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## Winning War in a Globalized World: Utilizing Women & Gender Initiatives in 21st Century Conflict

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## **Winning War in a Globalized World: Utilizing Women & Gender Initiatives in 21st Century Conflict**

### **Cover Page Footnote**

This submission is intended for the MGDR Special Issue on Alternative Imaginings.

# Markets, Globalization & Development Review



## **Winning War in a Globalized World: Utilizing Women & Gender Initiatives in 21st Century Conflict<sup>1</sup>**

Militarism, or the belief that a country should build a strong military and be prepared to use it in order to promote national interest, is embedded in the American experience. Staggeringly, the United States has been at war for 214 years out of its 235-year history (Anon 2017). The United States military is second to China in terms of size, but has the largest military budget – \$610 billion – of any military in the world (Dillinger 2017). American militarism is also felt abroad with the maintenance of more than 800 military bases in more than 70 countries and territories (Vine 2015). Every American generation has experienced warfare, directly or indirectly, but its size and presence around the world makes the American military a global phenomenon that has far reaching effects. Beyond affecting the US citizenry that the military aims to protect, it has an effect on the foreign men, women and children who interact with the American military and, often, face the challenges of living in a war zone and rebuilding once conflict ends. The era of globalization requires that the military innovate – with actors who can employ new perspectives and solutions – in order to effect peace and prosperity in the twenty-first century. These actors and perspectives – namely, servicewomen and gender initiatives – are key to achieving lasting peace.

Globalization, or the integration of ideas, trade, services, information, technologies, and communication has impacted our orientation to conflict (Sokolosky 2016). The interconnectedness and adoption of shared values associated with globalization has led to coordination and cooperation among states, which has made interstate conflict less likely. However, the global spread of values has also deepened the tension between global culture and local norms, thereby increasing the likelihood of intrastate conflict, or irregular warfare. Globalization, in this case, has led to fragmentation where “radical movements defending religious or ethnic values have found new legitimacy in their fight against weak states” (Rickli 2007, p. 3). America’s war in Afghanistan – the longest foreign war in United States’ history – is now in its sixteenth year with no end in sight (Astore 2017). While this war has touched the lives of men and women around the world, women’s lives have been particularly disrupted. Afghan women have been victimized and restricted by conservative law, but have also adopted

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<sup>1</sup> This article borrows heavily from the final chapter of the author’s 2017 book, entitled *Women, Warfare, and Representation: American Servicewomen in the Twenty-First Century* (London, UK: Bloomsbury), and has been significantly revised for this journal’s specifications.

the roles of caregivers, politicians, and insurgents. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations, along with the United States, have sent thousands of female troops into Afghanistan, many of them taking on combatant roles (Taylor 2013). The domain of warfare is no longer exclusively reserved for men in the twenty-first century and the results of globalization necessitate that we expand our thinking with respect to who participates in conflict and how to approach populations ravaged by war.

Globalization and the types of conflict the US Armed Forces confront requires the involvement of women. The intersection of gender and security today provides new routes to peaceful prosperity globally. Applying gender initiatives to militaries – whether it means creating a gender balanced force, the integration of women into combat arms, adoption of a gender perspective by male soldiers, or a gender mainstreaming policy – could fundamentally shift military culture and revolutionize the organization. International organizations are just beginning to understand this relationship.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the United Nations (UN) Security Council recognized the importance of mobilizing women to bring about peace and stability globally through the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325. Armed conflict has increased since that time and “in 2014 the world witnessed the highest battle related death toll since the Cold War. Belligerents increasingly target civilians, and the global displacement from conflict, violence, and persecution has reached the highest level ever recorded” (O’Reilly 2015, p. 1). Inclusive security, or approaches that consider the concerns of all stakeholders involved, is required now more than ever because conflict has a devastating impact on both men and women. Although previous UN mandates have addressed issues related to women, peace and security, UNSCR 1325 is dedicated to the subject. It calls for the following:

- Participation of women in decision making and peace processes;
- Inclusion of gender perspectives and training in peacekeeping;
- The protection of women;
- Gender mainstreaming in UN reporting systems and programmatic implementation;
- Ensuring the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements so that they take into account the particular needs of women and girls;

- Consideration of the different needs of men and women in the disarmament process (Winslow 2010, p. 22).

