to collaboratively make sense out of the conflicts and contradictions in everyday practices that isolated individuals may not have chance to do.

Whereas the dialogues, which later turned into transcripts and quotes in the text, are the product of the social interaction between my respondents and I, which is evidence of commonalities among women, the dialogues also reveal the different subject positions of my informants and different perspectives even on the same topic. The articulation of inconsistencies from similar as well as distinct points of view is exactly what I am interested in. The inconsistencies mirror what happens in the real world and explain how my participants' gendered identities are shaped. Specifically, what emerges from the interactive interviewing is the disclosure of not only the "whats" but most importantly the "hows" that occur in the actual social world. Quoting the work of Dingwall, Fontana (2003) maintains that individuals in interviews "turn the helter-skelter, fragmented process of everyday life into coherent explanations, thus cocreating a situationally cohesive sense of reality" (p. 56). Notably, the memories and experiences articulated by my informants in the approximately 2-hour interviews and in some informal dialogues between my informants and I turned into a collective and shared cultural resource.

Documents and Artifacts

In addition to the use of transcripts from the interactive interviewing for my project, several documents were also used. First, I purchased the latest version (2004) of the *ROC National Defense Report*, which contains policies promulgated by military personnel that may be employed as a reference in relation to servicewomen's well-being. Additionally, I went to one ROC military recruiting station close to where I live to collect recruiting brochures for the last 10 years that not only reveal strategies in propaganda campaigns but may be used in comparisons about the benefits servicewomen are said to receive and

my informants' actual experiences. Moreover, I went to the national library located in Taipei to look up all of the news in the last 10 years about Taiwanese servicewomen. I also spent a few days in the library at Green Valley College going through all of the school year books in order to have a thorough comprehension of the background of the cadet women in the college. Quite fortunately, I received a gift, a cadet women's T-shirt along with a pamphlet that elucidates cadet women's self images. The T-shirt, with only one expression printed on each side, construes my informants' self image and their perceptions of how others view them. The messages they transmit to others through the T-shirt they designed are resonant with what they later narrated in the interviews. Admittedly, all of these documents, the interview transcripts, and the previous literature on servicewomen and military culture provided me with a solid knowledge base from which to be sensitive to and capable of investigating the social world in the Taiwanese military.

The Research Process

The procedures for my research project were both linear and cyclical. The review of previous literature started in March 2004 and did not stop until my dissertation writing was finished. I spent the months of May, June and July in the same year flying from the U.S. back to Taiwan, visiting Green Valley College, and seeking voluntary participants for my project. A few months later in December when I returned to the U.S., I applied to the Social Science Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the Pennsylvania State University for approval to use human participants in my research. At the same time, the title of my project, research questions, and interview questions were decided and approved by IRB.

In the same month, I flew from the U.S. back to Taiwan and revisited my informants. I submitted the informed consent form for social science research to each of my informants and clearly explained to them the procedures, significance, and purpose of the research. After they signed and kept one copy of the informed consent form for themselves, I proceeded to the face-to-face interviews that were audio-taped and finished a tight schedule at the end of January 2005.

In early February 2005, I returned to the U.S. and began to transcribe the tapes, which were in Chinese mandarin, into approximately 20 to 30 pages of text for each of my informants. Subsequently, I made the transcripts of the interviews into clusters that are related to a number of themes, but at the same time I also listed the distinct words from individual women that I believed were significant to this research project. Following that, I translated the Chinese transcripts into English so that I could use direct quotes from my informants in the text of my research thesis. In the meantime, coupled with transcribing, I contacted my informants via e-mail, read my field notes, continued the on-going literature review, analyzed the data, and started to write my dissertation.

The Role of the Researcher and Ethical Issues

Even though the relationship between my informants and I was marked by easy rapport and egalitarian stances, I am well aware of the power relations that always emerge in the interview as well as the field work, and acknowledge my privileged position as a faculty member at Green Valley College and a wife of a higher-ranking military officer. Echoing Aihwa Ong, Gonick (2003) cautions that “in using the stories of women less privileged than themselves, feminists will probably gain more from the

encounter in terms of their careers and the extension of their academic authority than will informants” (p. 32). Yet, my insider-out status as a civilian faculty member rather than a military woman led servicewomen at Green Valley College to perceive me as a type of “microphone”, enabling them to speak and make their voices heard. Their unwillingness to speak out about their own concerns was mainly due to their concern about jeopardizing their careers. My outsider-within status led these women to believe that I was the person who knew what they needed and cared about.

Too often when I read through my field notes and the transcripts of my informants’ narratives, or mused over their body languages, facial expressions, and utterances of joy, anger, lamentation, and self-confidence, or pondered on the subject positions my informants took that constructed the meanings of their narration, I could not easily distance myself from the feelings of my informants and repeatedly asked myself: whose stories am I telling and for what purpose? Using my informants to gather material for my own purposes in the first place made me feel guilty. Numerous questions haunted me. How could I avoid exploitation? How could I advocate for women’s military participation and servicewomen’s rights in the ROC Armed Forces? Could the social encounter made possible through interviewing result in sisterhood and feminist activism?

Nevertheless, in interactive interviewing in which dialogues replace interrogation, the boundary between my informants and I became blurred, and we, as active social participants, felt comfortable sharing our experiences in the everyday world. After the interview finished, one of my informants said: “Before I came to this interview, I thought it was like the traditional survey in which I have participated for many times. My assumption is that when the interviewer asks one question, and then you reply but that

doesn't have to be what you really mean. Contrary to my presumption, I felt comfortable in the process of this interview in which I told my own personal opinions and experiences. More importantly, it offered me a chance to reorganize myself as to what a woman I was, am, and want to be."

As Ellis and Berger (2003) point out, "each participant's attitudes, feelings, and thoughts affect and are affected by the emerging reciprocity between the participants" (p. 159). During a 2-hour open-ended interview with each of my informants, what I sensed was a change in these women's attitudes at the end of the interview. They came in with the assumption that the interview would be the usual military assignment. At the beginning of the interview, they held doubts about what the interview would be like, and how such a short conversation would change anything. However, they left with numerous novel ideas and speculations about how they have become who they are. A number of women, after the recording stopped, sobbed about the stumbling blocks they have confronted in the armed forces, and then explained that they had never expressed those kinds of emotions and felt "great".

A number of senior women commented that they had never thought about the dynamics of telling their own stories—a situation that allowed them to better know themselves and the environment around them. One woman said, "I've always been rushing here and there, and juggling among diverse commitments. Without this interview, I've never had a chance to seriously sit down to think of the 'real' self. I was surprised how I can better understand myself now through listening to my own voice." Another woman remarked, "This is the first time I found out the magic of telling my own stories. Through reminiscing, I dug out some memories of unhappy events that I have

intentionally buried deep in my heart, which, if it's not for this interview, would never consciously come back to me. However, I think that all these past events make sense to me now, and I will not suppress my memories of these events any more."

Several young uniformed women expressed their interests in listening to their own voices. One woman said, "I've always tried to be a 'good girl,' paying filial piety to my parents and being loyal to my superiors. It's magnificent that through telling the stories of my own, I am able to closely listen to my own voice and intimately follow my own intuitions. I become even clearer what I want." Another young woman said, "I remembered when I just entered the academy, I had strong resistance to military life and even threatened my parents to let me drop out of the school by telling them my attempt to commit a suicide. I've been wondering why after years passed I've become confident and happy to be a servicewoman. Now I realized how military life has shaped me from a civilian into a soldier." The interactive interview thus creates opportunities to raise women's conscious awareness of how they become who they are.

In the process of observing, communicating with, and writing about the 13 servicewomen, I perceived my role as more like a reader and a learner, and less like a writer. I learned about their strategies in managing time and dealing with multiple roles in their lives. I also read 13 women's distinct life stories, which were full of wisdom, courage, and perseverance.

As an active participant in the interview, however, I reflexively realized what my role was and how the interview was negotiated and configured in the procedure (Fontana, 2003, p. 58). I also became reflexive and acknowledged that misunderstandings, resistance, and conflicts could arise in the process of interviewing if I became too pushy

about some emotional, personal, and sensitive topics about which my informants were not ready to disclose information. Yet, if my informants were willing to reply with respect to the above-mentioned topics, what became my biggest concern was how I could maintain their anonymity.

Bear in mind that my informants' privacy and confidentiality were exceedingly important. Therefore, the recordings were safely stored, the data were secured in a password-protected file to which only I had access, and pseudonyms were used in the event of direct quotes. Moreover, my informants were informed of their rights to review the write-up and make changes if they wished to. They were also told that if this research was published or presented, no personally identifiable information would be shared. Finally, the recordings and transcripts will be destroyed one year from the time when the research was completed.

Summary

In conclusion, this research project was a qualitative feminist critical inquiry that was based on interactive interviews with 13 servicewomen from a Taiwanese service academy. In addition to the interviews, documents were analyzed and artifacts were collected. This research was conducted between May 2004 and September 2005. For ethical reasons, the privacy and confidentiality of all 13 women, who were voluntary participants in this research project, were highly protected.

Chapter 5

Becoming a Hua Mu-Lan

The 13 Taiwanese military women who participated in my project are neither rich nor privileged, but ordinary people who play myriad roles as daughters, sisters, mothers, wives, girlfriends, cadets, faculty /staff officers, and soldier colleagues. These women narrated a variety of animated lived experiences that reveal a sophisticated mosaic of military life intermingled with laughter and tears, hardships and accomplishments, hopes and realities, routines and uncertainties, as well as compliance and resistance. For them, soldiering is a journey of ups and downs that provides unforgettable memories. These women's narratives are fraught not only with commonalities but also with differences that reflect an intricate scenario of military service in which uniformed women have negotiated a self within and against cultural norms and expectations, constructing their multiple subject positions as they create and recreate their gendered identities.

Juxtaposed with these women's narratives in this chapter are my arguments. I contend that the Taiwanese military institution claims to be exemplary, amicable, and non-misogynistic and endeavors to maintain the nation's collectivity and solidity. These claims are made to gain public support and legitimacy for national defense affairs. They serve to manipulate the Gender Equality in Employment Law and servicewomen's imagery in the mass media to promote the Taiwanese military's good public image and impress legislators, who will then enact laws that permit expansion of the military budget. However, I argue that Taiwanese women's military participation is merely superficial

evidence of gender equality. The main reason that the Taiwanese military institution employs women is to effectively use the female labor force as military personnel. The military intentionally keeps the number of servicewomen under 5%, puts women in support roles as administrative, clerical, or nursing work, and thus maintains sufficient manpower for national defense. The military mechanism of a gendered female/male private/public dichotomy is continuously at play. Despite the fact that servicewomen moved from the private sphere (i.e., the home) to the public one (i.e., the military), they are repeatedly assumed to belong to the private corner of the public space, such as the office on the base for administrative work, or a segregated dorm. In addition, I maintain that regardless of whether Taiwanese servicewomen have been shaped by the military mechanisms emerging out of the interplay of Confucianism and nationalism that are based on the gendered division of labor, they are active social agents who strategically negotiate among their multiple social roles (soldiers, mothers, wives, daughters, and daughters-in-law), demonstrating that they can perform well in a male domain, a public sphere, and within the home, a private one. For example, as I discussed in this chapter, my informants have fulfilled their social roles as independent, competent, and considerate women at work, and passionate women after work.

Why Do They Join the Military?

The participants in my project reminisced about their determination to wear the uniform and how that determination evolved from multiple motives. Yet, without knowing much about military life, very few initially embraced the idea of making the service a full, life-long career. Although several women have remained in the military for

more than 15 years and are currently in higher-ranking positions, they attributed their achievement in the military to “good luck”. For most of these women, retirement benefits rarely were a consideration in that service members only become eligible for retirement benefits after serving in the armed forces for twenty years. Acknowledging that the decision to stay in the male-dominated military is filled with uncertainties, the economic concerns (e.g., reduction of family financial burden and having employment opportunities) are the main reason for entering the armed forces. They thought that if the military profession was not appropriate for them, they could retire early. If they decided to challenge the tasks they faced in the military and remain in longer, they would have a stable income and help their parents to be better off.

Filial Piety

While the 13 servicewomen, like many Taiwanese women, are no longer confined to the domestic sphere and are able to make their own choices about many things, many of them tended to be susceptible to authority regardless of their occasional internal resistance. It is not surprising to find that they respect the advice they have received from their teachers and that they have chosen majors in the social sciences, which are viewed in Taiwanese culture as proper for women. Analogously, they were determined to become uniformed women so that they could meet their respective family’s expectations or economic needs. Even in choosing a husband, significant numbers of women requested their parents’ permission. Notably, as Brownell et al. (2002) point out, well before the 1920s in China, family was “the primary site for the production of gender: marriage and sexuality were to serve the lineage by producing the next generation of lineage members;

personal love and pleasure were secondary to this goal” (p. 32). This perspective can be seen in some of my informants’ responses. It is fair to say that most of them made decisions, to some extent, at the expense of a sense of the “self”.

“Well, I’m from a poor family; my parents are farmers. I thought then if I chose to receive college education in a service academy, I didn’t have to pay tuition and at the same time I would have a stipend each month. More importantly, the military promises a guaranteed job after my graduation. In this way, I wouldn’t increase my parents’ financial burden on their tight budget and also could help out my family to be better off later.” (Colonel Chen)

“My older brother and sister at the time needed long-term medication and my parents desperately raised money for the cost. The free education and board the service academy offered could exempt my parents from worrying about my educational expenses. So I said, ‘Well, that sounds good.’ I eventually attended Green Valley College.” (Lieutenant Colonel Yun)

“There’re four kids in our family and I’m the oldest child with three younger brothers. Living expenses for my family was huge and my father was just a low-ranking civil servant then. The best way to be independent of economic support from my family was to enter the military.” (Colonel Lu)

For a number of the older Taiwanese servicewomen, including Chen, Lu and Yun, the reduction of the parents’ financial burden was the primary concern upon entering the service (崔艾湄, 2004). Despite the low pay for soldiers in the early days, being economically independent and contributing a great part of their earnings to their families seems to be, for the older participants, a way to exhibit filial piety to parents. Self-sacrifice as delineated by these women is viewed as ethically important. Surprisingly, these women have, to a certain degree, clung to the Confucian doctrine of femininity: obey authority and make sacrifices for one’s family.

However, of special interest is the characteristic of inseparability between obedience to one’s parents and emotional adherence to one’s family. Thus, when these women articulated the importance of a sense of obligation to the family, what can also be

detected are the emotions of a daughter toward her parents. According to the observations of Jordan (1998), who did four years of fieldwork in Taiwan, filial piety in contemporary Taiwanese popular thought is interpreted as “simultaneously behavior, moral code, and emotion” (p. 278). He goes on to point out that through compulsory education (e.g., the teaching of the *Twenty-Four Filial Exemplars* in elementary schools), filial piety has been promoted and thus perceived as “an inevitable fact of nature rather than an arbitrary social convention” (p. 278).

Within the patriarchal Confucian family structure, close family ties and interdependence among family members are highly emphasized. This phenomenon is especially obvious in the relationship between a daughter and her parents. Individuals are taught from early childhood that family interests always take precedence over personal interests and concerns. Jordan further contends that the essential unit in a Confucian society such as Taiwan is the family rather than the individual. Although for the younger informants the immediate incentive to be a soldier more likely shifted from concerns about family finances to other matters (e.g., employment, job experiences, and training), these concerns were mostly influenced by their parents.

“As you know, the University Joint Entrance Exam is very difficult. But I was admitted to the law school of a renowned university based on my scores from that exam. Although I acknowledged the rigorous regulations in service academies and as a 18-year-old girl, I wanted to enjoy freedom in a civilian university, I decided to go to Green Valley College in order to meet the expectations of my parents and grandparents. They preferred the economic security the military provides.” (Captain Wang)

“When I was in high school, I heard that there is a major of Fine Arts in the military school. I love painting. And wearing the uniform has been so gorgeous to me. My dad strongly encouraged me to attend the service academy in that I can get paid during my schooling, at the same time receiving better training in the field of my interest.” (Cadet Shen)

Even though finances may not be a major problem within the household, many Taiwanese parents expect their daughters to have a stable job. Take, for example, Wang and Shen. Despite the fact that the majority of the younger informants chose as their reason for joining the “opportunity to better myself”, they obeyed their parents and even grandparents (as in Wang’s case). Cadet Tseng reflected: “My dad had difficult times in developing his career and that made him have regrets. Therefore, he wished me to join the military which he considered as a potential career path.” Shen reminisced about how her father answered her doubts about being a painter and a servicewoman at the same time: “My dad told me that after entering into the service academy, I would find out why it is possible.” “My dad retired from the army and heartily wished me to follow his steps in pursuing a military career. He was proud of me when I was admitted to Green Valley College,” said Major Ying. For these young servicewomen, obedience to parents continues to be valued as the most salient feature of filial piety. To live out parents’ dreams seems irresistible. Psychiatrists Tzeng Wen-Hsing and Hsu Jing comment on this in the following excerpt.

The virtue of filial piety, as understood by the Chinese, consists of several qualities, including unquestioning obedience to the parents and concern for and understanding of their needs and wishes with the intention of pleasing and comforting them. This relationship which begins between the child and his own parents is eventually extended to his relations with all authority (cited in Jordon, 1998, p. 268).

For most of my informants, job-related motives predominated. In the study of 陳膺宇 (2000) on 4,031 Taiwanese servicewomen, 64.8% of the respondents replied that the consideration of economic security is the most compelling reason for becoming a soldier.

Moreover, in 1997 the Office of Personnel in the Navy General Headquarters of Taiwan conducted an investigation among all Taiwanese female cadets in the Naval Academy regarding the most important incentives for joining the service, and 54.1% underscored the concern about employment (pay and benefits) and 39.3% highlighted the concern about reducing family financial burden (崔艾湄, 2004).

While the opportunities for employment and professional training offered by the military have become attractive factors in women's entry into the armed forces, women's decision to become soldiers perhaps clues us into the fact that, as Addis (1994) concluded after conducting a study of U.S. servicewomen, there are fewer employment opportunities and lower wages in the civilian labor market for women. It can also be explained that, as Addis et al. (1994) note, the increasing administrative complexity of the military institution and the technological advances in weaponry demand a well-educated, highly qualified and less expensive female labor force.

Influences from High School Military Course Instructors

Quite interestingly, some women reflected on the encouragement from military course instructors in high schools as another important factor in their entrance into the military. It is remarkably peculiar that military basic training has been included in the high school curriculum in Taiwan. This education policy, which was established in the 1950s, can be partly viewed as the Taiwanese government's attempt to prepare young people with certain martial skills for national defense in the case of war. The military course instructors serve as preachers of nationalism and gatekeepers for future quality soldiers. As Day et al. (2004) insightfully point out:

[The] ideas of the nation brings to mind not only notions of cultural distinctiveness and the sense of belonging to community held together by cultural solidarity, but also ideas of shared memories and popular sovereignty. Yet, populations do not just develop an awareness of these ideas as individuals. Rather, people need to be encouraged to think of themselves as a nation, with all the cultural and political implications this concept entails. It is nationalism, as a distinctive form of politics and as a way of thinking about our identity, relations to others and to government, which performs this function (p. 82).