Gender mainstreaming, just one of the UNSCR 1325 directives, is critical to understanding the future capabilities of militaries and reinforces the notion that gender is about *both* men and women. NATO engagements in Bosnia (1995) lead to the realization that conflict is experienced differently by men and women and this lesson resulted in new Alliance practices (e.g., use of gender advisors) and training, culminating in a gender mainstreaming policy. This policy is described as “a strategy for achieving gender equality by assessing the implications for *women and men* of any planned action, including legislation, policies, and programs in all areas and at all levels, in order to assure that the concerns and experiences of women and men are taken into account in the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and social spheres” (Hunt and Lute 2016, p. 12, emphasis added). Thus, gender perspectives require both men and women to look at an area of operations through a new lens that expands what is traditionally considered important. Social, cultural, religious, political, and economic practices emerge as sites to explore regarding the distribution of resources and power across groups. Analyzing a situation from these multiple vantage points can change the way military units address problems. Merging gender and security in this way is transformative for militaries around the world and a Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) will emerge as gender initiatives are implemented. However, debate of what constitutes an RMA in military and professional circles is devoid of gender analysis.

Discussion of cultural, organizational, or technological military innovations are situated at the heart of the RMA literature. RMA provides a theory about the future of warfare that is intimately connected to technological and organizational recommendations for change in the military. The RMA debate has been ongoing for approximately 25 years; American defense planners in the 1980s saw a military technological transformation underway that could potentially reorganize American defense posture. New technology, it was thought, might lead to a shrinking force structure, new derivatives of outdated organizational forms, new actors within the changing organization, and the prioritization of research and development over all else. Thus, a revolution of this kind “would touch virtually all aspects of the military establishment” (Cohen 1996, p. 37). Recent attempts at women’s integration into combat arms and international efforts to apply gender perspectives to security problems signal that RMA cannot proceed without active consideration for an essential but much neglected demographic.

Gender initiatives must be considered when thinking about RMA because revolutions always involve and are often predicated on the elevation of previously subordinated groups. I attempt to fill this theoretical gap by reconceptualizing RMA to include gender as an interdependent variable tied to three others: (1) technological innovation, (2) a changing relationship between the state and war, and (3) evolving conflict type and location. The aforementioned four variables determine who participates in war, how the state and war are linked, and the kinds of conflict an armed force confronts. Furthermore, these variables converge to create a new, cultural RMA that brings to bear alternative routes to sustainable peace and prosperity. In the paper that follows, I will first review the literature on RMA to illustrate that gender is absent from the debate. The next section will recast the RMA discussion to include gender and draw on Female Engagement Teams (FETs) and Cultural Support Teams (CSTs) operating in Afghanistan and Iraq as examples to model this convergence and illustrate new military capabilities. Taking seriously the concept of gender in the military context, as I argue in this paper, constitutes an RMA and this novel perspective is the primary contribution of this paper. This alternative understanding of how militaries approach war, in direct opposition to how militaries have engaged historically, bring new possibilities to the forefront. Indeed, women's military service everywhere and the recognition that effective soldiering requires that both men *and* women assume masculine and feminine qualities (i.e., gender perspectives) will revolutionize western militaries.

### **Literature Review**

The definition of an RMA has been debated for many years. There is much disagreement between academic and military professionals about what the term means and how many RMAs militaries have experienced. The literature review defines RMA, highlights the RMA typology, and illustrates that gender analysis is absent from the debate.