The instructors (men and women) of these courses are officers on active duty whose ranks range from first lieutenant to colonel. They are also recruiters of the military, filtering and selecting candidates, both young men and women, who hold the potential to undertake a military career.

“During my high school days, the instructor in military basic training was my role model. Observing my outstanding performances in his class, he told me that I was best qualified for a servicewoman. So with his encouragement, I joined the military.” (Colonel Chen)

“I participated in numerous interschool activities and contests on behalf of my high school and won many awards. The military course instructor told me that a military career would allow me spatial room for self-development. He said because I am a dependable, self-reliant, energetic, and well organized person, therefore I would have a promising future if I would become a modern Hua Mu-Lan. I kept his words in mind. He was just like my big brother. I decided to give it a try. So here I am.” (Lieutenant colonel Yun)

“My military course instructor was a capable woman and a person with principles. She got along well with her colleagues and students and her teaching was very impressive. ... With her analysis of the strength and disadvantages of being a servicewoman, I seriously considered the military occupation. I always wanted to do something different. I found the disciplined life-style of the military desirable. I decided to go to Green Valley College.” (Cadet Lee)

Many young Taiwanese women in high schools consider their military course instructors to be a resourceful consultant who is familiar with life in the armed forces and can thus help them make a decision regarding the services for which they are better fitted or the ranks for which they should apply. But these instructors work for the military and

perhaps channel youth into various military services and ranks based on quotas of recruits rather than young women's needs. Major Lin recalled: "Our military course instructor persuaded many of us to join as a non-commissioned officer. But my dad insisted that I had to enter a service academy and later pursue an officer's commission." Admittedly, a particular military course instructor often carries weight in a young women's determination to pursue a military career.

Serving One's Country like Men Do

As a few of my informants attempted to untwist the tangles of their motives related to becoming uniformed women, they also referred to a strong desire to serve the nation. In their eyes, military service is a patriotic duty and a family honor.

"I have three younger sisters but no brother. My father minded very much that he did not have any sons to engage in martial service and guard our country—an action that manifests first-class citizenship. Thus, since I was young I have had a strong sense to go into the military service." (Ho, a retired officer and currently holding a teaching position at Green Valley College)

"From my early childhood, I've read many books about this country's defense against the Japanese invasion during WWI and WWII. Military service seems to me a unique and special way for a person to serve her/his country." (Colonel Lu)

"1979 was the year that the formal diplomatic relationship between Taiwan and the US was discontinued. There was a fear of Mainland China's taking over Taiwan throughout the island. I considered my determination of serving in the military as a way of fulfilling my patriotic commitment." (Colonel Chen)

Many contemporary Taiwanese hold on to a patriarchal and patrilineal Confucian culture. The son is the center of the Confucian family and is viewed as directly honoring his parents when he goes into military service and thus demonstrates a patriotic commitment. Many older Taiwanese women, like Ho, internalize the socially constructed values stemming from Confucianism and nationalism. In Ho's case, when

there is no son in the family who can serve in the armed forces, the oldest daughter becomes a Hua Mu-Lan, participating in the military in order to honor her parents. Moreover, in the accounts of Ho, Chen and Lu, patriotism is equivalent to military service or participating in war, which undergirds the notion of first-class citizenship. Engrained in their thoughts is the image of the patriotic woman, signifying the ultimate glory. Yet, what is at issue is that all too often the imagery of the patriotic woman (modeled as the woman worrier, the mother, the wife, or the nurse) has been manipulated through “national propaganda in contemporary wars because it served in various ways the needs of the military” (Addis et al., 1994, p. xvi). More than occasionally, in contemporary wars, militarists propagandize the ideology of first-class citizenship, as well as stir up national patriotic sentiments. For example, in the U.S., WWII and the 1950s recruiting poster included an image of Uncle Sam, pointing his finger and proclaiming: Uncle Sam Needs You (Marrs & Read, 1987). Also, during the Chinese national defense against the Japanese in WWII, a slogan dubbed “A Hundred Thousand Youth—A Hundred Thousand Soldiers” attracted many young people to engage in the war in a reflection of patriotic duty and assisted the nation in avoiding the threat of social disorder.

In conclusion, the entangled motives behind becoming a uniformed woman emerged from the conversations with each individual informant. Above all, the decision to commit at least eight years of their young lives to the service, or to make a career in it, has produced ambivalence. While regretting the loss of the opportunity to attend an outstanding civilian university (the majority of my informants were accepted by top 20 universities in Taiwan), they take pride in studying at Green Valley College, which is a

service academy. On the one hand, they were sorry to have relinquished a great part of their autonomy by participating in the military, but honored the military system of authority and hierarchy, on the other. Even though some informants lamented renouncing the most interesting pursuit of their lives for the sake of obeying their parents, all 13 women expressed no regrets about being a member of the military. Paradoxically, as they commented on their long-standing support roles as regulated by men in the military, they take on citizenship roles that are based on a male model, implying that sacrifice in combat is the symbol of the ultimate honor and first-class citizenship for soldiers.

Initial Entry Training

My informants shared with me their most unforgettable memories of a military event—the initial eight summer weeks of physical and military Cadet Basic Training before start of the academic year. They characterized this initial entry training as “a rite of passage” to military life and a moment of transformation from civilians into soldiers. In looking back, these women narrated their vivid memories of how basic training changed them from being ignorant of the actualities of military life to a sense of being a “real soldier”.

Transformation into a Real “Soldier”

The degree of difficulty or trauma associated with basic training depends on the woman herself. Colonel Lu reflected: “It was really a different world in the military. In the beginning, I wasn’t used to the military life at all. I was shocked that I had to shower together with three other women. I couldn’t go to sleep until early in the morning because the bed was so hard.... I was really homesick, but I knew I would get through the

hardships if I sustained with perseverance which is required in a soldier during war time. And I made it.... My dad's encouragement in letters actually motivated me to overcome the physically and mentally stressful training. "It was really painful for the first couple of weeks. We were bound to stay in the base without seeing the outside world for exactly six weeks. But I eventually liked it because I've been through a lot of thrills and fun," said cadet Shen. Cadet Kao recalled: "My high school peers teased that I wasn't going to be able to stand the hardships in basic training. Truly, I was crying the first few days and called home often. As I talked with my dad on the phone, he told me that I had to go for it and be positive. But day after day went by and soon it was graduation day. I made it eventually. It was a good feeling." However, Colonel Chen described lightly: "Initial military training was necessary and a turning point for a person to be a soldier. I didn't have any problem with the grueling training. The physical demands didn't beat me, and I got high scores on physical fitness tests."

Military basic training aims to disconnect the trainee from her civilian past and to discipline/reconstruct her in the military life, a process called by U.S. military women in the study by Schneider et al. (1992) a "mind game" or "head game" that involves not only the individual's physical but more importantly mental transformation. In this regard, trainees totally immerse themselves in the military environment which is distinct from the civilian world and "the previous support structure of family, friends, and achievements vanish or at least are put at a distance" (McCloy & Clover, 1988, p. 136). Through the process of basic training trainees develop a new self-image and identify themselves as soldiers.

As Snyder (2003) succinctly points out, “one of the primary purposes of basic training is the transformation of the individual into a warrior ready for combat” (p. 191). Soldiers are trained to believe that personal sacrifice is for the solidarity of the whole nation, and that the military is a family, implying the notion of obedience to the leaders who represent authority figures (as fathers do in the patriarchal family) that take no challenges to their authority. Snyder goes on to note that, “the first phase of basic training not only involves intensive physical training to prepare recruits for possible combat, but also purposeful exhaustion, psychological intimidation, and personal humiliation, treatment aimed at breaking down feelings of individualism within new recruits” (p. 191). Some cadet women, during the interviews, articulated their memories of the initial military training which were still fresh.

“I didn’t appreciate physical education and didn’t do much exercise in high school, so the physical demands during the period of basic training became the most severe challenge for me. I had a hard time holding a rifle or doing push-ups because my two arms were weak. My drill instructor kept shouting at me until I could do them correctly.” “As a trainee, we only could say three sentences: yes, sir; no, sir; and no excuse, sir. We would be punished for smiling or saying the wrong thing.” (Cadet Kao)

“During the basic training, we were exhausted both mentally and physically. I even stopped menstruating at a stretch during basic training. I remembered we were giving very short time to assemble in the morning before marching to the mess hall. Busy training schedules came right after breakfast. Thus, many of us usually went to bed with our uniforms on in order to save time the next morning. However, we stopped after we were found out.” (Cadet Lee)

“I remembered a drill sergeant from another platoon inquired what I was doing. I told her that ‘I’ was waiting for the other members of my platoon. However, I was asked to stand at attention for the saying of the word ‘I’ instead of ‘trainee’. Anyway, while I was standing, I was holding lots of supplies, but later I dropped something. I was going to pick it up before she said ‘did I allow you?’ Then she turned to the other women around and hollered ‘don’t you think you should help?’ Don’t you think it’s weird? She picked on us for no reason. Each one of our moves was from her command.” (Cadet Kao)

The Role of Drill Instructors

The DIs (drill instructors) or TIs (training instructors) play an overwhelmingly prominent role in basic training. They purposefully deprive trainees of their privacy, individuality, and status in order to reinforce values and essential standards in the military and to reshape trainees' identity as soldiers. The DIs or TIs may not strike a trainee or curse her. But they may and do yell, humiliate, intimidate, punish, and encourage her. Despite this fact, a sense of camaraderie is very often developed between drill instructors and trainees. As Schneider et al. (1992) point out in their study of 50 military women, "successful trainees, much as they may have complained, often look back in amusement and affection, professing a new understanding of the DIs' efforts to develop precision, self-control, and teamwork" (p. 28). My informants expressed their appreciation for their DIs' instructions.

"As the weeks grew shorter, I realized that all our drill instructors were nice even though they were strict and hard. Because you are a trainee, you are stretched physically, mentally, and socially. You're not supposed to have much privacy and individuality. They purposefully intimidate, humiliate and stimulate you. And you felt losing face and self-confidence at the time. However, you would benefit from knowing how to control yourself and your situations. Until now I think of them often. I remember the last day I gave a big hug to my drill sergeant. (Kao)

"I remember before graduation from basic training I cried very hard. It was an overwhelming feeling to see a sense of camaraderie emerging out of the members of our platoon and our drill instructor as well. At the last phase of the training, our drill instructor became our role model and a close friend." (Lee)

Nevertheless, young trainees may develop tacit resistance toward the drill instructor's grueling training. Captain Wang reminisced: "My combat helmet didn't fit me. Fearing that it would fall off my head because of its big size, I stuck a hand towel

between my head and the helmet. Yet, during the break after I took off my helmet, my drill sergeant saw me with a towel on my head and thought I did it for keeping from the hot sun. He was yelling in my face for a very long period. Even other male members in my formation quailed before his put-downs. I survived his screaming though. I pretended that I looked at him and paid attention to what he said, but, actually, I heard nothing at all and was just gazing at the acne on his face.”

The Military Ideology

Snyder (2003) notes that an individual turns into a soldier through “the process of military socialization that entails an actual change of identity” (p. 181). As Rodriguez (2005) explains, “the military imposes discipline in order to normalize and standardize the view of the soldiers as a collectivity and further the new construction of values through the military are meant to reinforce the idea that soldiers are supposed to feel a special pride through their compliance to the military chain of command and hierarchy” (p. 10). The military, through the deconstruction of trainees’ previous sense of diversity and individuality and reconstruction of their new sense of unity and sameness, aims to instill in them military values of teamwork and conformance. The first lesson that trainees learn is to value uniformity and to disregard difference. Ho, a retired officer, expressed this: “Initial military training rendered me a new self-image. As an eighteen-year-old woman, I easily internalized the military doctrines and believed that group values are far more important than self development.” Apparently, the military culture of respecting an authority figure is congruent with values within the patriarchal Confucian family structure in which male authority is highly valued.

Yet, as Snyder (2003) points out, “traditional training standards themselves are not simply objective ones. Instead, they are standards that developed in accordance with the capacities of male physiology” (p. 190). Regardless of the physical demands that ignore women’s strength limitations, my informants had positive reactions to the initial entry training. Cadet Lee commented: “I grew up a lot while in basic training. Before this basic training, I’ve never appreciated what my parents had done for me. But during basic training, I sent letters home with my hearty appreciation for their love.” “I felt good about a sense of solidarity and camaraderie among trainees,” said cadet Shen. Major Lin concluded regarding basic training: “Even though I felt that it was cruel treatment, I had confidence that I would be going through it. There was absolutely no time for me to think because we had to accomplish various tasks each day. You just had to face the reality. The graduation day came before I had chance to think. Anyway, I never thought about quitting for I didn’t want to restart the preparation for the University Joint Entrance Exam. Besides, I hoped to seek a stable job in the military.” Captain Wang summed up her experience with basic training: “Time was slippery during basic training. I didn’t have much time to think about my future. If I did, it was only a fleeting moment when I reconsidered enrolling in law school. I asked myself, ‘Am I going to register or not?’ ‘Am I really giving up going to a civilian university?’” All in all, according to my informants, they built a new self-image as servicewomen during basic training.

Self-images of the 13 Women

The participants in this study reject the perception that they are all alike in personality and physique despite being in uniform. Stunningly, most of them, while

displaying some masculine characteristics at work, disapprove of the stereotypical view that they seek to resemble the male soldier. As Lieutenant Colonel Yun said, “I think to be a female is a fact. Thus, as a woman, even though sometimes I have to demonstrate my leadership, I mostly maintain my femininity, and the characteristics such as relationality, respecting and caring sometimes benefit me as well as the unit where I’m working.” “Hua Mu-Lan” can be feminine at times and masculine at others. There has been a significant change in servicewomen’s concept of being a soldier; that is, we may play multiple roles, though we occasionally have conflicts in juggling among these roles” said Captain Wang. Herbert (1998) incisively points out that:

Femininity carries with it both positive and negative connotations; which of these connotations applies varies with the role or situation. In the military, women face ongoing battles over femininity, which is both valued and devalued, the source of both reward and punishment. This dilemma recalls the early days of women’s entry into the military, when, on one hand, femininity was discouraged because it symbolized women’s inappropriateness for the role they were filling, while, on the other, it was emphasized as a way of illustrating that women could perform military duties and still be “good women. (p. 33).

All in all, while none of the participants are in combat roles, what they explicitly or implicitly articulate in their narratives are their positive attitudes and strong self-confidence about military service. Cadet Jia noted: “I have no single regret to become a uniformed woman. By contrast, I would feel sorry if I couldn’t wear this uniform any longer.”

An Anecdote

One afternoon while I was waiting in an office in the women’s barracks for one of my informants (a woman cadet) for an interview, an unexpected thing happened. Another

young woman came up to me and gave me a T-shirt. “The pattern was created by a collective effort from the corps of female cadets, very special,” she said, “and I think you’ll better understand from the design on the T-shirt how we feel about ourselves.” Indeed, it is a unique piece. Along with the T-shirt, wrapped in the plastic bag is a description of the conceptualization of the object.

Before discussing these cadets’ perception of themselves, which was put into the text and printed on a T-shirt, there is a need to review particular Chinese characters and their meanings. In fact, the word woman (婦女—*funu* or 女性—*nuxing*) stems from a western concept and was introduced to China during the May Fourth Movement (1919) and the initiation of sex-identity politics; in imperial China there was no generic category of “woman”. However, there were such pronouns as a daughter (女—*nu*), a wife (婦—*fu*), and a mother (母—*mu*) (Barlow, cited in Brownell, 2002, p. 28). According to Chinese tradition, women’s social roles as a man’s “other” (a man’s daughter, wife or mother) is self-evident in Chinese language and daily discourses. Furthermore, the opposite of the pronoun “daughter” is the character “son” (子—*zi*). The character 子(son) is actually a generic term used to identify young children given that lineage structure in Confucian families organized around fathers and sons. Interestingly, the characters 女 and 子 can become radicals of another character 好 (*hao*), meaning “good”. Yet, the phrase 女子 (2 characters not 2 radicals) refers to a young daughter, but currently in Taiwan this phrase also indicates a young woman.

Printed on the T-shirt are two expressions, one on each side. The front of the T-shirt shows 女子不女子 (不—*bu*, means “not”). The female cadets intentionally ask viewers

to interpret the phrase in four different ways. The direct translation of the phrase is that the young woman (daughter) is not like a woman. It metaphorically implies that the young daughters at Green Valley College can be intelligent and courageous (the characteristics that allegedly belong to men), but still maintain their femininity. According to traditions in Chinese martial history, an ideal fighter is said to have both the characteristics of *wen* (cultured behavior, refinement, mastery of scholarly works) and *wu* (martial prowess, strength, mastery of physical arts) (Louie & Edwards, quoted in Brownell, 2002, p. 28). Apparently, female cadets are attempting to tell the public that women can be good soldiers and have qualities of *wen and wu*. Nonetheless, the interpretation of the phrase can also be directed to an alternative way of reading—女子不好?—are the young daughters not good? The cadets here challenge the view that military service is improper for women. Moreover, the female cadets invite their viewers to perceive a third possible reading of the phrase as an exclamation, 好不女子 (what a daughter), which emphasizes the presence of women in a nontraditional career. Finally, in the fourth alternative interpretation, 好不好 (good or not good), the cadets request that the viewers speculate about the servicewomen's representation in the military.

On the reverse side, there is a second expression—很女子 (很—*hen*, means “very”). It is suggested that this has two interpretations. First, what the young cadets are trying to underscore are their feminine characteristics: passion, relationality, caring, and the like. In the expression 很女子, the cadets insist that they are preserving femininity. Second, if the phrase is read as 很好, and then means “very good.” In conclusion, according to the

female cadets, the second phrase on the back of the T-shirt is designed to correspond with the term on the front, like flipping a coin with two sides:

女子不女子.	很女子!
The young woman (daughter) is not like a woman.	Yes, she is, but....
女子不好.	很好!
It is not good to be a woman soldier.	Yes, it is.
好不女子.	很女子!
What a young woman (daughter)!	Yes, she is a great woman.
好不好?	很好!
Is it good to be a woman?	Yes, it is.

Unlike Sasson-Levy's (2003) observation of the Israeli army—that servicewomen eschew traditional femininity and mimic “combat soldiers’ bodily and discursive practices” (4p. 47)—what the cadets at a Taiwanese service academy demonstrate is that they do masculine things but still are feminine. What appears puzzling is the diversity in the servicewomen’s performance of gender. Yet, this sheds important light on the key element in epistemology: contextual differences. While we are keenly aware that Taiwanese women cadets’ gender identities are local and contingent, without doubt there is a need for a more comprehensive study of Taiwanese uniformed women in order to identify common threads that may connect their diversity.

My informants’ social view of gender echoes what Herbert (1998) found after surveying and interviewing 285 U.S. servicewomen on active duty. She notes that 37% of women “engaged in strategies of femininity,” but only 13% engaged in those of masculinity (p. 85). She went on to note that “[servicewomen] must strike a balance between femininity and masculinity in which they are feminine enough to be perceived as women, specifically heterosexual women, yet masculine enough to be perceived as capable of soldiering” (p. 82). As West and Zimmerman (1991) point out, “Gender

depictions are less a consequence of our 'essential' sexual natures' than interactional portrayals of what we would like to convey about sexual natures, using conventionalized gestures" (p. 17). Moreover, Butler (1990) succinctly states that "the substantive effect of gender is performatively produced and compelled by the regulatory practices of gender coherence" (p. 24). In actuality, gender is far more active than we can imagine; it is something that we do rather than what we are. Herbert's study richly documents the servicewomen's awareness of how they deploy gender in situations and of how they manipulate others' perceptions of them in terms of femininity and masculinity. Yet, in a male domain gender is not an easy task given the strict gender norms. As Herbert (1998) notes, "Women in the military must do gender in such a way as to carefully negotiate terrain that often appears designed to make the venture as difficult as possible" (p. 112).

An Independent, Competent, and Considerate Woman at Work

Compared to civilian women, my participants believe they are more physically fit, independent and competent. They are positive that they took the right path in their lives even though their future is unclear. Cadet Tseng said: "Probably compared with my peers, I know better how to manage time, organize stuff in daily life, and withstand stress." "I'm not like my friends in civilian universities who party until early in the morning a couple of times a week and rely on their parents for finance. They sleep away their lives, but I'm pretty much sure what I want and have a very clear plan in my life," said cadet Jia. However, a feeling of living in a distinct world was often articulated among my participants. They mourned the loss of what civilian women may enjoy, but this negative feeling, according to them, did not stay long.

“Because of military training, when I was in my 20s, my outlook was much more mature than my age. I was too serious and dull. Although without the chance of being young and free, I didn’t have regrets. However, now I encourage my student to enjoy life when they’re young.” (Ho)

“After receiving military training, I’ve become such a macho-type woman. For a not very short period, I guess, I was so upset about my thick arms, short hair and dark skin. One day when I entered into a restroom at MRT station, an old woman told me: ‘Mr., you’re in the wrong room.’...I cared about my appearance so much, so I asked my mom to buy me a wig because I didn’t want to be such an unattractive woman.” (Kao)

“Several weeks ago at a high school reunion, I was told that I’ve changed a lot. While I was wondering if I’ve become unattractive, few guys told me that I’ve acquired masculine quality not in appearance but in my personality which they’ve never noticed before. I told them: why not? ‘A woman doesn’t have to be weak. She can display not only femininity but also masculinity,’ I said.” (Shen)

Nevertheless, all of these women pointed out that they feel very proud of their competence in their jobs and believe that they are able to undertake tasks and play the role of a leader. They often noted that they manage their feminine qualities (e.g., caring, relationality, etc.) well in their work, while sometimes engaging in masculine strategies (e.g., determination, authority, rationality, and etc.). Colonel Lu commented: “You can’t jettison humanity just because you’re a soldier who does a killing job in the battle field.” Lieutenant Colonel Yun said: “women are more cautious especially in administrative and clerical work. Unlike men who are too straightforward and do not have much patience that might offend people sometimes, women know how to communicate and negotiate with people and can achieve maximum results with less effort.” As Colonel Chen marked:

“In my opinion, the skills of communication and negotiation are very important not only in the civilian labor market but also in the military. Like myself, I pay caring and honesty to my staff. Regarding our daily work, I listen to their opinions carefully and pay respect to their suggestions, not just give commands and expect them to follow my orders. To me, this is leadership. Of course, you could say there is no time for you to negotiate and communicate at war and you have to make the right decision in a sec. After all, now in Taiwan as else where, the

military has its permanent forces and military actions won't take place all the time. Therefore, it is crucial to keep the military running well in peacetime and the skills of communication and negotiation play an important role in accomplishing assignments required."

Yet, such characteristics as caring, communication and negotiation may be viewed in a serviceman as well. Lee told me what she observed during her 2-week internship in an Army company.

"In this company, the deputy is a female but she is so macho and so mannish. Usually, she strictly requires all male privates to follow the orders she issued. Interestingly, the company counselor is a male but has these feminine characteristics such as caring and communicating. He's a good listener, too. He listened to whatever those privates told him including the pressure from the deputy and then offered suggestions. All privates liked him a lot. Out of my expectation, those privates gave me positive comments on the deputy when I asked."

A Passionate Woman after Work

Most women I interviewed indicated that they play the role of girlfriend, wife or mother after they take off their uniforms. Surprisingly, five of the women have a dual-career family. And four of the six cadets were dating a male cadet within the same school. They considered themselves better off than those married to or dating civilians. The main reason to choose a serviceman as a husband, as Lee mentioned, is that:

"Now my boyfriend is my classmate and we are thinking of getting married later. I think my husband will be more supportive if he's also serving in the military because he understands military demands as well as my unpredictable and long working hours. In Chinese tradition, it seems natural if the husband serves in the armed forces but the wife stays at home cooking and taking care of children. But if the conventional roles between husband and wife reverse, it's kind of against social norms. I think not many men as a civilian husband would like to manage things around household after work during weekdays and wait for his wife to come home only during the weekend. A civilian husband would feel that you're devoting most of your time to your military service. I doubt how long this kind of relationship can last."

Of course, many of my informants pointed out that they have also seen many divorces among dual-career couples. The primary reason, according to them, is that servicewomen fail to strike a balance between masculinity and femininity and persistently display their masculine characteristics at home. Women play a significant role in maintaining family harmony through communication and negotiation. Lu recalled: “When I was appointed to be in the position of a department head, I discussed and communicated with my husband first. He just retired from the Army then and agreed to stay at home baby sitting our young children. He told me: ‘Don’t worry and just go for it.’ I really appreciate that he puts my career first.”

The family support system is frequently mentioned as an accomplishment in these servicewomen’s marriages and careers. Major Ying said: “My husband also serves in the military. We both stay at different bases during weekdays. I really appreciate my mother’s help with baby sitting my daughters. It’s tough for her to take care of my three kids whose ages range from 9 to 4.” Unlike Ying, for family support, many servicewomen have to turn to an extended family that is very often the husband’s family. The key element in marital success rests on the relationship between daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. In a Confucian family, the mother-in-law wields a great deal of power within the household and the daughter-in-law is expected to be submissive. It is hard to imagine the extent to which a servicewoman must adjust her role as a daughter-in-law after work. Lieutenant Yun described her experience:

“I’ve lived with my mother-in-law until now. She became a widow when she was young. My husband is the only child in his family that means he’s been the center in my mother-in-law’s life. I had a miscarriage of our first baby. My mother-in-law blamed me for working too hard and not taking care of myself as well as the fetus. In her opinion, a woman is not supposed to weigh her career aspirations

over her obligations of child-rearing and child-bearing. She implied that I dedicated too much to my work and indirectly killed my baby. After I came home from the hospital, my mother-in-law yelled at me and said: 'Quit your job! Are you going to outdo and outrank your husband? You're supposed to stay home and take care of children.' While I felt awfully helpless and sad, my husband wasn't able to give me any comfort because he was having military duties at the base."

"My husband is civilian. We've lived with his parents. My parents-in-law are nice. They take care of our children when we work, but they still expect their daughter-in-law to dedicate much more time at home. So my husband oftentimes makes excuses for me for coming home late or having duties at night. He's covered for me all the time. He's really an extraordinary man." (Chen)

According to some of my participants, the obligations of child-rearing and child-bearing are the greatest obstacles for women's military careers. To juggle among plural commitments is an enormous task in military service. However, these servicewomen's parents or parents-in-law figure largely in child-rearing.

Military Service: Career or Job?

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the 13 Taiwanese servicewomen did not initially join the ROC Armed Forces in order to make military service a full, life-long career. They realized that what faced them are numerous visible and invisible barriers. In addition to the hindrances in having a family or raising children, in recent years, the establishment of a management system for the assignment, appointment and promotion of military personnel makes servicewomen's career development even rougher. After the implementation of this new management system, the Gender Equality in Employment Law was promulgated in 2002. Since then both servicemen and servicewomen must experience leadership at every level from platoon through the rank of general and receive an education in military specialties in order to receive promotion and retention. What discourages these women is not the law but the formal and informal mechanisms that

prohibit them from becoming a full military member. Worse yet, since the inception of the new millennium, a downsizing in military personnel has caused the numbers of women in the military to be even more meager. As Tseng restated what she was told by some male junior officers, “The positions of leadership are already very competitive among servicemen, let alone the chances left for servicewomen.” Yet, what pushes these women to remain in service are hope, luck, courage and diligence. They adjust and readjust their itineraries to remain in military service, including such plans as having a family, raising children or transferring to other posts.

“Marriage or having kids is not in my plan. If I do want to marry, I don’t want to have my own children. I’ll just go and adopt a couple of kids. There’s hearsay that if we get married and pregnant when we are in the ranks of lieutenant or captain, our superiors or immediate bosses would make bad impressions on us. Why bother to make a plan for marriage or a family? I’ll find myself regretting if I have a not very nice mother-in-law.” (Cadet Liang)

“My boyfriend is a military man. We’ve thought about getting married, but it’ll be in few years because I’m a soldier 24 hours a day. Also there’re so many things that I want to do. It’s already hard enough to get my education, training, and to prepare myself for the next step since the establishment of management system in military personnel. I really don’t have much time to think about family or kids. If I have my own kids, I might get out of the military or at least transfer to a post with a more flexible working hours. However, I kid with my boyfriend that if he retires and I stay in.” (Captain Wang)

“I’m satisfied with my current job as an associate professor because it’s my own choice. Even though I’m a colonel now, I’ve never thought about career advancement especially with the new management system in the military personnel. I love my husband. He’s really unique. I put my family as my first priority.” (Colonel Lu)

“My husband and I are a dual-career couple. Both of us are career-oriented. So we agreed to not having kids before we feel we’re ready. We are deployed to different posts and hardly see each other. We have to endure separation to save our careers, but we think it’s worth the sacrifice. Recently we bought a house. More often than not, when I walked my dog, I saw people playing with their kids so that I changed my mind. I wish to have a baby right away. Suddenly I feel so guilty that I’m not able to have a child for my husband. We need not only a pet

but also a kid. However, I realize it's going to be a real hard time having a child and a military job at the same time. I think when my kids are young, I can ask my parents to baby sit them. I'll consider leaving the military if my children are ready to go to elementary school."(Major Lin)

None of the 13 Taiwanese servicewomen said that they would easily give up military service. Unless the military denies them the right to be a service member, they will remain in and will not be afraid to undertake any of the hard tasks performed by servicemen.

Images of Taiwanese Servicewomen in the News Media

In this section, I use a review of 25 articles from the two largest circulation newspapers (*The United Daily News* and *China Daily News*) in a discussion of how Taiwanese servicewomen are perceived by the public, and how the imagery of Taiwanese servicewomen was employed by the military institution.

Language is abundant in imagery. The uses and interpretations of imagery are deeply rooted in social life. As Nealon et al. (2003) insightfully point out, everything is in need of interpretation and nothing is simply self-evident. Similarly, images do not contain meaning; meanings are constructed and then imposed on them instead. Above all, the material use of imagery can symbolically convey abstract concepts (the signified) that lie behind images (signifiers). In modern times, the nation-state incorporates gender into wider and more complex symbolic systems to transmit certain values into nationalism. It is not uncommon to see the manipulation of maternal images in masculine war narratives in the press for the promotion of national security (e.g., the woman with a rifle over one shoulder and a baby in her arms—the symbolism of the protector-protected relationship:

the Mother Country's protecting her people) (Macdonald et al., 1987). Also prevalent in media coverage are images of soldier-mothers who are leaving children to go into war—an explicit characterization of women's disregard for their family roles and motherhood. This also functions to encourage young men to bravely go to the battle-front and to leave women at the home-front to care children.

However, while hegemonic values might predominate in newspapers, a critical reading of these values through an alternative lens may generate different meanings in and around the images that are arbitrarily interpreted. According to Nealon et al. (2003), “all meaning is context bound and socially constructed rather than somehow naturally found” (p. 26). Therefore, what is crucial to our reading of texts or imagery is the negotiation of meanings under the consideration of socio-historical contexts rather than passive acceptance of meanings that are imposed on us without reflexive inquiry.

Among the mass media, newspapers may become a powerful means by which we scrutinize gender issues to date as well as public opinion regarding the issues (蔡貝侖, 2000). The examination of the imagery of and discourses about Taiwanese uniformed women presented in the news media may be viewed as a dynamic device to use in inquiring into the Taiwanese military ideology and bringing it into the public eye. In the last two decades, the conspicuous icon of Taiwanese servicewomen reflects numerous dimensions in media coverage that attract public attention. This phenomenon is manifested in articles in the *The United Daily News* and *China Daily News* (the two largest circulation newspapers in Taiwan). While the images of these women as portrayed in media coverage reflect public curiosity about woman's representation in the predominantly male domain, they play a critical role in troubling the domain—the

military—and “in symbolically articulating the social order and its values” (Macdonald et al., 1987, p. 6).

Because Taiwanese civilians recognize Taiwanese military women by pulling together these women’s images in the mass media, it is important to examine how these images are constructed. In this sense, to deconstruct the socially dominant imagery of these women in newspapers (specifically *The United Daily News* and *China Daily News* here) seems a proper entry into the exploration of military ideology and public opinion, and the possibility of social change regarding gender issues in the military. As Macdonald et al. (1987) precisely put it, “imagery can capture the paradoxes and contradictions which if more clearly articulated would be easily ridiculed” (p. 12). My concerns in this exploration are as follows: what are the images of Taiwanese servicewomen as represented in newspaper coverage; what are the messages that the military institutions intend to transmit through newspapers; what are the paradoxes and contradictions between what Macdonald et al. (1987) call the “open images” (intentionally interpreted) and the “closed images” (intentionally masked); and what can we find in newspaper articles about the mutual influence between the military and the public in terms of seeing more women represented in non-traditional careers?

The Proud, the Exceptional, the Selective: Public Images of Hua Mu-Lans

Hua Mu-Lan, according to national legend, was a great Chinese woman warrior who, disguised as a man, replaced her conscripted aging father to go into war, and received promotions and rewards from the emperor. Taiwanese servicewomen have appropriated the name of this mythic figure, calling themselves “Hua Mu-Lan”. The tone of the press

in Taiwan is filled with praise when referring to these women. Therefore, the discussion of their outstanding performance in the military has received a good deal of attention in newspaper coverage and has drawn public notice. These women are primarily portrayed as having particularly masculine characteristics and performing excellent professional skills that may shake off the stereotype of women as the weaker sex. The word “first” is frequently presented in the headlines of newspaper articles to highlight women’s presence in a nontraditional arena. Examples include “the first NCO (non-commissioned officer) specialist,” “the first platoon commander,” “the first female fighter plane pilot,” and the like. It may be argued that to highlight the “first,” “non-traditional,” and “special” is to view uniformed women as the “other” in counterpoint to the “essential” military and to reveal tokenism in the military.

“In the past, fighter plane pilots were always male. Chen, Jiun-Yi is the first female fighter pilot. Her performance in training is as good as male trainees. ...She’s accomplished all tasks in training like men. ‘Sometimes I forget that I’m a woman,’ she said.” (*The United Daily News*, 07/01/1996)

.....Female officer Yi, Cheng-Han was commissioned a company commander under the Logistics Support Command in Marine Corps. And first sergeant Wu, Shia-Ling was commissioned the leader of Marine Corps Band. The 2 uniformed women are the first female commanders in Taiwanese military history....” (*The United Daily News*, 11/11/1998)

“.....It turned out that there were 6 women jumping out of the aircraft at this demonstration organized by the Aviation & Special Forces Command. Even though they look like a little bit skinny compared with their male counterparts, their courage and performance in parachute jumping skills is as excellent as men....” (*China Daily News*, 04/09/1999)

“Chen, Ya-Jane was born in 1976, and comes from Pon-Hu, an off-shore island of Taiwan. She graduated from the ROC Army Academy in 1998 with the second highest GPA in class in the department of civil engineering. ...She was commissioned a platoon commander in Engineering Corps attached to the Armored Brigade Command...She wants to prove that she can accomplish the

missions assigned as well as her male equivalents.” (*The United Daily News*, 05/19/1999)

“Petty officer second class Huang, Huey-Fen, the first female deep-sea explosives disposal specialist, has become the first female member of the group since it was established 45 years ago.” (*The United Daily News*, 07/30/1999)

“Lee, Jia-Na graduated from the ROC Naval Academy in 2002. She recently finished her training courses in Missile& Artillery Training School and Marine Corps School and officially becomes a platoon commander in an Air Defense Artillery company directed by Air Defense squadron and Marine Corps base brigade and will be commissioned first lieutenant next month. She is the first woman in a combat unit.” (*The United Daily News*, 07/24/2003)

“Hong, Jia-Miaw, the first female attorney in the ROC military, points out the fact that women victims do not feel comfortable in court while being inquired by a male attorney regarding such case as sexual harassment in the military. She is expecting that more female attorneys would appear in the near future, for it will favor women officers and NCOs who encounter the same situation.” (*The United Daily News*, 09/22/2004)

Moreover, female cadets have won numerous compliments from the public and considerable publicity has constantly been given to their representation in academies. Before becoming a plebe, most of these cadets had attained high scores on *the University Joint Entrance Exam* (the most competitive one in Taiwan), but gave up admission to renowned universities and decided to enter a service academy. They have performed remarkably in leadership and military training and have had much higher GPAs than their male counterparts. Often they are portrayed in the media as a modern Hua Mu-Lan who has both physical and mental prowess.