### **Definitions & History**

RMA is generally understood as a representation of loosely connected ideas, approaches, and theories involved in security policy. In its most basic form, RMA is “simply a revolutionary change in how war is fought” (Rogers 2000, p. 22). Inventions like gunpowder, blitzkrieg, and nuclear weapons signal revolutions in military affairs. Military historians have used the term ‘RMA’ since the 1950s to describe various innovative periods between the fourteenth and twentieth centuries. While Table 1 is not exhaustive, it lists some major military innovations cited in the literature:

**Table 1.** Possible RMAs and Driving Forces

<b>Century</b>	<b>RMA</b>	<b>Driving Force</b>
<b>14</b>	Longbow	Cultural
<b>15</b>	Gunpowder	Technological, Financial
<b>16</b>	Fortifications	Architectural, Financial
<b>17</b>	French Military Reforms	Tactical, Organizational, Administrative
<b>18</b>	Naval Warfare	Social, Financial, Technological
<b>18-19</b>	Industrial Revolution	Technological, Financial, Organizational, Cultural
<b>20</b>	WWI Combined Arms	Tactical, Conceptual, Technological, Scientific
<b>20</b>	Blitzkrieg	Tactical, Operational, Conceptual, Organization
<b>20</b>	Intelligence	Conceptual, Political, Ideological
<b>20</b>	Nuclear Weapons	Technological

Note. Table 1 is a shortened adaptation of a table presented by Williamson Murray, “Thinking about Revolutions in Military Affairs,” *Joint Force Quarterly* (Summer 1997).

Histories of revolution in warfare include moving from the longbow to firearms (artillery revolution). Tactical, organizational, and cultural reforms Napoleon “instituted in the wake of the French Revolution are commonly referred to as the Napoleonic Revolution” (Shimko 2010, p. 5). The twentieth century (post-WWII era) brought about a nuclear revolution (Jervis 1990). Table 1 catalogues the most commonly cited innovations in the RMA literature, but many scholars continue to dispute the list of military revolutions. Some scholars believe there have been as few as three and as many as ten military revolutions over a 600-year period.



RMAs can be visualized on major and minor scales. Big and small RMAs involve change across three domains – society and the government, society and the military, and the government and the military – to varying degrees (Okros 2016). Changes in the relationship between *society and government* can impact the type of political objectives that are desirable (the ends). Changes in relations between the *society and military* can impact the actions a military engages in while still operating in a fair and just manner supported by the citizenry (the ways). Shifts in the relationship between the *government and military* changes the operational capabilities produced by the military, and therefore, how the state goes about achieving its political goals (the means). A major RMA occurs when there are changes across all three of the aforementioned domains that lead to a significant break from previous Grand Strategy. The nature of such comprehensive change could explain why some scholars are compelled to argue that there has only been three RMAs. Minor RMAs, on the other hand, involve one or two of the aforementioned relationships, along with technological innovations that diversify the available options civilian and military leaders have at their disposal to effect political ends. For example, questions about the morality of using nuclear weapons informed changes in military tactics, and ultimately the degree to which society supports the means used by the military to achieve the political ends. Rather than comprehensive change in Grand Strategy, minor RMAs involve changes in military strategy – that is, the political goals that the government hopes society will support remain static, but the ways and means these goals are achieved transform.

While there are many RMA definitions from which to choose, Knox and Murray (2001) adopt a comprehensive definition and provide a framework for elucidating the difference between military revolutions and RMA. They contend that cases like the Industrial and Napoleonic Revolutions demonstrate that military revolutions are kinds of disturbances that create effects extending beyond military organizations. These military revolutions bring “with them such systematic changes in the political, social, and cultural arenas as to be largely uncontrollable, unpredictable, and above all unforeseeable,” while recasting society and the state (Murray 1997, p. 67). Knox and Murray see contemporary RMAs as modest shifts that entail “the assembly of a complex mix of tactical, organizational, doctrinal, and technological innovations in order to implement a new conceptual approach to warfare or to a specialized sub-branch of warfare” (Knox and Murray 2001, p. 12). Because RMAs are visualized as more limited in significance and breadth under this framework, they are typically subsumed by a larger military revolution. This conceptualization, and one I

adopt in this paper, sees RMAs as leading to military revolution, which results in significant change.

### ***Types of RMA***

Scholars have identified three revolutionary shifts – technological, doctrinal, and organizational – that are useful when describing RMAs.

First, the most current RMA discussions pivot around the concept of **technology**. The term RMA developed out of the Soviets' concern that their opponents were building technologically advanced weapons so great to put anyone lagging behind at a disadvantage. Just as the Industrial Revolution profoundly changed the conduct of war in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many scholars maintain that transitioning from industrial to information-based societies will have a similar impact in the future. Kipp represents this line of thinking and believes the defining feature of RMA is “the shift from mass industrial warfare to information warfare” (2000, p. 93). Friedman and Friedman (1998) and Beier (2003) see the first Gulf War as the transition point. The difference between an F-117 attacking precise targets in Baghdad during the opening salvo of the first Gulf War and the WWII allied bombing raids of Tokyo illustrate two very different types of warfare. The inaccurate and tremendously destructive carpet bombing required large numbers of munitions to ensure termination of specific targets. The technological RMA renders conventional interstate warfare a thing of the past. The technology employed during the Gulf War (e.g., precision guided munitions) represents the shifting structure in favor of smaller forces without compromising military effectiveness while fighting wars in a limited manner, rather than engaging in attrition style warfare. Technological RMA scholars typically see this as a trend reversal when compared to industrial war, and therefore, it constitutes a RMA.

Second, scholars recognize a significant shift in **operational** doctrine that constitutes an RMA since the Cold War. Naval, land, and air doctrines have all independently changed, and all services emphasize interdependence, or “jointness.” These changes are viewed as revolutionary because they alter the way forces fight. Technological RMAs force militaries to act jointly or in coalitions (Lambeth 1997). Today's integrated battlefield looks something like the following scenario:

...air force precision force preparing the battlefield for ground forces and airlift assets transporting troops to the theater of operations. Manned, unmanned, and satellite surveillance platforms would operate throughout the campaign, supporting all three services, while naval forces could provide off-shore logistical support, sea lift,

and precision force capabilities against ground targets (Sloan 2002, p. 9).

This scenario illustrates the importance of different services working with one another to fight smarter, but combined operations involving military services working in collaboration with allied forces is becoming more critical.

Advances in precision munitions, for example, have enshrined air power as the decisive force in war. Air power doctrine emphasizes jointness with the concept of Rapid Halt, where employing an overwhelming application of air power against the enemy can stop an attack all together, cripple the enemy's ability to control its forces, and lead to effortless ground force victory. Air power will eventually move away from manned fighters to Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), which offer new opportunities (Hewish 1999). UAVs are less expensive than manned aircraft, eliminate risking the life of the pilot, and may even be able to outperform their manned counterparts. Advances in air power will also inevitably change the way military organizations are structured.

Finally, the literature shows that **organizations**, too, adapt in the face of change. The transformation from total war to precision warfare requires a similar transformation at the organizational level – that is, a move away from mass, conscripted armies to “smaller, more highly educated, and capital-intensive professional armed forces whose units are commanded by a more decentralized decision-making structure and can be specifically tailored to the task at hand” (Sloan 2002, p. 15). High quality forces are necessary as greater importance is placed on sophisticated weapons systems. Moreover, a flexible organization that emphasizes adaptability is paramount in a world where forces confront many different kinds of conflict. Flexible force packaging, a concept that links the importance of interoperability with other units or service branches, emphasizes new synergistic possibilities to deal with contingencies (e.g., interstate ethnic conflict, regional threats).