“This year service academies have their first women’s enrollment— 15 young women are admitted to the Army Academy and 21 the Naval Academy. Like young men, they are expecting the initial 8 summer weeks of physical and military Cadet Basic Training before the academic year begins. The male and female trainees stay integrated and receive the same grueling training. The women will do everything that the men do.” (*The United Daily News*, 10/9/1994)

“At the joint commencement of 6 service academies in the ROC Armed Forces, among the 18 awards to the first 3 highest GPA students in each school, women took 9. Notably, the awards went to all females in the Army Academy.” (*China Daily News*, 11/08/1998)

“Hong, Wan-Ting, skillful in playing Chinese classical music, will become a cadet of the class of 2007 in the US West Point Academy. She commented that being accepted by West Point was due to her demonstrating academic aspirations, physical fitness, potential of leadership, and excellent English proficiency. She mentioned that self-control and patience the DI taught her in military Cadet Basic Training in Taiwan will allow her to be a Hau, Mu-lan with both brain and physical prowess in the near future after she finishes her course work and training in West Point and comes back.” (*The United Daily News*, 6/6/2003)

“The minister of National Defense, Tan, Yao-Ming, remarked at commencement: male cadets haven’t done well in physical fitness tests as well as the tests of English ability and Chinese Mandarin composition. He pointed out that there is a lot of room for them to be improved. On the contrary, he acclaimed women cadets’ outstanding performance in school.” (*The United Daily News*, 07/12/2003)

“Like her two older sisters, Chang, Yin-Hwa also graduated from Taichung Girls High School. Three of them had received an admission from the same law school of the top-one university. Rather, they all decided to become a cadet because of economic concerns.” (*China Daily News*, 07/20/2003)

Obviously, cadet women’s excellent performance in training and academics has received much praise in public. Yet, these women’s achievements seem to worry some traditional militarists. They may not be pleased to see that women excel in a male domain. It is no surprise that Tan Yao-Ming, the minister of the ROC National Defense, seriously encouraged male graduates and cadets at commencement to work harder on both physical fitness and academics.

The Myth of Gender Equality in the Taiwanese Military

In Taiwan, under the pressure of social expectations and feminist intervention, the military has, through the media, persistently reinforced its equal-opportunity employment and gender-neutral policies in order to project itself as “an exemplar for the rest of the

society” (Unterhalter, 1987, p. 114). The Taiwanese military repeatedly uses the mass media to transmit its explicit message that it disregards gender differences, and that servicewomen and servicemen have an equal chance for promotion and allocation in diverse job categories.

According to 蔡貝倫 (2000) in her investigation of three daily newspapers in Taiwan (including the two discussed here) published from 1994 to 1999, 35.6% of the sources in the press were directly provided by the military propaganda. Through the mass media, the Taiwanese military advertises its open image (an exemplar for the rest of society that overrides gender differences) and extols servicewomen’s outstanding performance. What remains perplexing is that through the same mass media the military continuously highlights itself as a predominantly male arena and servicewomen as selective and exceptional. The messages in the media seem to imply the notion that only a few women who possess masculine characteristics can enter the armed forces, regardless of the military’s attempt to preserve masculine cultures and police the gender lines—issues that are not addressed in public—it is self-evident. In the military’s propaganda campaigns, the servicewoman model is as prevalent as the man’s. For example, Lee Jia-Na was described as follows in a newspaper interview: “she has had no regrets for entering the military service. Despite the heavy helmet and the burning sun, as long as she is wearing the uniform, she has no privileges compared to servicemen” (*The United Daily News*, 07/24/03).

Each year in Taiwan, the Ministry of National Defense is required by the Constitution to appoint higher-ranking officers from the ROC Armed Forces to report to the Legislature its annual expenditures on national defense. Legislators function as

gatekeepers of the military budget. In responding to legislator Yeh, Ju-Lan's inquiry into the absence of female generals in the military, Lieutenant General Chen, Ging-Shen noted:

“...Women officers and NCOs will be fairly allocated in a variety of job categories including combat units based on their qualification and choice. Temporarily there are 47 colonels in the military. It is very possible that a female major general will be appointed in the near future. However, by now there are no qualified women for the major general position in that they fail to meet preparedness criterion. ...In the face of the shortage of manpower, the military has employed women in such easy tasks as administrative and clerical work to allow servicemen becoming a member in national defense. Yet, because of women's expanding military roles and public expectations of this consequence, the military will seriously consider the possibility to integrate women into combat duty. In this sense, gender equality would virtually achieve in the military and servicemen's accusation of servicewomen's privileged status to have same pay but less work would be dissolved.” (*The United Daily News*, 12/30/1997)

Common indicators of fairness in the military include same pay, same training and same responsibilities. What appears contradictory to the military's grandiose claims of gender-neutral policy is its long-standing gender quota system. Policy-making militarists persistently limit the numbers of women joining the military to less than 5% compared to the proportion of servicemen. This adherence to the military's gender lines makes a military career difficult for women. For example, only small numbers of young women are allowed to enroll in service academies. The consequence is that the proportion of women officers who graduate from service academies will therefore remain low.

In 2003, Chang, Yin-Hwa, a smart young woman, received an admission offer from Taiwan University Law School (the top university on the island), but was rejected by a service academy. This academy only admits 1 woman to the law school each year compared to 17 men. Because another girl had already been admitted, Chang appealed to the press, describing her wish to join the military and seek a to register in the academy.

According to legislator Tsai, Tung-Zong, the number of newly enrolled male plebes in Taiwanese service academies were 1,407 in 2003, but of female plebes was only 54; a ratio of 27:1 (*The United Daily News*, 07/25/2003). Chang's case caused considerable controversy and gained public visibility. Even though Chang eventually became a plebe because the only admitted woman Lei, Jia-Jia, changed her mind and decided to attend a civilian university, the gender quota system is self-evident. At a press conference on behalf of the Ministry of National Defense, Wu, Shen-Ping, the director of Military Recruiting Center, said:

“We have 25482 young people who have participated in the Service Academies Joint Exam this year, the numbers of participants increased 3185. However, in accordance with military personnel needs each year, the numbers of student enrollment will be cut down 623 compared with the number of last year. This means the recruiting this year is even more competitive. ...Chang, Yin-Hwa's case has nothing to do with gender discrimination but with the consideration of the needs of military personnel.” (*The United Daily News*, 07/22/2003)

The ambiguity resides in the fact that the gender quotas do not equate to gender discrimination according to the statement from the military institution. Yet, it is obvious that the military intends to conceal its intent to maintain itself as a male domain and thus keep the numbers of women low in the military.

Furthermore, higher-ranking uniformed women (e.g., lieutenant colonels and colonels) are rigidly restricted to gaining access to decision-making posts or the major rank of general. After the promulgation of the Gender Equality in Employment Law (2002), women are no longer prohibited from and in fact are eligible for much higher ranks on the condition that they have obtained a diploma from the Command and General Staff College and have gone through commander positions at the platoon and company levels, through to the regiment level (王雅菁, 2004). Nevertheless, before the

implementation of the law, a lot of professional training courses and job categories remained closed to those higher-ranking women when they were young. Therefore, without meeting the requirements set up by the military institution, there is no feasible way for these women to break the glass ceiling in the military, even though in 2002 the first major general was appointed (*China Daily News*, 12/28/2002).

If the military had made women's promotion and career advancement opportunities equal to those for men, why did Lieutenant Colonel Myau, Chyong-Wen decide to leave the military two years after she received a medal as an exemplar female officer from the Marine Corps? The Taiwanese military's intention may not be dissimilar to that of the U.S. military (Stiehm, 1989) or that of the Israeli military (Sasson-Levy, 2003), where the appointment of a female major general is more symbolic and decorative. It functions as superficial evidence that the military is democratic and promotes equal-opportunity employment rights.

It is not surprising that many capable higher-ranking servicewomen, when confronted by the threshold as they seek a position at the general level, must face the reality of leaving the military before retirement despite their wishes for a fair chance in life. As D'Amico (1997) describes women's situation in the U.S. Army and Marines as, "formal and informal mechanisms encourage women's attrition" (p. 220). One of my informants reported encountering a bottleneck after pursuing her military career for more than 15 years and decided to become a military course instructor at a college during the period of our interaction. Unquestionably, there is a vast fault line between the reality (servicewomen's unsuccessful career upward mobility) and the military's proclamation of its policy of equal employment rights.

The repeated appearance of servicewomen's images in the press act to buttress the military's declaration of gender equality. Yet, servicewomen's heightened visibility in the mass media does not mean that they receive the same important assignments and positions that servicemen do despite these women's competence. Ironically, only by means of the mass media can servicewomen's voices somehow be effectively heard. Jiang, Li-Jun, a distinguished honors graduate of the ROC Army Academy, spoke to the media immediately after her graduation about her wish to receive training for a commander position (she was actually assigned to a support role in the transportation corps at the time). Her father also appealed to the Taiwanese government to seriously consider the issue of equal-opportunity employment in the military (*The United Daily News*, 11/08/1998). The military's open image as an exemplar masks its hidden image as a male dominated society and opens immense space for speculation. Is equality as imprinted in paper accounts equivalent to the equality that exists daily? How can we explain the many inequities in the Taiwanese military?

An image of equality helps the Taiwanese military to claim that it is a democratic society that fights for the nation-state and the common good in the name of freedom and justice. This justifies the expansion of its budget to purchase expensive weaponry to defend Taiwan against Mainland China across the Taiwan Strait. Therefore, each year in the *ROC National Defense Report*, the military reinforces the importance of gender equality and devalues gender discrimination. In the 2004 report it was stated with regard to military laws:

In coordination with the promulgation of "Gender Equality in Employment Law," to ensure equal employment rights and to highlight the implication of equality status as stipulated in the law, the

MND [Ministry of National Defense] revised and promulgated regulations including the “Operational Guidelines for Enlisted Officers and Non-commissioned Officers Applying for Unpaid Parental Leave for Raising Children,” “Regulations Governing Female Physiological Leave, Maternity Leave and Family Leave,” “Regulations Governing the Management of Female Military Personnel Living in Barracks of the Armed Forces,” “Regulations Governing the Management and Punishment for Co-ed Army Barracks of the Armed Forces,” and “Rules for Establishing and Providing Child-Care Facilities in the Armed Forces.” In order to foster a friendly and gender-parity work environment, the MND shall make major commitment to create a friendly and gender equal environment by carrying out the laws regarding gender equality laws and creating counseling and complaint channels as well (p. 138).

Yet, do the laws really protect servicewomen and do women in actuality benefit from the laws? And are counseling and complaint channels available? In 1996, female officer Huang was sexually harassed by her immediate commander, Lieutenant Colonel Wu (*The United Daily News*, 12/8/1996). Before the case burst onto the public scene, Wu retired with his full pension, but this female officer received a demerit and a bad evaluation for her annual performance. Not only did the trauma bring her mental and physical misery but she also retired the next year. Without a verdict of guilty after a 3-year lawsuit, she appealed to the press and said: “I’m not a trouble maker but a person fighting for social justice in the military” (*China Daily News*, 04/26/1998). We might wonder: would the case raise public speculation if the complaint channel were available or if she was protected under the laws?

It seems that the military intentionally makes the issue of sexual harassment taboo in order to demonstrate that it is an exemplary, friendly, non-violent, and non-misogynistic society. In addition to the sexual harassment of the female officer Huang, another case is also absurd. The military institution, in responding to legislators’ inquiries, conceded that

both female officers and non-commissioned officers who have illegitimate young children are still qualified for unpaid parental leave, maternity leave, and family leave. However, very few uniformed women and men received such benefits because the military made it known that allowing servicewomen to raise illegitimate children is “something the military does not expect to happen” (*The United Daily News*, 12/30/1997).

Clearly, what the military looks for is not how to resolve these issues but how to effectively use the female labor force in the armed forces to put women in support roles (e.g., administrative, clerical, nursing) and to save manpower for national defense. In the *ROC National Defense Report of 2004*, it was stated in regard to the employment of the female labor force that:

. . . 95% of commissioned officers are male and 5% are female; 97% of non-commissioned officers are male and 3% are female. The Armed Forces are actively taking the characteristics of female servicemen into consideration in response to the needs of selecting qualified personnel and improving overall combat readiness. The proportion of female servicemen employed will be adjusted to optimize qualified female personnel in defense affairs (p. 130).

What appears obvious is that the inclusion of women in the Taiwanese military is determined primarily on the basis of military need. In the 1990s, in the face of a shortage of manpower, the Ministry of National Defense endeavored to attract young women to military service. The Minister of National Defense, Chen Lu-An, proclaimed in the media that: “the integration of women officers and NCOs into the military seemed to function well last year. MND considers increasing servicewomen’s numbers this year. Yet, this still cannot satisfy the needs of military personnel in the face of insufficient manpower” (*The United Daily News*, 04/07/1992). Nevertheless, two years ago, the military stated in the media its plan to downsize the number of both servicemen and servicewomen, with

an especially larger reduction in the number of women (*The United Daily News*, 07/25/2003). In the same article, one lieutenant general commented on the public's appeal for an exception in letting Chang, Yin-Hwa enter the military law school: "Blindly absorbing social values will weaken our national defense force. There is little difference between the enrollment numbers of female cadets in the ROC academies and that of the US Academies. There are data to be examined. The Virginia Military Institute (VMI) has not accepted women until recently. The enrollment of women in the ROC academies came even earlier than that it did in the VMI. Compared with the U.S., the Taiwanese military can be viewed as less conservative."

Intriguingly, in her study of news articles in three newspapers from 1994 to 1999, 蔡貝倫 (2000) concludes that the mounting frequency of servicewomen's images in the press coincides with the urgent need for a women's labor force in the military. She also reports that if the proportion of servicewomen in the military is 5%, based on the calculation of the numbers of servicemen (400,000), the numbers of servicewomen should be 20,000. However by the year 2000, the total number of servicewomen in the military was around 7,000, only one third of the proportion, which MND designates in the *National Defense Report* each year. It is not difficult to see that the great reduction in the number of servicewomen is probably to avoid these positions, which are expected to be given to men. Central to the core of the Taiwanese military's ideologies is the preservation of the essential masculine culture. Unarguably, women's presence in the Taiwanese military has changed the nature of the defense force and this phenomenon appears to continuously produce an interesting tension.

Communication between the Military and the Civilian World

The media serves as a bridge between the Taiwanese military and the public. In the *National Defense Report of 2004* it is stated with regard to the military's press release principles: "The MND communicates with the public, clarifies misunderstandings, and refutes rumors immediately so that negative effects will not grow and spread and the ROC Armed Forces can maintain a good public image" (p. 308). Not surprisingly, there has been an interdependent relationship between the military and the media in Taiwan. The military releases news to the media to promote its nationalism and "through individuals' circulation within the print media and other forms of communication, terms like 'nation', 'citizenship' and 'sovereignty' gain their resonance and solidity" (Day et al., 2004, p. 90). The media also makes use of news released by the military, including news about servicewomen, to create national sentiment or to satisfy their readers' and audiences' curiosities about uniformed women.

Although from the beginning of the millennium there has been a plan to downsize military personnel, from 1992 onward, due to the labor shortage in the ROC Armed Forces, the Taiwanese military has attempted not only to attract both young men and young women to join the military but also to expand women's military roles (蔡貝倫, 2000; 虞立莉, 2002; 沈明室, 2003; 崔艾湄, 2004; 王雅菁, 2004). In media coverage as well as in the recruiting brochures, the military characterizes a decision to join the military as realistic, idealistic, and beneficial: a fresh start, patriotic commitments, employment, job experience and training, stable salary, educational benefits, and military careers. The recruiting brochure for 2003 for women NCOs was dubbed "Make a Difference in Your Life on Your Own Choice" and has encouraged considerable numbers

of young women to compete for entry into the ROC Armed Forces. Since the 1990s, given severe economic recession and high unemployment in the civilian labor force, many young men and women have exhibited a strong willingness to join the military.

In addition to press releases, the military regularly holds activities such as troop exhibitions, family reunions, and conscript counseling, and welcomes journalists' interviews in order to downplay its conservative image and to earn support for national defense affairs from the public (*ROC National Defense Report*, 2004, pp. 313-316). The military has never hesitated to use the female labor force in activities and the servicewomen's imagery in media coverage. Yet, the military aims to gain public consensus on national defense affairs. What the military is eager to see is neither the public's continuous interest in unveiling the myth of woman warriors, nor its inquiry into the essential masculine culture that underpins military ideologies.

As many Taiwanese military policy planners clearly point out in the media, the reason to include women in the military is to lessen labor shortages, to allocate these women to military support roles, and to save sufficient manpower for national defense. Possibly, the integration of Taiwanese servicewomen into the military or combat support units may, at best, be perceived as symptomatic of social movement, experimental, and a token initiative.

The fact is that the images of servicewomen are frequently employed in propaganda campaigns in both Taiwan and other countries. As Muir (1992) points out, every second photograph in British recruiting brochures is of a woman, "which is not a true reflection of their small presence in real life" (p. 181). She goes on to note that in the U.S. and Canada the photos of pretty uniformed women rather than "mannish-looking soldiers"

repeatedly appear in recruiting pamphlets. Woman warriors are portrayed as capable of doing tough jobs but still pretty and feminine. A careful maneuvering of an emphasis on femininity while highlighting the masculine characteristics in servicewomen is self-evident in gender relations that highlight the male-female/self-other binary. It seems that the military institution strategically attracts women to join the armed forces to handle labor shortages, on the one hand, but maintains the military as a male domain, on the other. Servicewomen in the military serve as the “other” to servicemen.

Yet, the marketing of servicewomen’s images (perhaps the public visibility is not the military’s primary goal) subverts a stereotypical view of Chinese/Taiwanese women associated with the Confucian model as passive, submissive and domestic. Regardless of the fact that the public constructs a picture of servicewomen mainly from the sources provided by the media (蔡貝倫, 2000; 王雅菁, 2004), the military is never totally transparent to the public. Speculation about servicewomen’s competence in soldiering has been a civilian concern, so changes in public opinion are necessary. Hua Mu-Lan is no longer perceived as a mythic heroine in historical accounts, but as a woman who is seen and heard in everyday life. Moreover, the public has observed both the femininity and masculinity in a woman (even though masculine qualities in servicewomen are emphasized), and the individual differences demonstrated by women.

The publicity has brought some issues relating to servicewomen’s social roles in the military to the public’s attention. The public has been a driving force in pushing the Taiwanese military to take gender equality in the ROC Armed Forces into account.

“The issue of gender quota system implemented in service academies has brought heated debate from the public as a whole and women groups specifically. MND pledges that it will soon consult with scholars in national defense manpower

planning to critically consider expanding women's roles in the ROC Armed Forces." (*The United Daily News*, 07/30/2003)

Yet, those who publicly advocate servicewomen in their roles as wife and mother sometimes cause misunderstanding about them. Servicewomen are viewed as needing protection. Thus, protests against the protection of servicewomen have often been heard. The following passages in the "readers' reactions" section of the newspaper reflect this.

"In the civilian labor force, there is a wide breach between men's pay and women's. Women receive less pay even with the same work compared to their male counterparts—a fact of 'same work but different pay.' However, in the military, women have less work, do not take night shifts, and are allowed to live out of the base. They are exempted from many tasks for the excuses of raising children and taking care of their parents-in-law. They fail to take the same responsibilities like men do—a fact of 'same pay but different work.' If the military will go on to include more women, will all servicemen be exploited to death?" (*The United Daily News*, 07/25/2003)

"Because the inclusion of women in the military is a new system, many units will not, dare not, and do not know how to use the female labor force that results in a waste of government's dollars." (*The United Daily News*, 12/30/1996)

Undeniably, there is a need to critically examine the recurring problem with servicemen's resentment of servicewomen and the assumption that women are protected. In an investigation of priorities in selecting job categories in the Army, 64.2% of its 39 female cadets indicated that they wished to be deployed to infantry, armor or artillery specialties (蔡貝倫, 2000). Perplexingly, in another study of personnel management in the ROC Army, questionnaires were distributed to women officers and NCOs on active duty (蔡貝倫, 2000). If all job categories in the Army remain open, 61.5% of these women wish to transfer from combat support units (none are in combat units) to those posts with less pressure and fewer work demands, such as a military police station or the helicopter base. But if they are only allowed to choose from among combat support units,

41% would prefer the communications corps as their first priority, 33.3% , the transportation corps, and the rest the engineering corps and chemical warfare corps.

According to 蔡貝倫, a comparison of the two studies suggests that women on active duty prefer low-demand units based on their previous experiences with mental and physical demands. On the other hand, cadets have no experiences serving in the Army and embrace a utopian view of the military; or perhaps these cadets do wish to join combat units and give alternative answers to questions in an attempt to change policy makers' decisions about exempting women from combat duty. We need more research into servicewomen's subjective experiences in military service and combat duty. A similar analysis of servicemen also seems indispensable. Furthermore, the media and the public may need to expand their knowledge about both servicemen and servicewomen in order to debate military policies about gender equality.

Summary

In a word, the initial incentive for the 13 Taiwanese servicewomen to join the military was economic necessity. Either due to filial piety or to live out their parents' dreams, these women became Hua Mu-Lans. Through physical and military Cadet Basic Training, a military "rite of passage", they were transformed from civilians into soldiers. During this period of time, they were deprived of their privacy and individuality and indoctrinated into believing in sameness and unity by drill instructors. From the same DIs, they experienced exhaustion, humiliation and intimidation. They were taught that only the person who withstands hardships remains in. Indeed, they overcame adversities in basic training as well as in the military. Moreover, Taiwanese servicewomen's

outstanding performance attracts public attention and their media coverage has continuously maintained their public visibility. The military institutions unhesitatingly utilize servicewomen's images to legitimate its use of military forces. Yet, the intention is embellished by the justification of defending the nation-state. In actuality, the Gender Equality in Employment Law blurs the focus on women's marginalization in the military. Holding on to the hope embodied in this law, these women have sought to stay in the military to get a fair chance in life, given their beliefs in being a soldier not because they are a man or a woman but because they are competent.

Chapter 6

Crossing the Gender Line

Is the military a suitable career for women? For my informants, paradoxically, the answer to this inquiry was yes and no. They have fewer disciplinary and efficiency problems and a higher first-term completion rate that lowers training costs. Nevertheless, they lamented that their superiors in decision-making positions (all males) did not believe in promotion and job advancement for women.

These women's feelings about military service were ambivalent. To leave the military and reenter the civilian world produced strong fears in them. To do so would mean giving up not only the material benefits and security but also something beyond, such as the camaraderie—"something you can only find in the military," as Colonel Lu said. Yet, staying in means a plethora of ordeals and obstacles, as my informants articulated.

Some women, like Ho and Colonel Lu, sought an alternative way to reconcile their conflict between leaving and staying. Ho said: "I don't want to get out of the military community and nor do I want to forgo my marriage and family. Thus I decided to stay at Green Valley College as a teacher, although a teaching job limits a soldier's promotion and career advancement. But, anyway, I transformed into a civilian teacher a few years later." These women's ambiguity was understandable. After all, the move into the military is the most important decision of their lives. Nevertheless, it is not always easy being a woman in uniform—not in a male-dominated military society.

In this chapter I argue that Taiwanese servicewomen are not viewed as full members by servicemen in the ROC Armed Forces. They are perceived as the protected sex, the “other” to servicemen, and the “ornament” in the military. When they try twice as hard to prove their competence, they pose threats to servicemen and are thought to be trespassers. They are assumed to stay in a domestic arena not the public one, particular the political arena. Since the first day they enter the military, these women are indoctrinated to believe military regulations that highlight compliance with the military chain of command and hierarchy. However, at the same time they are expected to pay filial piety to their parents and parents-in-law, as well as care for their own children. Servicewomen are required to be a loyal soldier and a dutiful wife/daughter/daughter-in-law/mother. Judged by a double standard and therefore expected to fulfill obligations both in the military and family, as I argued, these women juggle among plural roles, negotiating a self within and against cultural norms. Moreover, I argue that young servicewomen are at the forefront of sexual harassment battles. However, sexual harassment is seen as an individual incident and kept at a low profile. All in all, while Taiwanese servicewomen face difficulties in the military, what they lack is a well-planned social support system (e.g., mentoring in workplace, child daycare, etc.) that the military should offer to them.

Mu-Lan Village

On the campus of Green Valley College, the corps of women students (organized in a company and led by several women officers) stays in segregated barracks called Mu-Lan village where my informants spent their horrible plebe year but also collected beautiful memories. Mu-Lan village provides these women a chance to experience four

years of military life before being commissioned in the ROC Armed Forces after graduation. Some women commented that the regulations in Mu-Lan village are far stricter than those in initial entry training. As Maj. Lin recalled, “Nightmares started from my stay in Mu-Lan village rather than Cadet Basic Military Training, but I have also grown out of there.”

The women barracks were previously located in a remote corner of the school, but were integrated into the male cadet barracks 10 years ago. They are located on the top floors (women share rooms of 4) with entrances locked during the night. Colonel Chen made fun of this policy: “I don’t know if it prevents men from harassing women or vice versa.” Overall, Mu-Lan village not only has a history that chronicles women cadets’ lives on campus but also carries rich implications for military mechanisms that highlight soldiers’ compliance with the military chain of command and hierarchy, as well as their willingness to sacrifice during military actions for the nation-state in the name of the public good.

Practicing Self-discipline

It may be not appropriate to apply Jeremy Bentham’s term about the all-seeing panopticon (cited in Gubrium & Holstein, 2003) to describe Mu-Lan village where women cadets’ lives are under surveillance. It is also from this place that women’s firm sense of pride and discipline is built up. Currently, there are about 30 women cadets on a campus that contains a faculty, administration, and male student corps of more than 1,000 men. Every move women make is not only under the gaze of men at Green Valley College but also under the public scrutiny of the civilian society.

Moreover, as Foucault theorizes in his book *Discipline and Punish* (1977), in modern days, the institutions discursively censor the individual and strategically urge the individual's self-surveillance in order to attain their goals of social control. In the account by Foucault, social standards articulated in hegemonic discourses are prescribed for the male but, more insistently, the female body. The military hierarchy system enacted in Mu-Lan village and women cadets' self regulation may reflect Foucault's idea. Servicewomen construct their subjectivity by disciplining their body and behavior in accordance with the military norms practiced everyday. "As a member of Mu-Lan village and Green Valley College, most women monitor themselves rather than being monitored by their supervisors. Their behaviors have always been praised by the authorities," said Lieutenant Colonel Yun. Capitan Wang indicated: "Because you are a woman, one of the few, and thus special and obvious, your behaviors are scrutinized under a microscope and spotlighted in public spectacles, and you are easily singled out either because of your misdemeanors or excellent performances." Therefore, as Colonel Chen commented, "Women have to be twice as good."

Since the first day after moving into Mu-Lan village, which has a highly competitive and hierarchical structure, women begin to practice self-scrutiny through plebe indoctrination that involves rigid discipline and severe punishment. According to my informants, the needless debasement of plebes was eliminated by school authorities; while flagrant abuses are gone, hazing has been employed by upperclassmen upon male plebes. This is because the plebes did not seek the proper channels to let the authorities know what was happening.

However, in Mu-Lan village, there is a lower incidence of plebe abuse, but occasions of demeaning people mentally and psychologically have been known to occur. As cadet Tseng described, “Sometimes just because the assignment you’ve accomplished did not satisfy them, upper-class women would curse and jeer, say terrible things and throw anything they could grab on your face. It was so degrading.” Cadet Jia complained: “I really did not have any time for studying when I was a plebe because I made use of the only private time I had writing reports of my ‘wrongdoings’ that the upper-class women accused me of.” Notwithstanding, the training styles in plebe indoctrination vary depending on the women in the class. The cadets I interviewed agreed that the women in one class were much more irritating. After cadet women in that class left the academy and entered the military, coupled with school regulations against plebe abuse, authorities saw that Mu-Lan village became more humane.

Perpetuating Military Paradigms

In one sense, a more humane environment in Mu-Lan village after the exit of that particular class should be welcome. Yet, on the contrary, the women protested the humanistic training in the plebe inculcation. What became obvious is women’s insistence on military tradition: adherence to rigid discipline and military regimentation on cadets, and plebes specifically. Yet, where does the military tradition come from? Modeling U.S. academies (Rogan, 1981; Stiehm, 1997), Taiwanese academies also apply a Spartan life of intense competition and strict discipline, aiming to elicit “real leadership” from a “well-rounded” individual who tenaciously clings to military ideologies centering on the military motto of Duty, Honor, and Country. Women from Green Valley College seem to

deeply believe in this tradition. Thus, rigid regimentation of plebes is said to be necessary. Ho said: “It’s not about good or bad. However, older servicewomen are more likely to withstand the stress because in the past they received much stricter training in mental agility as well as physical development.” And some other women made similar comments.

“I received harsh training in my plebe year. From my sophomore year till now, I’ve pushed the plebes very hard, but it has nothing to do with plebe abuse. In my opinion, strict regulations seem unbearable, yet, it’s a good opportunity for practicing self-discipline. After all, this training is to well prepare cadets for entering the military years later. Of course, some women do not care because they do not plan a long stay in the military and maybe quit when the initial 4-year commitment is up.” (Cadet Tseng)

“When upper-class women used scorn and cruel jokes on us as plebes, I reminded myself of never doing anything like that on plebes when I’ve become an upper-class cadet. Yet, when I turned into a sophomore, sometimes on the stretch, I couldn’t hold things in and started yelling at plebes, even though I was seen to be much gentler compared with women in previous classes. Only then did I realize why upper-class women did to me (e.g. using scorn and cruel jokes) when I was a plebe.” (Cadet Lee)

“When I was a plebe, there was a wealth of doubt in my mind regarding plebe indoctrination. But when I turned into a sophomore, I eventually realized what the notion of hierarchy is. Surely, senior cadets have responsibilities to teach plebes. Now, I respect this tradition. We should’ve heeded before we came in because there is a difference between the military and civilian society. The discipline makes us a servicewoman. Actually, the year when we came in, we were told to have better protection but less training that was said to be not a proper way for a person to become a soldier. However, compared with us, the plebes this year get a lot more protection. I doubt if they are better prepared for entering into the military.” (Cadet Liang)

“I had strong resistance when I just came in. Why should we do so many assignments? Why weren’t the assignments evenly distributed? Now I understand that upper-class women went through all the rigors that the plebes are now experiencing. That’s why the seniors monitor and direct what the plebes are doing. I believe in the necessity of the hierarchy system in the military. Your superiors have more experiences than you. To manage things efficiently, I’ll work within my chain of command and follow the orders issued from top-down. I perceive this as my duty.” (Cadet Shen)

A Micro Political Arena

In Mu-Lan village, relations between groups and between upper-class women and lower-class women were not only about hierarchies but also politics. Jia complained that when she was a plebe, one senior cadet, who was also her roommate, did not like an upperclassman whom Jia was dating. However, this woman diverted her antipathy from Jia's boyfriend to Jia and invited the other four seniors to act as witnesses to report to the company commander that Jia failed to practice and recite military cadences. To Jia's surprise, moments later, most women in the village through hearsay believed it was a fact without listening to her clarification. Because of this woman's report, Jia received detention for three consecutive weekends without any excuses. "Mu-Lan village is a gossip mill," said Jia. Lieutenant Colonel Yun indicated that when she was a sophomore she was isolated in Mu-Lan village and categorized as a women's libber just because she disagreed with extreme plebe discipline.

In addition, Lin recalled, when she was a junior, there was a plebe whose father was one of the superiors at Green Valley College. Discontented with the preferential treatment this privileged plebe received, Lin and the rest of the junior and senior cadets together wrote a letter to the school commandant, Lieutenant General Du. However, their voices were silenced. While Lin and some women became quiet, the other women openly expressed their fierce objections about the unfairness in Mu-Lan village. Viewed through a civilian eye there is nothing wrong with what these women were protesting. However, they were marked as "making waves", implying a danger to solidarity in the military. As far as Lin knows, these women mostly received early retirement.

Moreover, according to Lin, if a cadet expected to have a smooth life in Mu-Lan village, she needed to manage close links with female officers and upper-class women. In turn, female officers and upper-class women are also pleased to have a few lower-class women who could efficiently carry out issued orders. Wang admitted that when she was a junior in Mu-Lan village, she was one of the above-mentioned women, but also an ambitious one. At that time she was competing with another junior student for the position of intern brigade commander. One senior woman who then was holding an intern position at the brigade level gave Wang strong support and considerable help. While Wang faced the reality that in the long run she would only attain the position of intern battalion commander and the other candidate would obtain the intern brigade commander position, she was struck by the fact that she was used by the senior woman against Wang's competitor who previously had conflicts with this senior. Wang commented: "My visceral feeling is that through the competition I've learned a lesson that power relations are practiced even in such a small group. And I was like a stone in the Go game." Tseng concluded about Mu-Lan village: "You just have to face the fact that Mu-Lan village is just a micro society which is reflecting the same power struggles in the macro cosmos."

Whereas Tseng lamented that there was no female bonding in Mu-Lan village like the male bonding that male cadets allegedly share, Colonel Chen and Colonel Lu thought that during their stay in Mu-Lan village, power relations were not as complicated as some women described. They experienced sisterhood in and had the most beautiful memories from the family-like barracks. However, Maj. Lin remarked: "Even though I don't like

that politics stuff in Mu-Lan village, I will voice my objections against those people who degrade it.”

Token Women

In Taiwan, beginning in 1990, each service opened non-combat jobs to women, and in 1994 military academies also opened their doors to female cadets. (Green Valley College is an exception; it has enrolled women for more than 40 years. See chapter 4.) Hence, in the last decade, the number of servicewomen has increased, but never exceeds 5% of the total force of the ROC Armed Forces. Within the same period, the number of women cadets at Green Valley College reached a maximum of around 120 (about one tenth of the corps of students) until the downsizing of 2000, and is less than 30. The difference in the ratio between male and female cadets is hugely significant.

In the military and service academies as well, women are metaphorically depicted as “the only flowers in widespreading greens”—implying that women function merely as an ornament. Clearly understanding what and how they are perceived, the 13 women have endeavored, by performing according to their competence and knowledge, to erase men’s stereotypical view of them as an adornment, weak and protected. Colonel Chen said: “Being token women, we have to prove ourselves and work twice as hard.” According to a number of my informants, proving their competence requires the sacrifice of time, children, and family life.

Lin lamented: “I’ve never seen any servicewoman who receives rewards which can be equal to her sacrifice. Forget about easy promotion. We have to struggle. It’s not that simple that you make a goal, go for it and get what you want. In order to survive my

military career, having a child was previously not in my plan. Now I want to have a baby, but I'm not sure if I can." Ho pessimistically pointed out: "The military is a male arena and there is no room for women. Even though there is a major general right now, she's nothing but a token presence which the military uses as superficial evidence that it is an equal-opportunity employer."

Lieutenant Colonel Yun commented: "I've known many senior women officers who are qualified for occupying a major general position, but most retired early because they have not seen a promising future in the military. Of course, they formerly had a dream of reaching the stars. Yet, that's a dream not reality." Yun reported that exemplar servicewomen were praised in public only in 1998, the first but also the last time, under pressure from legislators. She also commented: "Other than one woman of the class of 1985 from Green Valley College who has occupied a colonel position, none of the women from the class of 1985 through that of 1989 are currently in the colonel rank." Colonel Lu concluded: "While now younger servicewomen can be deployed to combat support units, compared with servicemen, they will still get later promotions and static career advancement regardless of their competence and better performances." This year on July 1st, 55 officers were commissioned as major generals and lieutenant generals, but among them were no women (*China Daily News*, 06/28/2005). It is obvious that women are utilized as tokens in the ROC Armed Forces.

Acknowledging their bumpy and unpredictable career paths, younger women have claimed that they will not easily give up the hope of becoming a major general someday and somehow. Lee enthusiastically said: "Being a major general is my career goal. The upperclassmen used to tell me that I've been too naïve hoping to reach the stars. However,

I'll give it a try in the military. Why shouldn't a competent woman get promoted like a man?" Tseng also said: "To become a general is my dream and I won't easily let go of my career and will hang in there till I am told that I have to retire." There seems to be a gap between older women's perceptions of a military career and those of younger women. It may be argued that older women have been through more military experiences than younger women, and therefore realize that many obstacles limit women's career development. However, with more women occupying higher-ranking positions, there is clear evidence of the military's reluctance to expand women's military roles. What progress is being made is occurring under social pressure.

It is puzzling that all 13 women, much as they complained about their roles as an ornament in school, also admitted that they enjoyed and took pride in participating in school activities; they especially mentioned marching on the school anniversary. Given that they are special, well performing, exceptional, and therefore functioning as "school propaganda campaigns" in the recruitment of quality cadets, women cadets are highlighted at such school occasions as open houses, anniversaries and sports days. Moreover, school authorities intentionally put on their records female cadets' participation in the annual events in yearbooks displayed at the library. Astonishingly, what jumps out of the pages are those women's images in numerous photos printed in the yearbook—specifically women's marching in the school anniversary celebrations.

In their reminiscences, the 13 women fervently described marching during the parade on the school anniversary. Ho said: "Marching is a beauty of collectivity, even though we rehearsed for months just for the performance that faded out in a moment. But I think it's worth it. The memory of the moment becomes permanent." Cadet Liang

described: “One month prior to the school anniversary, we started doing parade ground drills day after day. I had strong resistance each time in rehearsal, but on the anniversary, when we collectively did a wonderful job and received lots of applause, I felt proud of myself and the rest of the women from Mu-lan village.” Major Lin recalled a touching moment: “Some alumnae, who were already retired, came back wearing uniforms to partake in the school anniversary and proudly watched the marching as if they were one of the members in the parade.” Cadet Shen said: “Our company commander highly praised our performance in the marching during the celebration last year but made a joke about us. She said, ‘you did a lot better than you did in rehearsals. You really need audiences and camera shooting, don’t you?’” Capitan Wang commented: “Marching makes me feel proud of being a member of the military. Even though I was not in the parade, I was touched when watching the parade performed by current cadets.”

Gender Relations

After the promulgation of the Gender Equality in Employment Law (2002) in the ROC Armed Forces, along with the regulations about promotion that require that both men and women manage leadership at each level beginning from the platoon, women who want to make it in the military are no longer exempt from deployment to combat support units. They are also less likely to have a choice about whether to stay in clerical fields. According to my informants, because women’s ability to be assigned to various units previously dominated by men have led to resistance and fears from servicemen, women have become men’s rivals in competing for the positions that are already very competitive since the downsizing in ROC military personnel.