As the quality of combat capabilities increases and the information age takes hold, decentralization in the decision-making structure becomes paramount. If advanced technologies provide the same information to the common soldier as it does the commander, “local command is likely to be empowered at the expense of theater level command” (ibid.). Units and command staff are more aligned on the twenty-first century digitized battlefield, which shifts command protocol. This shift has ramifications for culture as well. Cohen notes that the warrior culture may change as a result. He states that “the cultural challenge for military organizations will be to maintain a warrior spirit and the intuitive understanding of war that goes with it, even where their leaders are not, in large part, warriors themselves”

(1996, p. 49). A reconceptualization of the warrior ethos is a cornerstone of the cultural RMA that will be explored later.

### ***Where Does Gender Fit in the RMA Debate?***

Technological, doctrinal, and organizational innovation are not the only driving forces of evolutionary change. The integration of servicewomen into combat arms, for example, can also drive a transformational cultural change throughout the military. This transformational change – what I will call the cultural RMA – radically changes the way service members think about the warrior model, the qualities essential to successful military engagements, and reveals the positive implications diversity has on combat effectiveness and unit cohesion. Women’s integration generally and the implementation of gender perspectives specifically is of both organizational and doctrinal importance but has been heretofore regarded, both in scholarship and in the trenches, as a non-factor. Under Okros’ (2016) major/minor RMA dichotomy, the cultural RMA constitutes a minor RMA. That is, the inclusion of women allows the military to field new capabilities, which in turn gives more options to the government regarding how they can mobilize these capabilities. Overall, the triumvirate of technological, doctrinal, and organizational change provides useful yet incomplete categories when thinking about types of RMA.

Given the changes that result from each RMA – a wholesale transformation of everything from force structure to military personnel – it is surprising that there is almost no discussion of women’s integration into combat arms or the use of gender perspectives operationally in the literature. Moskos, Segal and Williams (2000) present the expanding role of servicewomen as a central part of their analysis on military transformation, but do not frame this expansion as an RMA. Cohen mentions women explicitly, albeit tangentially, in the RMA context. When arguing that new technologies will usher in new specialists, Cohen says “none of them [are] combat specialist[s] in the old sense and a fair percentage of them, sooner or later, female” (1996, p. 49). Although he says nothing directly about whether this change is good or bad for the military, the tone of the sentence intimates that the change might be undesirable. Whether one believes the change is undesirable or not, the changes that result from RMA have obvious implications for gender integration and vice versa.

A master’s thesis written by Shadrock (2007), *Women in the US Army: A Quiet Revolution in Military Affairs*, is the only piece of scholarship that takes up the question of gender and RMA explicitly. Shadrock argues that “an organizational revolution in military affairs occurred in the US Army pertaining to permanency, increased scope and exponential expansion of the numbers of women serving” (iii). She primarily focuses on the Women’s

Army Corps from WWII to the 1960s, where she notes that women's Army service constitutes an RMA. She argues that the roles of Army women will continue to grow into the twenty-first century "and will continue to be substantially influenced by the Contemporary Operational Environment" (ibid.). This expansion of servicewomen's roles indicates a continuation of the organizational RMA. In the next section I expand upon Shadrock's argument by making a case for the understanding of gender initiatives as driving transformational change in the military that constitutes a cultural RMA. The cultural RMA impacts technology, doctrine, and the organization in profound ways that change the character of war and offers a more inclusive security that benefits everyone.

### **Cultural RMA**

Any significant treatment of gender initiatives (e.g., women's integration into combat arms, creation of a gender balanced force, implementation of a gender perspective) as revolutionary, or even innovative, is entirely absent from the literature. Serious discussion of revolution must take account of gender as a variable since revolutions transform economic, political, *and* social structures dramatically. Women's accession into western military combat arms has been a culmination of a long process having its origins in WWII. Recent policy changes that allow women to occupy ground combat roles, however, are driven by a more specific recognition of twenty-first century global operational realities (King 2015).