Currently in the Taiwanese military, women are more likely to be the “first” female in their units. For example, Capitán Wang is the first female in her unit, and Maj. Lin, the first female specialist in her unit. As tokens in the military, as Maj. Lin said, “Women encounter social isolation, a loss of personal life, and pressure to adopt stereotyped roles.” Furthermore, as Rustad (1982) points out, when servicewomen enter a masculine culture, they are examined “as to her strength, emotional control, and motives for taking a man’s job” (p. 145). In the following cases, my informants articulated their own experiences and observations of other servicewomen in creating and recreating their gendered identities. Nevertheless, as Rustad precisely notes, unless the structure of male domination is changed, it is not easy for a servicewoman to be a female and a soldier. Their dual roles yield role conflict in the eyes of servicemen and invoke servicemen’s negative attitudes.

Taking on the Professional Role

According to some of my informants, servicewomen pose a threat to servicemen because they occupy the jobs that were formerly preserved for men. Maj. Lin described becoming a target of innuendo in her unit when she became the first female commander in a special field. She was attacked for having close links with superiors, and, thus occupying the important position that was supposed to be assigned to a serviceman. Her authority was also challenged by her male colleagues and staff members. “I just want to prove myself and become a role model for younger servicewomen, but was charged as an ambitious woman who attempts to outdo men,” she said. As Maj. Lin reported, when commissioned as a major, she had very complicated feelings (intertwined with pride, joy,

sorrow and some unnamed feelings) because she earned the position at the expense of her personal life—working extra hours during countless nights, giving up a plan to have a child and staying at the base on weekends to accomplish missions on time. However, she was told more than once that, “Being a servicewoman is voluntary. Nobody forces you. You can make your own decision—either making it in the military or going home to have babies.” She was even labeled as the men’s “enemy” because she holds a master’s degree in American and English literature, excels in computers, and majors in a specialty (I am not naming the specialty because it is unusual to see women in this field, so I do not wish this woman to be identified). One suggestion from her male superiors and colleagues that was continuously offered to her and made her feel uneasy was: “Why don’t you have a baby to kill your time? Are you a workaholic?” It seems that the frequent reminders of her role as a mother and wife were attempts to keep women in the domestic sphere and thus obliterate the unspoken threat that women pose to a male-dominated military.

Lin also recalled an incident that occurred not long ago and alerted her to the strength of servicemen’s resentment. She was isolated from the men in her unit when she moved out of the women officers’ dorm (segregated and locked) to integrate into the men’s dorm with permission from superiors. She therefore was asked by her male peers: “What’s your intention? And why did you move out of a place which is safer and quieter?” Lin eventually found out that she spoiled men’s fun at night—drinking alcohol and talking about women. This incident is evidence of the gendered dichotomy of space, implying that women’s crossing the boundary to move into a male domain represents interference, threat, and trespass.

Another incident cited by Lin concerns a conversation between her and one of her superiors when she submitted a report. Identifying herself as a specialist, Lin disagreed with her superior's suggestions about a project and argued with him. This male superior, who, in Lin's perception, is a person who expresses the least sexism, considered Lin's behavior offensive and yelled at her: "So, you think you're smart. Is your current position not satisfactory enough? Plan to quickly get promoted to a battalion level?" Lin mournfully commented: "At last, to avoid a bad annual performance evaluation from this superior that is in close relation to service members' promotion and job advancement, I wrote an apology letter to him. However, I've learned a lesson from this episode. In the military, women should learn to pretend to be stupid but not too stupid. A capable woman is more likely to be perceived as a threat to men."

Lieutenant Colonel Yun reminisced: "I couldn't remember how many times that my superiors gave positions to my male peers rather than me even though my annual performance evaluation has constantly been assessed as the best and I won 2 Army medals. In a greater sense, it should be me who deserved a promotion. It is clearly written in the ROC National Defense Report that Ministry of National Defense 'shall consider annual performance evaluation as the basis for personnel management, assignment, promotion, appointment and retention. To retain the superior and to replace the inferior, a strict performance assessment of personnel shall be sent up according to relevant regulations.' However, despite what is printed in the report, what can I do? Get a lawsuit? Does that work? Eventually, the lower-ranking officers will be at fault and get punished, but does it benefit servicewomen as a whole?" As Maj. Lin and Capitan Wang mentioned, they do not have a chance to compete with men, but if they do they can do better. What

they expect is to accomplish assignments effectively and receive certain rewards that may improve gender equality in the military.

Relinquishing the Professional Role

To renounce a professional role and maintain a subordinate role, as noted by Maj. Lin, may spare the woman the occasion to be targeted as a gendered enemy among servicemen, but may not reduce men's degrading attitudes toward her. Rustad (1982) cogently points to a "double bind" that servicewomen face, "If they succeeded in their jobs, doubt was cast on their femininity. If they failed, their sex role was affirmed at the expense of their work role" (158). Similarly, Hana (1994) suggests that double standards are the burden of servicewomen; if they underachieve, they are devalued, but if they succeed in their career because they work harder than men, these women are skeptical of being privileged.

Lin gave an example of a woman in her unit who was from the Reserve Officer Training Corps and has always underachieved. Lin said: "Even though she is a specialist, she has never performed well and been jeered and cursed by our superiors and her peers. However, it seems that she does not mind. While she does not have a single chance to undertake important assignments and has continuously been situated in an 'adverse environment' in our eyes, she is obviously not unhappy. She does not have ambition and has been pleased to take a maternity leave and a parental leave not worrying about getting promoted. She has an easy life in the military and her pay is just as much as her peers, not a penny less." In addition, Wang restated what her male peers complained about: "Under the law, men and women have equal pay so that they should have equal obligations in

work. Why should women be exempted from touring the guard posts at night? How can women lose so much time in pregnancy? Pregnancy indeed is women's strategy to avoid responsibilities in military services."

Taking on the Combat Soldier Role

One type of servicewoman constructs her identity as a combat soldier and displays masculine demeanor and uses male soldiers' discourses, which contain numerous sexual innuendoes and expressions of fraternization. While none of my participants categorized themselves in this type of social role in the military community, Capitan Wang pointed out that in her unit she observed some non-commissioned women officers who constructed an identity as a combat soldier. Wang said: "They've performed male behaviors, used obscene language, and consumed a lot of alcohol in entertainment where servicemen have always been the majority. While they get a little closer to servicemen, some men totally accept these women, but some men just think these women are kind of weird and less delicate."

From her observation of Israeli servicewomen, Sasson-Levy (2003) found that these women preserved their femininity before and after participating in compulsory military service, but adopted male soldiers' ways of acting and speaking when wearing the uniform. Drawing on Butler, Sasson-Levy concluded that "their behavior suggests a new gender identity that combines both feminine and masculine elements" (p. 448). The implication from Sasson-Levy's findings about Israeli servicewomen is what Butler recommends—the fluidity of gendered identities and the spatial and temporal contingency of gender performance. Analogously, at West Point, as Francke (1997)

points out, while attempting to remain unnoticed, women cadets take up the posture of “a third sex,” trying to blend in with male cadets. These women do not mimic male cadets’ bodily and discursive practices, but underplay their femininity, acting as group members in school.

Taking on the Mother Role

Rustad (1982) points out that servicewomen who take on the mother role and magnify femininity can deflect servicemen’s attention. In order not to be the object of servicemen’s negative attitudes, most of my informants claimed that they intentionally preserved, if not amplified, their femininity and highlighted feminine characteristics, such as relationality, caring and skills of negotiation and communication, to benefit their work.

Major Ying said: “Before I came to this unit, I was a company counselor. Young enlisted men often times came to me with their problems. I was kind of like their mom listening to them and offering suggestions, and was functional as a bridge between enlisted men and the authorities. Even though I maintained a certain distant relationship with the young enlisted men, they felt comfortable to talk with me and relaxed after our conversation.”

Ho said: “I took on a real soldier role when I was the company commander. During that period, I strongly adhered to military regimentation. In my view, rigid regulations on young women were indispensable and things to me were either yes or no, either black or white, no reconciling. But now, as a teacher at Green Valley College, I know besides black and white on the opposite extreme poles there is a color called grey in the continuum. I should appreciate plural colors. So, I made an adjustment and took on a

different role. I want my students to know that I care about them like their mothers do. I'm proud to be a woman and concede that the military is a male domain. But I felt lucky that I still can stay in the academy without completely being cut off from the military community where I deeply believe I will be steadfastly affiliated with for my entire life." Perplexingly enough, Ho interwove remarkably complicated emotions into her military experiences, and made a 180-degree turn from her role as a rigid soldier to a caring mother. Yet, what we learn from her is the shifting construction and reconstruction of her gendered identities in the military.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment, as Meola (1997) suggests, is less likely to occur between two people of equal rank. Commonly, a young servicewoman is susceptible to her superior's molestation. If the young servicewoman resists, the superior may use his power against her in sordid ways. Thus, young uniformed women who suffered harassment either learned to deal with it at the expense of their happiness and health or remained quiet and frightened (p. 149). In her years of military service, Meola, as a senior woman officer, testifies that in the U.S. military, the commander too often took the side of the serviceman involved in sexual harassment, and conversely the complainant, usually a woman, experienced hostility and surveillance in her work surroundings and even risked losing her job. Not surprisingly, the women are always blamed.

In the Taiwanese military, as in the U.S., the case of sexual harassment reporting was usually handled in a semiofficial manner rather than put to a formal charge, in that the superiors attempted to keep it low profile and did not want the case to be exposed to

the public eye. While sexual harassment in the military is mostly attributed to a particular individual case, its goings-on serve as a reminder that women are outsiders.

Sexual harassment is hard to define. Servicemen are vulnerable to false accusations of sexual harassment, as are women. Even though proof of sexual harassment is extremely difficult, the determination to critically face the issue and seek resolution is undoubtedly crucial. As Campbell et al. (1999) precisely point out, “sexual harassment will never be eliminated from the military if leaders condone it, laugh it off, or allow whistle-blowers to be themselves harassed” (p. 75). Naval Academy professor James Barry also notes that leaders in U.S. military institutions too often “tolerate sexual harassment, favoritism, and the covering up of problems” resulting from their hypocrisy (as cited in Campbell et al., 1999, p. 75).

A number of my informants who were currently serving in the armed forces talked about a case of sexual harassment that happened at an off-shore island two years ago. It was handled in low profile, and thus did not get into the media. The story involved a group of young women active-duty officers who visited an off-shore island of Taiwan to lead a two-week seminar on how to maintain mental health in the military. One day around 10 o'clock in the evening, a male colonel entertained all of the women at a party and harassed one young woman who sat next to him. After the party, this superior offered a ride to another woman, the deputy of the group, who stayed in a dorm opposite his. On the way back to the dorm, he molested her in his car. The two women reported this to the higher command and later the colonel was forced to retire. Ironically, this colonel received no penalty but instead can enjoy his retirement benefits at home. Colonel Chen concludes: “It’s not at all a penalty. The authorities were just scared if the incident of

sexual harassment made the headlines in the next day's newspaper." However, the two young women officers, according to my informants, later were blamed by servicewomen for accepting the invitation without accurate judgment and failing to report it according to the chain of command in the first place.

Another incident of sexual harassment brought up by a few of my informants was discussed in chapter 5. While the incident eventually ruined the complainant's career, she was blamed for exposing military culture in public, setting off high-profile turbulence, and hurting the women who remained in the military. All of my informants maintained that Taiwanese servicewomen mostly live in a segregated dorm so sexual harassment is more likely to be an individual incident. They pointed out that women should know how to protect themselves. However, my informants acknowledged that more often than not the lower-ranking women are vulnerable to their supervisors' molestation, and if these women report the incident, they may make their situation worse (being stigmatized and feeling compelled to leave the military).

While in the U.S., some research has documented incidents of sexual harassment that took place in service academies (D'Amico et al., 1999; Francke, 1997), the issue has been taboo in the Taiwanese military. Yet, one of my informants, a cadet, told of her own experience of being harassed by an upperclassman. One Sunday, while she studied in a classroom, an upperclassman came in and attempted to talk with her. He became angry that she was ignoring him, and rushed to shut the front door of the room. This woman cadet frantically hurried out through the rear door. This incident was reported by an upper-class woman who was a witness. Both the cadet woman and the upperclassman were brought in for questioning. Angrily, the woman described the incident: "During

those three weeks before the winter break, I had not recovered from the nightmare, but my superiors continuously asked me to recall the incident. This just brought me additional pain, and I felt awful at the time. Why couldn't they stop spreading salt on my wound?" Finally, rather than leaving the academy as a punishment, this upperclassman was recorded a demerit. The explanation from the authorities was that this male cadet just made an attempt to talk with the cadet woman rather than to molest her. And the case was closed.

Sexual jokes and sexual innuendos were issues raised frequently by my informants. It appears that servicemen get together off duty to smoke, drink alcohol, and tell sexual jokes and make innuendos. As Maj. Lin noted, this has become a social ritual through which they are able to share secrets and experiences about how to cope successfully with work. What if sexual jokes and innuendos are told at work? Interestingly, the reactions from most of my informants were that they would have a certain degree of tolerance depending on who said it, what his intention was and if the jokes went too far. Lieutenant Colonel Yun stated: "If his jokes or innuendos go beyond proper limits, I'll tell him to stop it." Cadet Shen said: "Civilian college students, mostly men but a few women, tell sexual jokes and innuendos as well. I will not say anything like that myself, but if someone said it, I just laugh it off." Servicemen intentionally tell sexual jokes and innuendos on and off duty for amusement during boring military routines. Yet, what is implicitly manifested is the reproduction of masculine culture in the military.

Reflections of Military Service from 13 Women

While it is difficult for my informants to disentangle their ambivalent feelings about their military participation, they all have held positive attitudes toward it. Nevertheless, these women reflexively commented on their coping mechanisms for dealing with issues at work.

Paternalism

In the Taiwanese military, it is not uncommon to see paternalistic watchfulness and assistance given by male superiors towards servicewomen. For example, Colonel Chen experienced such occasions during her stay at a Regiment Command in the central area of Taiwan where the superiors repeatedly extended their help to servicewomen. The superiors let Colonel Chen or other servicewomen go home earlier when their children were sick. These superiors also occasionally dropped by women's offices to see if servicewomen were having difficulties at work that they could assist with.

In the past, male superiors mostly assigned servicewomen to the office for clerical work. Now it is also not rare for male superiors to free women from strength-demanding jobs. Male superiors look out for servicewomen's welfare through frequent visits while these women are on duty or through receiving these women in their offices. Lee indicated that when she had an internship on a base a year ago she witnessed paternalism from the base commander. The company commander made fun of Lee and another woman cadet: "You both have been received by our boss many times. It never happened to male interns. Women surely are different."

One of my informants described being popular, good looking and known by male superiors at the academy. Through their paternalistic assistance she occupied the position of intern battalion counselor without any obstacles because she was directly assigned to that job and freed of competing for it. Similarly, in his fieldwork at an American military base in West Germany, Rustad (1982) observed that women were exempted from field exercises and simulations. He said, “the Sergeant Daddy Warbucks” types of male superiors “assign the helpless and the vulnerable to the mail room or other clerical duties when it is time for the unit to deploy to the field” (p.159).

According to my informants, paternalism occurs as well between upperclassmen and lower-class women. Jia recalled: “When I was a plebe, my boyfriend then was a senior. He helped me with almost everything; sometimes he even mobilized lowerclassmen to assist me. But those things were my duties and good opportunities for training me. I’m a person who always wants to be independent and is not afraid of difficult tasks. I want my own life and need to be responsible for myself. He was so overprotective that I left him eventually.”

Acknowledging that paternalism prevents women from developing their greatest potential and evokes servicemen’s resentment, my informants articulated their strategies—displaying appreciation to the superior who paid paternalistic attention, on the one hand, and proving competence at work, on the other. According to Capitan Wang, every time she impeccably completed an assignment, she attributed her success to her superiors’ assistance, even though she clearly understood that she had made the greatest efforts. Shen said: “Some servicemen have blatantly argued about why they should take over women’s duties. They think women are overprotected in the military. They said that

superiors have often provided paternalistic help as long as women pretend to be docile, obedient and dutiful daughters. But I believe that as a servicewoman, at first, I have to be self-reliant and competent.” Lee commented: “Actually, servicewomen are more privileged and protected in the Armed Forces. This is really something unnecessary. How can we better perform our duties if we are protected?”

Insisting on the notion of equal pay equal responsibility, my informants maintained that servicewomen should independently accomplish the duties assigned. Colonel Chen commented: “I receive the same pay as my male counterpart, so I should do and am capable of doing what men do. And I always remind myself to have commitments in my duties.” Ho noted: “On the basis of fairness, if women attempt to make it in the military, they have to fulfill all duties assigned like men do. Otherwise, women should give up their military careers.”

Colonel Lu pointed out: “Paternalism actually blocks servicewomen’s promotion and job advancement. When superiors keep women in clerical fields, women may legitimately avoid heavy work, but these women should not be too happy too early. They should not expect bright futures. They are superficially privileged, but in fact they are already restricted in career development.” However, Captain Wang interpreted paternalism in an alternative way. She said: “My superiors protect not only me but also themselves. If I fail to perform well in my duty, they will lose face. The military after all emphasizes the collectivity. But when I do perform well, they also earn the credit.”

Visibility

While servicewomen hardly remain unnoticed in the military, heightened visibility is a disadvantage, specifically with regard to promotion and career advancement. As Tseng said, “In the Armed Forces, you should try to be as invisible as possible through your military career so that you won’t be targetted as an enemy by both servicemen and servicewomen.” Being a popular woman in the Armed Forces means being subject to cleanup details in work, innuendos, jealousy, and sacrifice. Capitan Wang recalled: “Men felt outdone and lost face when I performed my duty better than they did. They always think that my performance is for myself not for the good of the unit. My male peers have always perceived me as not a group member, but an outsider, a threat, and a possible competitor who might have better annual performance evaluations and thus better chances for promotion under the law.”

Lieutenant Colonel Yun recounted: “Whenever I voluntarily undertook a duty, I overheard my peers, both men and women, purposefully attack me. They said I attempted to impress the superior to write me a better annual performance evaluation which is the fundamental assessment for promotion. Give me a break! At the time, if it was not my last, it was never my first concern. I just hoped that someone could get the job done effectively.” Colonel Chen had similar experiences and established a motto for herself to follow during her journey through military service: “do not easily expose your ambition and try to remain in low profile.”