In 2000, the UN codified the importance of gender integration in Armed Forces around the world in UNSCR 1325, which resulted in the development of National Action Plans (NAP) for individual states regarding implementation of women's integration. This is a profound transformation "...and it is only in the last decade that a new gender norm has become established in the [NATO] Alliance" (King 2015, p. 22). In the American case, the effects of gender initiatives on the military establishment are just now becoming apparent, but they will become more striking as servicewomen move into traditionally male-dominated communities like infantry and armour units. While gender initiatives are beginning to materialize in military NAPs, this transformation will build to an inevitable *dénouement* – the cultural RMA. In the section that follows, I recast the RMA discussion as one that includes gender as a variable. In doing so, I show that four interdependent transformations have occurred and now converge to bring about the cultural RMA. The introduction of gender into the RMA debate transforms our understanding of conflict and how it might be peacefully resolved. The cultural RMA contributes to the existing literature by showing a richer, more robust understanding of the current RMA; one

that has led to the integration of gender perspectives in western militaries generally and to former Defense Secretary Ashton Carter's lifting of the ground combat exclusion policy in January 2016.

My conceptualization of revolution emanates from the historian's understanding that a revolution is the convergence of various evolutionary or transformational points at a given moment. A revolution forms only when several points converge to bring about significant change. The US is currently experiencing the initial stages of this convergence. Technological innovation, a new relationship between the state and war, evolving conflict type, and progressive social norms (and especially a timely shift in how we understand the relationship between masculinity and femininity) are the four areas of convergence. While some of these areas of convergence are discussed as more or less independent in the mainstream literature, I posit the RMA only becomes evident when these transformational areas are added together. Table 2 illustrates the formulation of cultural RMA as compared to how RMAs are discussed in the mainstream literature.

**Table 2.** Difference between Gender RMA and Mainstream Conceptualizations

<b>Variables Leading to Revolution</b>	<b>Cultural RMA</b>	<b>Mainstream RMAs</b>
<b>Technology Material Changes</b>	Technological Innovation	Technological RMA
<b>State Political, Military Actors</b>	Relationship between State & War	Organizational RMA
<b>Conflict Location</b>	Type of Conflict	Doctrinal RMA
<b>Social Norms Gender</b>	Gender Integration	N/A

The left-hand column of Table 2 shows the domains of transformational change that come together to create a revolution. Every revolution, from the Russian Revolution to the Industrial Revolution, has incorporated the four listed domains. For example, technological innovation brings about material, tangible changes. Likewise, the actors and the location of conflict will change as a response to the technological changes. Finally, societal norms will evolve due to the fact that changes driven by technology shifts our understanding of who is incorporated within new domains (social norms). The center column lists the variables that build to create the cultural RMA, and the following analysis will focus on these variables. The right-hand column should be compared to the cultural RMA column because it

shows the difference between the new understanding of RMA and the mainstream scholarly conceptualization of RMA – namely, the mainstream literature has analyzed the first three variables as distinct from one another without taking into account changes in social norms.

### ***Converging Forces and the Culminating Cultural RMA***

The mainstream literature offers technological innovation as the most obvious RMA that alters the way armed forces fight and how soldiers engage the enemy. The evolving nature of technology also lends itself to new types of warriors, new conflict locations, and a renewed relationship between the state and war. When gender is employed to describe the characterization of these developments, a new conceptualization of RMA becomes necessary. The literature review bears testimony to the general belief that technology like UAVs and precision-guided munitions have changed the types of war we fight. However, these changes also alter the role of a warrior and, consequently, society's pre-conceived notion of who can occupy those roles. In the age of cyber and virtual war, technological and intellectual skills trump physical ability for warriors in advanced industrial states. For example, the technological RMA allows the UAV pilot to incur minimal risk to her life and lowers the probability of physically engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Moreover, "the technological leap afforded by robotics [and autonomous systems] will shift the debate from whether women are able to meet combat standards to how gender diversity in combat will improve the U.S. military's fight capability" (Letendre 2015, p. 91). The Department of Defense plans to maintain technical dominance in the realm of autonomy, which involves exploration of how robotics can advance land warfare. Exoskeletons that enhance the soldier's physical capability and robotic mules that can lighten a soldier's carrying load are currently being tested and these advances are expected to be operable by 2025. These innovations shift the debate about women's competencies considerably. Advanced technologies like exoskeletons will give more women the opportunity to meet the ground combat standards, but the successful utilization and deployment of robotic and autonomous systems can only be achieved by gender diverse combat units. The technological changes that will emerge in the next decade means that discussion of physical strength and ability as a limiting factor for women in combat will dissolve. This, in turn, will necessitate a new conceptualization of what the warrior class looks like.