A number of my informants mentioned feeling extremely sorry for a senior officer, Colonel Jiang. Three years ago, in 2002, she was one of the candidates competing for the rank of major general. Not surprisingly, Colonel Jiang was perceived as a

servicewomen's role model given her marvelous personality, capability, rich military experiences and excellent educational background. Nevertheless, her heightened visibility brought her failure in the competition. During the campaign, jealous peers spread rumors about her, her family and her marriage. In the long run and to many people's astonishment, a woman of low profile was appointed to the rank of major general—the first and the only woman to date in Taiwan to have brass stars on her collar.

Physical Fitness

In the Taiwanese military, physical fitness, especially running, has been perceived as the underlying premise of a qualified soldier. Each service member is required to run two miles daily. Those service members who are supervisors must run or be perceived as losers and poor leaders. Analogously, the only way for U.S. women cadets to get respect, as Francke (1997) points out, is to prove that they can lift and run. Colonel Chen indicated that she still runs daily and can run faster than some servicemen. Moreover, Capitan Wang commented:

In my unit, if someone failed in the physical fitness test or made excuses to avoid the test, he or she would be viewed as a coward by enlisted men. Therefore, as a woman, I tell myself not to be a loser, especially in running. I usually build up my strength long before the PFT and have received perfect scores on PFTs. I've even tried to exceed men because that will benefit my leadership. Several woman NCOs told me that aging threatens their leadership. When they were as young and physically fit as enlisted men, to make these young men obey their orders was not difficult. But now after they have kids and a family and are not getting any younger, they've felt they cannot enforce their authority, even though they've tried hard to demonstrate their specialties to prove their value to their branch. I believe it's worthy to research the relationship between physical fitness and leadership.

What is clear is that the physical fitness of a service member buttresses his/her leadership and physical inadequacy undermines it. Furthermore, it came as no surprise when Capitan

Wang brought up another incident. Last year (2004), when the U.S. militarists and Taiwanese higher-ranking active-duty officers from the higher command visited Wang's unit to assess its strength in the ROC Armed Forces, they suggested in public that women's participation in the military is endangering solidarity and the effectiveness of the armed forces, as well as producing a morale crisis. They maintained without hesitation that the proportion of servicewomen needs to be reduced. While the modern world has undergone considerable social change concerning gender equality in employment, what remains defiantly unchanged in the armed forces and in those militarists' mind is that the military is a males-only preserve.

Compliance

Since the first day after entering the military, soldiers are instilled with the values of teamwork and compliance with the military chain of command and hierarchy. Every soldier undoubtedly understands that in the armed forces, there is strict adherence to the doctrine of obedience to orders. Much attention is paid to the dictates and suggestions of superiors. While soldiers who seek military service primarily aim at what the military offers—the economic security, the promise of a guaranteed job, and relatively generous benefits compared with the civilian labor market—they also clearly comprehend that in exchange they are ready in any given minute for combat.

Furthermore, the military is viewed by women as a means to attain career goals, acquire valuable training, and achieve upward mobility in life. What if a soldier finds out after joining the military that the possibility of a long-term military career is limited, the fringe benefits are shrinking, and promotion opportunities are decreasing? Even though

they felt desperate, my informants answered that they would respect military policies and conform to military regulations.

Military policy decisions are customarily based on perceived personnel needs that in turn determine women's percentages and numbers. In recent years Taiwan has seen a downsizing in the number and proportion of both servicemen and servicewomen. However, the number and proportion of women have been cut more. In addition to a downsizing in Taiwanese military personnel, the budget for military expenses has been curtailed as well. Accordingly, military regulations based on policy decisions have been altered. The frequently changed regulations dynamically impact on and bring great confusion to both servicemen and servicewomen. Taiwanese service members can only use the strategy of wait-and-see. Worse yet, the women cadets I interviewed encounter this chilly climate even before entering the armed forces. As much as they may have complained, they have no other alternative but to face the fact.

Jia recalled that unlike her peers who attended civilian universities, she took a different career path mainly because the recruiting brochure she read was so appealing. But rules have been repeatedly modified. Now she can no longer enroll in a master's program the second year after graduation nor can she attend a graduate school abroad—she could have done both things according to the former regulations. A few years ago, a cadet was commissioned as second lieutenant upon graduation and lieutenant rank was automatic one year later. However, this regulation indicates now that both men and women should remain as a second lieutenant for 3 years before being promoted to the next level. No one knows if this policy will be modified again. Moreover, the quotas for

registering in graduate schools domestically and abroad by active-duty officers in the armed forces have also been limited.

To Taiwanese cadets, the new policies are deeply at odds with the idealistic description of policies printed in the recruiting brochures that guarantee their welfare. Yet, Jia said: "I have to restart my career plan to accommodate the change. As a soldier, I am obliged to conform to superiors' commands and military regulations. If this is the rule, then I will follow it." Shen commented: "Well, I'm already a servicewoman and don't have a right to protest. There is no way for the authorities to change back to the old policies which are more beneficial to service members. Anyway, the unemployment rate is currently high in the civilian labor force. I at least have a guaranteed job after graduation." Yet, Tseng concluded: "Our voices about what we care about have constantly been muffled. Sometimes the policy the superiors implement does not benefit us. For example, like the Committee of Gender Equality. It just has a superficial presence but does not transform gender relations at all."

Summary

As uniformed women, my informants have frequently lived through ambivalence. They felt proud to be servicewomen, but struggle desperately in a male domain. They cannot easily decide to remain in or leave the military because both the military and civilian worlds proffer rewards and difficulties in life. Yet, realizing that they function as token women in the military, they work twice as hard, trying to prove themselves and hoping to be treated on a par with servicemen. Through military regimentation the 13 women have practiced self-discipline and internalized military paradigms. They have

developed coping mechanisms in the process of constructing and reconstructing their gendered identities. With confidence and competence, they crossed the boundary and entered a male domain. They took a vow to commit to their duties but also expected to have a fair chance in military service despite the fact that their career trajectories have been characterized by uncertainty and adjustments to circumstances rather than careful planning.

Chapter 7

Epilogue

At the beginning of my research process, when I asked my informants to contribute their lived stories to my study, a number of them said that their narratives would consist of “just ordinary/ personal things and subjective experiences” that may not become “important and objective evidence” to be included in a “formal” study. Yet, they indeed made a significant contribution to this research project. Regardless of whether gender relations prevail in every aspect of our experiences, through my informants’ narration of their negotiation of a gendered self within and against cultural/social norms and expectations in everyday life, we come to realize the process of gendering. As Alsop et al. (2002) point out, “to this process of gendering the role of culture and language is central” (p. 79). Also, through their articulation of how they took up multiple and sometimes contradictory subject positions to make meaning of their lives, we come to understand the complexities of the society that shapes our social norms and forms our social relations. Their narratives provide a lens through which emerge alternative interpretations rather than reproductions of conventional understanding of the world. During my interactions with my informants, I gained an in-depth understanding of these women—their strategies in gender performance, their perception of military masculine culture, and their desires to break the glass ceiling for women in the armed forces. While my informants and I maintained our conversations via email and phone, and while we each, I believe, do not expect an end to this activity, here I sum up my study as the end of the project.

In this chapter, I first reflexively examine the feminist study that I conducted. In addition, I return to the stories of the Taiwanese servicewomen to highlight these non-traditional/traditional marvelous women in a male-dominated society. Reflecting on my informants' stories, I argue that both gender and nationalism as socially/culturally constructed have allowed the rigid practice of a gendered division of labor that defines women's status as inferior and domestic. Following that, I argue that there is a schism between the implementation of the equal-opportunity employment law in the Taiwanese military and the reality of gender inequalities as evidenced in my informants' service experiences. And based on this study's findings, I suggest that if Taiwanese government policymakers expect to make the ROC Armed Forces more effective (e.g., a higher first-term completion rate in training, fewer discipline problems, having assignments completed on time, etc.), they should seriously consider making gender equality a reality and employing women according to their competence rather than biological differences. Furthermore, I argue that under the pressure of public expectations and feminist intervention to assure equality in gender relations in the armed forces, gender transformation in the military is possible, although slow and full of difficulties. Finally, I discuss the limitations of this study and directions for further research.

Reflections on the Feminist Research Project

This feminist study was sparked by my observation at one service academy of a group of cadet women and female graduates whose competence had been downplayed. Long puzzled by the Confucian cultural paradigms, I asked why women are restricted to traditional social roles. Why do women who try something non-traditional confronted by

so many obstacles and so much criticism? And when a woman performs well in her job, why is she labeled an ambitious woman who mainly wants to outdo men?

Having been brought up in a patriarchal Confucian family, when I was young I internalized the Confucian doctrine of the “Three Bonds”—the ruler’s authority over the minister, the father’s over the son, and the husband’s over the wife. To meet the expectations of some important male figures in my life, such as my father, husband, father-in-law, and superiors at work, I tried to play the role of a “good girl”, and later, a committed teacher, devoted wife, selfless mother, and loyal citizen. But I have not been happy at all. I have superficially behaved as a traditional woman, but I have wished to do something that I want or am interested in for myself. For a long time, the meaning of the Three Bonds remained mysterious to me. However, when I inquired about the reasons for having to patiently deal with oppression from my parents-in-law and sisters-in-law, why I experienced unfairness at the work place, or why women stay at home while men fight the battles to protect women and the weak, I was told by both men and women who were close to me: “Don’t ask or challenge male authority, just be good, because you’re a woman and should be submissive.” My struggles have remained—if I resist the traditions, the external conflicts emerge, but if I comply, my internal conflicts haunt me. Yet, I could never obtain an answer about why gender differences matter so much.

After I took courses in my doctoral program such as *Language and Gender*, *Gender and Education*, *Feminist Theories*, etc., I began to realize that gender has much to do with the notion of social construction and less with biological differences, and that gender issues are also discursively interconnected with those of class, ethnicity, and race. I believe that gendered social norms have been culturally constructed and steadfastly

embedded in societies and practiced by people in everyday life, and will not be changed overnight. To critically scrutinize and then subvert patriarchy and its hegemonic values that have caused women's oppression, in my opinion, is a task that my informants and I must somehow undertake.

Unexpectedly, most of my informants told me that they have noticed inequalities for women based on sex differences in the military as well as in the civilian world. They do not mind if feminists advocate equal rights in the armed forces for them, but they do not want to be a "woman libber" to challenge traditional military and family values that consequently would jeopardize their careers and cause the destruction of their marriages. As insiders in the military and home, they stated that they would apply their own strategies for dealing with gendered inequalities. Numerous women commented that they appreciate their jobs and love their families, and that juggling among commitments in these two sites has drained their energy so that they do not have extra time to think about taking aggressive actions in advocating women liberation.

Yet, one woman said: "to prove our competence to our superiors is also a form of feminist activism." From my informants, I learned a different form of resistance to patriarchy—demonstrating women's intelligence and competence. This form of resistance does not have to do with physical or discursive resistance. Yet, as one of my informants remarked, to show one's competence translates resistance into action, and being critical or entering direct conflicts with the military marginalizes them or even puts them at risk of earlier departure from the military.

A number of women metaphorically described themselves as being exhausted, a candle burned at both ends. Yet, they expressed a willingness to play roles as

servicewomen, mothers, and wives. Lieutenant Colonel Yun said: “If I were not appreciated by my superiors in the military, I could quit my job and return home and be a happy wife and mother. I don’t mean that I don’t have career aspirations, but what I mean is that I don’t want to make a lot of sacrifice at work at the expense of my family time, if my superiors do not appreciate it. I weigh the importance of my husband and kids over my career development. However, I’ll stay in as long as I can because my salary and fringe benefits greatly help my family’s finances. Being a woman liberber? Well, not me. It’s a tough life.”

During the interviews, some women expressed concerns about whether there would be repercussions for telling their stories in the context of this feminist study. Among their concerns was that if the text were to be published, their identities would become known even though I used pseudonyms to avoid identifying them and notified my informants of this before the project proceeded. Yet, their reaction of fear and anxiety reminds me that sensitivity and reflexivity always underpin feminist research. The objectives of this project are to recognize servicewomen’s subjective experiences and enable their voices to be heard. Despite my material use of this study for personal purposes, to earn a doctoral degree and a promotion, I must bear in mind that consideration of my informants’ rights and well-being is the first priority and primary goal of my project.

When I was analyzing the transcripts and composing my informants’ narratives, I struggled with how to both securely protect my informants’ confidentiality and present the data on the inequalities facing servicewomen. Whereas the ultimate goal of this project is to draw attention of the Taiwanese militarist policymakers and the public to the well-being of uniformed women, my biggest worry became how to avoid doing harm to

the 13 women's careers or marriages. I threw away page after page, wrote and rewrote. There were some times when I decided not to use some of my informants' words when they were related to sensitive issues in the ROC military (e.g., criticism of government policies). I asked myself again and again how to represent the voices of my informants. I realized that I am not able to represent my informants. Accordingly, to synthesize the lived stories of 13 Taiwanese servicewomen into a text became a difficult task. How can I, by critically examining these women's subjective military experiences, build a conduit of communication between Taiwanese militarist policymakers and servicewomen that might transform gender relations in the ROC Armed Forces?

During the process of my dissertation writing, my internal conflicts also emerged as a concern about my own career. After finishing my doctoral program in the U.S., I am required under contract to go back to the service academy in Taiwan, the site where I conducted this project, where I have been holding a teaching position. As a faculty member in an extremely conservative community, I wondered how people on the thesis assessment committee will evaluate my dissertation or me, and how the school authorities will perceive me after they read the evaluation report from the committee members. I understand that the quality of my dissertation is important; but do critical analyses in the study matter when assessing qualifications as a teacher? Will I be labeled a "wave-making" person? A stable income is important in supporting my children's education at universities. What if I lose my job? Does any school need an aging woman teacher?

During many sleepless nights, while I was racked with worry over my informants' and my own future, I envisioned new forms of social relationships in which maleness and femaleness are no longer the principal elements in arbitrarily determining what men and

women are and what they should or should not do. I dreamed of how the oppression of not only women but also men from the bias of gender, ethnicity, class, and race could be eliminated. This is my vision, desire, and hope.

Reflections on Researching Hua Mu-Lans

The images of my informants frequently come to mind. They impressed me with their wisdom, courage, confidence, and competence. In addition, they made me empathize with their struggles and ambivalence in balancing their family lives and military service. What they gave me was an opportunity to weave their stories into a sophisticated web of knowledge about contemporary Taiwanese servicewomen—how they negotiated and constructed their identities in a male-dominated arena. Here, I attempt to depict the images that my informants left in my memory. Following that, I argue that the polarity between masculine and feminine is socially constructed. Finally, I suggest two implications from this feminist research practice: the mutual flow of femininity and masculinity, and a need to deconstruct rigidly gendered norms.

The Mu-Lan, Possessing Both Mental and Physical Prowess

In some of my informants' narration as well as their behavior, I observed their efforts and perseverance in maintaining their mental and physical strength. Demonstrating both qualities in physical tests, initial basic training, field exercises, military maneuvers, and the completion of difficult assignments, they proudly expressed their difference from men and women in the civilian world. What some civilian women may lack, they claimed, are self-control, patience, persistence, and physical strength. Paradoxically, while they appreciated strict military regimentation and felt they had

grown out of this kind of discipline, they lamented the loss of the civilian life style choices. They complained about the lack of time with their families, because their lives are restricted within the military most days and nights. Intriguingly, they claimed to have no regrets about becoming servicewomen. Yet, their biggest concern and what they felt most desperate about is that even though they have shown the same mental and physical prowess as men, they are constantly assigned to support roles and thought of as trivial in the military.

The Mu-Lan, Juggling among Multiple Roles

Most of my informants endeavored to practice several social roles in their everyday life. Before marriage, they tried to be loyal daughters, listening to what their parents or even grandparents told them to do, and sent part of their salary home as a form of filial piety. At work, they strived to be faithful soldiers, complying with the military chain of command and hierarchy. After marriage, these women tried to play the roles of good daughters, mothers, wives, daughters-in-law, and military officers.

Six of the 13 women in my study were married (6 cadets in my study are required to remain single before graduation). Also, 5 of the 6 women have two or three children. Some of the married women described themselves as a candle burning at both ends, who are busily and exhaustedly juggling among numerous commitments both in their jobs and families. Yet, they felt rewarded in fulfilling their multiple roles. They emphasized the key importance of family support systems and their time management skills. Three of my informants lived with their parents-in-law, one with parents, and one had previously lived with her own parents for approximately six years before they passed away.

The U.S. military has provided a relatively better social support system for military members, such as child daycare or long-term baby-sitting when soldiers are deployed on urgent missions, yet this is unlikely to happen in the ROC military. Therefore, for Taiwanese servicewomen, the responsibilities of childcare have more or less fallen upon the shoulders of their parents or parents-in-law. This phenomenon may be translated into the notion of the relationship of interdependence between parents and children in an extended Confucian family.

Moreover, some of women in my study appreciated the paternalism of their superiors, especially when the male superiors offered these women the chance to take off from duties to take care of their children. This, according to my informants, caused servicemen to complain about and resent the servicewomen. Yet, beyond the charge that servicewomen received favors from superiors, no consideration was given to these women from servicemen about their roles as both good soldiers and dutiful wives and mothers. Servicewomen have to work twice as hard as servicemen.

Additionally, there is a generational difference between my informants who are senior officers and those who are junior officers and cadets with regard to the values in having children. The former group preferred to have their own children at a young age, while the latter preferred to postpone their child-bearing plans or even adopt a child in order to avoid time loss or being downgraded due to pregnancy in the military. The main reason for this new development may be that military regulations in career management require all servicewomen to be deployed to combat-support units for training for commander positions. When senior officers were young, there was no such requirement. They mostly did secretarial and miscellaneous administrative work during the day and

went home in the evening, which allowed them to have more time for child-bearing and child-rearing. Of course, there is a need for a longitudinal study about these younger women to see if there is any change later in their decisions about having children.

The Mu-Lan, Anticipating Becoming a Female General

For some women in my study, the opportunity to be promoted to the level of general is an unrealistic idea. But for others (specifically cadets and junior officers), it is an aspiration, a goal, and a dreamed-of reality. Knowing that it is not easy to stay in a male-dominated community, the young, enthusiastic, and ambitious women believe that the future is open, and that becoming a woman general is not only a dream or something that happens with good luck. They endeavor to accomplish possible as well as impossible missions, trying to prove that they are twice as good as servicemen. Today, there is only one female major general in the ROC military, but these young women anticipate more in the future. They impressed me with their courage, confidence, intelligence, and energy.

The Mu-Lan, Manipulating Strategies in Demonstrating Femininity and Masculinity as Context-Specific

Most of my relatives and friends take for granted the dualistic and fixed categories of gender, either feminine or masculine. The characteristics of masculinity are assumed to be inherently embodied in a male, and femininity in a female. A man will be described as too feminine when some female qualities are observed in him, and vice versa for the description of a woman. A Confucian culture promotes the dichotomy of masculinity/femininity, as well as that of public/private spheres in gender relations. It discourages men and women from crossing the boundaries or blurring the two extremely

distinct categories. Therefore, it is not uncommon in Taiwan today to see a man being teased for cooking for his family, or a woman being mocked for participating in the military.