Davis and McKee argue that "the real hurdle for women in participating fully in the military today has little to do with their physical or mental abilities but rather revolves around social and cultural issues characterizing the 'warrior' framework" (2004, p. 52). Ideas about women's

ability to perform in combat roles are strongly influenced by socio-cultural perspectives that originate in a male centric warrior paradigm. Warrior frameworks locate combat as the central military activity and warrior ethos are often defined as physicality, courage, emotional stamina, loyalty, and tenacity to complete the mission (Dunivin 1994; Ellner 2011; Youngman 2000). While this language has been applied to soldiers serving in combat arms, the warrior framework is used to describe the foundation of American military culture and the values held by every professional soldier (St. Denis 2001). In the twenty-first century, this sits in direct opposition to the trends in the range of mission requirements that are assumed by operational combat personnel (Pinch 2004). New technologies and skillsets have changed the duties of the modern military, and as a consequence, brute strength is no longer an absolute requirement of the warrior. A reconceptualization of what it means to be a warrior will ultimately follow. If the armed forces become increasingly more technical, and we have every reason to believe they will, servicemen no longer have the advantage over their female counterparts. The physical strength, stamina, and endurance that has been historically associated with soldiering, and therefore masculinity, does not set the standard for women piloting UAVs, coordinating attacks from computers (e.g., cyber war missions like Stuxnet), and operating robotic devices (Kennedy-Pipe 2000). Servicemen and women are intellectually matched and equally suited to take on technological, combat oriented jobs in contexts where war is waged at a distance. Stereotypes historically associated with femininity – empathy, patience, collaboration, and compassion – have been cited to keep women out of combat. However, these are the skills that might prove to be most valuable in new conflicts types (Brannon 2005). In the context of twenty-first century leadership, people globally “crave leaders who emulate the qualities most attributed to women: *Openness, sharing, compassion, flexibility, and empathy*...[and] innovators are breaking from masculine structures to lead a social, interdependent and transparent world” (Gerzema 2013, p. 19). The leaders that are successful – both men and women – break from stereotypically male behavior (e.g., aggressive, controlling) and incorporate more stereotypically feminine qualities into their problem solving and organization building approaches. Overall, masculine structures, or the warrior framework in the military context, lose validity, and as a consequence, social norms that determine who can participate in the militarized domain progress with innovation in technology.

The realities of twenty-first century conflict underscores the evolving understanding of the relationship between the state and war. The mainstream organizational RMA includes discussions of smaller force



structures and professional military elites (rather than conscripts), but these changes have grown out of the evolving relationship between the state and war. Kennedy-Pipe (2000) notes a gradual erosion of the demands made by the state on its people since 1945, where most modern militaries have discarded conscription and replaced it with All-Volunteer Force (AVF) structures. The creation of smaller AVFs illustrates that the military might not occupy a central role in society as it once did. For example, “the mothballing of airbases, the closure of nuclear bases and the eradication of immediate nuclear range forces are all visible symbols of the removal of the military from society” (Kennedy-Pipe 2000, p. 44). Thus, demobilization of the state has weakened the relationship between it and war. Scholarship on the civil-military gap provides additional evidence of that (Rahbek-Clemmensen et al. 2012). The civil-military gap alludes to the fact that the military and society are drifting apart with respect to culture, attitudes, socioeconomic status (SES), ethnicity, and gender. Scholars report that soldiers in the AVF tend to have lower SES, identify more as republicans than democrats, are disproportionately drawn from southern states, and have larger male representation than female. For these reasons, among others, the military no longer mirrors the society it serves. The individual volunteers who make up the AVF today are not widely connected to the Americans they defend because they are such a small minority of the population. A 2011 Pew survey expressed that “not since the peacetime years between World War I and World War II has a smaller share of Americans served in the Armed Forces” (Thompson 2011). The estranged relationship between the state and soldiers who protect it also degrades traditional notions of who the protectors and protected are. The fact that American militarism is receding from mainstream society (as compared to the era of national conscription) and contact with service members is becoming increasingly rare has subsequently shaken our traditional beliefs about what war and the warrior look like.