However, when we first met and talked about how she felt about women “occupying a men’s job”, Captain Wang provided a different definition of the notion of “gender”. She said: “Hua Mu-Lan can be feminine at times and masculine at others.” I observed that my informants, on the one hand, tried to prove that they were not weak or in need of protection and could be very independent. Yet, on the other hand, they intentionally preserved their femininity for not bringing themselves too much trouble regarding how “traditional” people judge them from appearance. They flexibly engaged in strategies of femininity and masculinity depending on contexts which they were in. Even though being feminine in appearance, I observed my informants, at work, demonstrating such alleged masculine characteristics as determination, bravery, and fortitude, although blending with the alleged feminine characteristics of caring and negotiation. Additionally, a number of my informants indicated that at home they demonstrated such feminine characteristics as passion, caring, and submissiveness in order to maintain family harmony. It was amazing to see these women who were sometime “traditional” and other times “non-traditional”.

Gender is a Product of a Patriarchal Society

Reflecting on the 13 Taiwanese servicewomen’s narratives, I argue that gender is a product of a patriarchal society. In a patrilineal/patriarchal/patrilocal Confucian culture, the gender system is based on the gendered division of labor. It is distinguished by the notion of superior males versus inferior females, and the public sphere to the male versus

the domestic sphere to the female. The gender system has been established by elites and privileged males to manage the family and the state. For centuries, the Confucian social norms that stem from the gender system have regulated and shaped Chinese/Taiwanese men's and women's behaviors in everyday life. Various degrees of penalties are leveled against the person who behaves in defiance of social norms.

Therefore, for a person, especially a woman, to cross the gender line means facing the consequence of numerous internal and external conflicts. Indeed, there were some exceptional women—female warriors—in Chinese history. Yet, most of these women disguised themselves as men in order to fight with their fathers, husbands, or brothers in the face of national crises. Their brave deeds (rather than their internal/external conflicts in relation to the violation of gendered norms) were documented and passed down through the generations primarily to promote nationalism. Among Chinese legendary heroines, the story of Hua Mu-Lan has become best known to Chinese/Taiwanese men and women. Notably, it has encouraged many young women to disrupt the Confucian social norms.

Nationalism is Sexism

I argued that the state, controlled mainly by privileged males, advocates nationalism (again based on a gendered public/private dichotomy) that aims to mobilize gallant male soldiers who are ready for combat. For a soldier, the experience of participating in military conflicts helps him in promotion and job advancement within the armed forces. Through war, the state proclaims its sovereignty and gains recognition of its political strength. Today, the armed forces, the state's combat machine, have begun to include

women in the reserve labor force. However, because the gendered stereotypical views of women as the weak and protected sex are prevalent in the military, women for decades in Taiwan, as in many countries in the world, have been assigned to support roles to servicemen, excluded from combat missions, and deployed to the alleged non-combat zone during wartime. Given that servicewomen are denied access to combat duty, promotion and advancement in the military have become extremely difficult for them.

Yet, today, highly developed technological weapons are used in warfare. This blurs the boundary between combat and non-combat zones. Combat zones can be everywhere in modern warfare, and non-combat zones may become the most dangerous area during wartime. A national information center located remotely from the combat zone may become an easy target for long-range artillery and surface-to-surface missiles. Too often servicewomen are deployed near or within the combat zone, but legally commissioned as having non-combat status. In addition, high-technology war involves soldiers who possess intelligence and professions that rely on more than physical strength. There is no reason to argue that servicewomen are not qualified to participate in combat missions, despite the fact that participation in military conflicts is not necessarily related to promotion. Furthermore, I maintain that servicewomen are on the frontlines in daily life, resisting being criticized, harassed, marginalized, or subordinated.

Today, the belief in the gendered division of labor is still practiced in everyday life across cultures. In Taiwan, women are assumed to not be proper if they pursue non-traditional careers such as a military profession. Moreover, Taiwanese militarists believe that combat support roles to servicemen are more appropriate for servicewomen.

However, my informants' good participation in military exercises and difficulties with career development have two implications.

Implication 1: The Mutual Flow between Femininity and Masculinity

The plural and sometimes contradictory subject positions my informants took in constructing and reconstructing their gendered identities may suggest the characteristics of fluidity and complexity in gender. From my observation and conversations with the 13 servicewomen, I learned that they engaged in strategies of femininity and masculinity when negotiating among contexts to make meaning of their lives. However, they preserved their feminine appearance and did not imitate male soldiers' personal physical practices. They transmitted the clear message that they expected the people around them to perceive them as feminine enough to be a woman, but masculine enough to be a capable soldier. As some of my informants described it, at work as officers they were inclined to be masculine to some extent, but were extremely feminine at home as wives, mothers, or daughters-in-law. Interestingly, I observed a number of my informants perform masculine activities such as when they gave orders to and directed their staff or enlisted men, but immediately the next moment they became feminine when talking with their friends, colleagues, or superiors. My informants are active agents rather than passive receivers who generate a multiplicity of meanings of gender to make sense of their everyday gendered lives. The ways that my informants negotiate, deploy, and perform gender opens up a space for our consideration of how subjective, complex, and flexible gender performance is and how gendered norms may be disrupted. A woman can be a

good soldier; and the characteristics of masculinity and femininity can also be seen in one person.

*Implication 2: Gendered Norms are Rigid and Discursively Embedded in a Society—
There is a Need to Deconstruct Gendered Values*

While one realizes that gender may have fluidity and complexity, one may also acknowledge that social gendered norms are dynamic, inflexible, rigorous, rooted in a society, and practiced by men and women in everyday life. Social gendered norms have shaped men and women. Notably, in the military, a male domain, the formation of gendered identities by women is even more complicated and ambiguous.

In the male-dominated, institutionalized, and hierarchical military organization, the system of a gendered division of labor is strictly practiced. Paradoxically, in the process of the social construction of gender in military daily life, servicewomen are shaped by military masculine culture and instilled with military ideologies, on the one hand, but are treated as women and assigned to combat-support roles, on the other. They are mentally and physically trained according to the male soldier's standards, and forced to value only teamwork and forget that they are women. Moreover, they are socially expected to be good soldiers, but good daughters, daughters-in-law, wives, and mothers as well. Consequently, ambivalence emerges in the creation and recreation of gendered identities among servicewomen who are judged by double standards.

Ranks in the military are very important to soldiers, and arranged in the shape of pyramid; at the higher ranks, there are fewer positions. As my informants pointed out in our informal conversation, military superiors rarely grant higher-ranking and decision-making positions to women, or help them to manage their careers. If a male superior does

promote a servicewoman, he may face the risk of being criticized and of favoritism, or of being called a coward. Not surprisingly, not many male superiors have the courage to promote women to higher-ranking positions.

Moreover, when servicewomen wish to stay in the military longer, without mentors, they have to figure out alone how to compete for promotions—a symbol of more autonomy and higher pay. Joining in the competition, some servicewomen unavoidably exercise men’s mechanisms to play the “men’s games”—the political games—and follow the rules, such as how to manage close links to male superiors, how to properly demonstrate one’s competence without offending superiors, or how to expand one’s social relations within the military community. Yet, as the minority group in the military, servicewomen are not guaranteed success in competition with servicemen, regardless of their intelligence, competence, and their playing of men’s games. They have fought alone for their rights. Their voices have not yet been heard in public. They are still quasi-members in the military.

Therefore I suggest that more research be done to demonstrate how Taiwanese servicewomen make sense of their everyday lives, how military masculine culture has shaped them, and how they have struggled with various social roles. A study of servicewomen’s subjective experiences that shows the meaning of their lives in a gendered community is a good entry point into the exploration of the above-mentioned issues in the military. It opens up new paths for alternative interpretations of gender relations in the military community rather than the reproduction of traditional definitions of those relations. How servicewomen make meaning of their military services creates a fundamental grounding that opens up a space for critical inquiry into masculine culture

and military ideologies practiced on a day-to-day basis in the armed forces. To closely examine servicewomen's subjectivity or the subject positions they take in performing their gendered roles provides opportunities to understand how individuals' subjectivities are formed, as well as how they negotiate among contexts to create meaning. It is important to acknowledge, as Weeden (1997) points out, that subjectivity is "embodied in the bodies that are both socially and culturally produced and gendered" (p. 173).

Making Armed Forces More Effective, Making Gender Equality a Reality

Women have been included in the military in Taiwan for more than four decades. In the last ten years, the Ministry of National Defense (MND) has increased women's representation in the ROC Armed Forces in the face of labor shortages in military personnel, but maintained the proportion of servicewomen to less than 5%. The MND is required by the Constitution to appoint higher-ranking officers, or sometimes even the Minister (usually an active-duty general) of the MND, to go to the Legislature to report its annual expenditures on national defense. Among the legislators are a number of women who may veto the increasingly expanding military budget for high-cost U.S. weapons. The budget has been proposed by the MND in an attempt to maintain political strength in the face of threats from Mainland China. These women legislators have often inquired about servicewomen's treatment in the military. In order to show women legislators that there is no gender bias in the military, to earn a larger military budget, to win public support for national defense affairs, and to promote its nationalism, the MND highlights the military as an exemplary, humane, non-misogynistic community that has undertaken national defense affairs for the public good. Notably, in 2002, the Gender

Equality in Employment Law was promulgated. Thereafter, the MND has repeatedly proclaimed that servicewomen have equal rights in training, education, promotion, and career advancement as servicemen. However, my study results reveal that there is an immense gap between the 13 women's visions and the realities they face in the military.

The ROC Armed Forces Employ Servicewomen as a Reserve Labor Force

According to 虞立莉 (2002), in 1998, the MND was asked by legislators during a public hearing about the reason for the lack of female generals in the military. The MND replied that servicewomen did not meet the requirements (military education and leadership from lower through higher ranks), there were no ranks at the general level in the fields in which servicewomen have served, servicewomen have obligations to fulfill at home, and they voluntarily give up the chances for promotion or job advancement. However, my informants' articulation proved that these reasons are incorrect.

Admittedly, many servicewomen do decide to leave the military earlier when they do not succeed in managing military services and family duties at the same time. Those who, like my informants, chose to remain are women who have had a plan to develop military careers. Some of these women decided to delay their child-bearing, and some sought parents' or parents-in-law's assistance with child care and house management. With high career aspirations, most of these women have finished the required military education and training and do not mind being transferred to any posts for which they qualify. Compared to servicemen, their promotions came much later on average.

However, in some cases, servicewomen avoided duties at night and volunteered to stay at secretarial posts in order to have more time to fulfill their roles as mothers and

wives. The military has generalized this phenomenon to all servicewomen and used it as an excuse in explaining servicewomen's static career development. Since the promulgation of Gender Equality in Employment Law, all young servicewomen are required to be deployed to combat-support units around the island of Taiwan. After its passage, the military claimed that uniformed women are treated equally with men. Yet, based on the rationale of national long-term development and the idealism of democracy and equality, one might ask if it is really equal treatment when servicewomen's multiple roles as soldier and as family member are not taken into account, leading to a better social support system for these women. After all, most servicewomen, not their husbands, deal with all of the family obligations.

From this study, I found that the younger officers have embraced more uncertainty about their careers, because since the promulgation of Gender Equality in Employment Law, they have spent more time engaged in commitments within the station, and feel more pressure from their jobs. Not only do they undertake the elongated track that will lead to commander positions, but they also go through certain military training and education that jeopardize their family lives. All of these tasks, plus the frequently altered military policies that, as I mentioned in a previous chapter, make young servicewomen develop a career plan today that they have to change tomorrow, virtually encourage servicewomen's early retirement. Perhaps some traditional militarists would apply Darwinism and call the phenomenon "survival of the fittest". However, the significant issue is whether the military mechanisms are discursively played out in order to police the gender lines and preserve a masculine culture in the military.

If servicewomen, as Taiwanese traditional militarists have commented, endanger solidarity and the effectiveness of the armed forces, then the Taiwanese government could have evaluated the practicality of including women in the military a few decades ago. Furthermore, if the result of the evaluation was akin to that claimed by traditional militarists, then the government could have stopped employing servicewomen. To the contrary, the government has used women in the armed forces during wartime and peace time since the establishment of the country (the Republic of China) in 1911, and has amplified women's representation in the military from the 1990s onward, even though the proportion of servicewomen has always been kept under 5%. The fact of the continuity of Taiwanese women's representation in the military implies that servicewomen are needed by the ROC Armed Forces and the nation.

Implication: Women Make the Military Effective Rather Than Damaging the Morale of the Forces

Without a doubt, the main rationale for the Taiwanese military institution's inclusion of women in the military is to supplement labor shortages of military personnel. When manpower decreases in the military, the proportion of servicewomen increases. However, the female labor force has always been as needed in the Taiwanese military as in the civilian labor market. From my observation and my informants' narratives, the cohesion in a unit has not been damaged due to the presence of women. According to my informants, they have a higher first-term completion rate in training, fewer efficiency and disciplinary problems, and make their units more effective based on their negotiation and communication skills.

More intriguing, as my informants commented, servicewomen's presence in a unit may stimulate servicemen's morale, given that servicemen think that if they cannot perform better, they will lose face in front of women. Some of my informants also noted that they had completed numerous difficult assignments and won a number of medals. Some women proudly pointed out that they are the first female or the only specialist in their units to have successfully completed the missions assigned on time with the assistance of male staff and enlisted men. It is worth mentioning that intelligence and technical skills—the qualities easily found in servicewomen— have become important requirements for military participation today. In actuality, servicewomen may work cohesively side by side with servicemen.

Gender Transformation is not Impossible

Regardless of whether the military is, as Segal (1995) points out, “one of the last bastions of male domination and there are forces resistant to gender integration,” many facts revealed about the Taiwanese armed forces as well as the civilian world have shown that gender transformation is possible when the culture in a society has gradually changed (p. 770). Today, in the civilian labor market, numerous women have already held important positions in non-traditional jobs. In 1994, Taiwanese military academies began to admit women cadets. Since 1996, Taiwanese military history has witnessed the deployment of servicewomen to the positions previously occupied only by servicemen. In 2002, the first female major general was appointed, despite the fact that her appointment has been viewed as a token presence. Also, through the mass media, servicewomen's outstanding performance has attracted public attention in the last ten years, and men as

well as women in the civilian world have accepted the reality that servicewomen perform well in non-traditional arenas.

Taiwanese servicewomen have demonstrated that they do not easily give up their military careers, proving their competence and intelligence in their professions as another form of resistance to the issues of gendered inequalities in the armed forces. With servicewomen's demonstration of their qualification, and with intervention from legislators (both men and women), feminist activists, and the civilian public, the Taiwanese military institution is expected to make gender equality a reality.

Research Limitations and Directions for Further Research

In this research project, I explored 13 Taiwanese uniformed women's gendered identities and social roles through their narration of subjective experiences in military service. Through a feminist lens, the analysis of these women's lived stories is an attempt to highlight the characteristics of complexity and fluidity of women's subjectivity in gender performance, as well as those of inflexibility, rigor, and an everyday-life practice in social gendered norms. As mentioned in chapter 4, it is not my intention to generalize this critical inquiry to other settings because I believe that there is no universal truth. In addition, this study may reveal my own bias. In addition, when I make efforts to paint a picture of servicewomen, I unavoidably categorized these women. Yet, the dualistic categories—servicewomen versus servicemen—are not a part of this project's emphasis. Instead, I invite readers to scrutinize the gender issues in the military. Moreover, I expect this study to spark more research in the field of gender studies in the near future. Nevertheless, this study had several important limitations.

First, the participants were demographically restricted to those women who were students and graduates of a service academy, and geographically deployed to units located in the central and northern parts of Taiwan (a great number of my informants were stationed in the Green Valley College). Therefore, these women's military experiences may not be comparable to those of servicewomen deployed to posts in southern Taiwan and the off-shore islands.

Second, the phenomena observed and discussed in this study are local, temporal, and contingent. When contexts change, the phenomenon may become evanescent. Nevertheless, the notion of contextual differences always serves as a reminder for a feminist researcher to retain sensitivity in a critical research inquiry.

Furthermore, given my informants' heightened visibility and the fact that they are identifiable because there are so few women in the higher ranks, when I included direct quotes in the text, pseudonyms were used to protect their confidentiality. Moreover, I did not provide clear background information about individual women in my study, such as their specialties, the exact locations and commands at which my informants were deployed, and the cadet women's grades. Hence, readers may have difficulties in mapping out a comprehensive picture of my informants.

Lastly, I avoided some important information either due to ethical concerns or at the request of my informants. Accordingly, a disjunction may appear between episodes when the phenomena were described. Yet, my informants' feelings and their privacy were no less important than to the text of this study.

There are a few directions for further research. This research project examined a group of women who either currently study at or have graduated from a Taiwanese

service academy. There is a need for more studies on different groups of Taiwanese servicewomen, such as women officers or NCOs in the Army, Navy, Air Force, or specialty fields. These studies may be functional as references that weave servicewomen's diversity into a sophisticated tapestry of gender studies.

It may also be interesting to conduct a study based on servicemen's perceptions of servicewomen and military professions. Constrained by limited time, I did not have an opportunity to seek Taiwanese servicemen's subjective experiences about military service. The opportunity to let Taiwanese servicemen's voices be heard and their lived stories be told may generate evidence that enriches research on gender issues.

A comparative study of Taiwanese service members in which the sexes are more equally represented is recommended as well. Accordingly, an in-depth understanding of how different sexes in the military perceive each other may help the acceleration of gender transformation. Comparative research that engages servicewomen from different countries is also suggested. Rich information may emerge from a comparison and contrast of the formation of servicewomen's gendered identities across cultures.

It is also interesting to explore, via the poststructuralist approach, the process of the subjectification of Taiwanese servicewomen. In order to scrutinize how individuals' subjectivities are shaped and reshaped, this approach usually involves ethnographic observation on, enthusiastic interaction with, and discursive analyses of the gendered individuals or groups as to how power relations, knowledge production, and discourses of everyday life are played out between individuals and groups. In this approach, the meaning of the unsaid is viewed with as much significance as the said, and the dissimilarities in individuals with as much importance as the similarities. Through

servicewomen's reflexive narration about how they negotiate among contexts to construct and reconstruct a self in making meaning of their everyday life in the military, one may see the multiple, contradictory, and conflicted subject positions they take to form their gendered identities.

Final Thoughts

On the way to the mess hall with one of my informants, she commented, "I don't like people calling me an androgynous person. Femininity and masculinity are both embodied in me. This is nothing to do with good or bad regarding femininity or masculinity. Both qualities should be appreciated. Even though I'm a servicewoman who is in a non-traditional profession, I hope that people perceive in me my competence and intelligence not my gender." Indeed, the description provided by this woman is a desire, vision, and hope shared between my informants and me.

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