A third interdependent transformation is a change in the type of engagements that the US and other advanced militaries fight around the globe. The US spends significant time and resources on gaining a competitive edge in cyber capabilities and other technologies that will enable soldiers to fight virtual wars more effectively (e.g., UAVs, robotics). Besides cyber and virtual war, missions oriented around humanitarian interventions, peacekeeping, security enforcement, and post-war reconstruction are far more common than engaging in conventional interstate warfare. Just as the types of engagements have evolved, so too have the goals – militaries have moved from securing concrete strategic military objectives to creating the conditions that can precipitate political

outcomes. Militaries, then, play a supporting role in “operations that involve a large number of actors and activities aimed at achieving more far-reaching political goals of stabilization, democratization, economic growth, and the implementation and maintenance of respect for human rights and the rule of law” (Egnell 2015, p. 76). Now militaries focus on protecting civilians, establishing order, and preventing gender based violence. The political objectives are the primary focus and the military is one of many actors that works on the ground to ensure those political goals are achieved. This mandates that scholars and military leadership reconsider traditional ideas of where servicewomen belong in the militarized domain. Swedish peacekeepers who served in Bosnia in the early 1990s identified the attributes of the *ideal* UN soldier in a 1997 survey for such missions. The qualities articulated by respondents were “*not a Rambo*, [but] flexible, humble, adaptable, able to resist frustration, tolerant, able to show feelings, group-oriented, patient, staying power, manage stress, self-confident, tough, obstinate, able to listen, tolerates provocation, impartial, and diplomatic” (Davis and McKee 2004, p. 70). The peacekeepers’ responses align with the range of duties that the twenty-first century soldier encounters in an operational environment. Deployed servicewomen in peacekeeping environments are credited with the ability to defuse confrontation and violence more effectively than their male counterparts and are less likely to resort to force as compared to all-male peacekeeping units (DeGroot 1999; Miller and Moskos 1995). When there is a significant shift in the type of operational imperatives encountered, there must be a comparable shift when considering who has the skills best suited for the task.

Twenty-first century engagements require new approaches and ways of thinking that ensure military mission success. The integration of women into combat arms, in concert with the application of gender perspectives to military operations, provide armed forces with new capabilities and will ultimately precipitate a cultural RMA and ensure new pathways to peace. Rather than looking at servicewomen as offering special capabilities that their male counterparts cannot, the addition of women and a gender perspective will likely transform the traditional war fighting paradigm by creating space for important non-traditional security issues. As Dharmapuri (2014) states, “a gender perspective is an analytic tool that illuminates the different experiences of men, women, boys, and girls as they relate to a mission’s mandate. Both men and women can use a gender perspective in their work,” and this added dimension can inform the way a military operates in the environment. In other words, a gender perspective looks at an area of operations through a new lens that expands what is traditionally considered important. Social, cultural, religious, political, and

economic practices emerge as sites to explore regarding the distribution of resources and power across groups. Analyzing a situation from these disparate vantage points can change the way military units' address problems. When the notion of violence is expanded beyond the traditional understanding to include sexual violence targeted at civilians, for example, a gender perspective could shape the tactics employed by militaries. Behavioral changes of servicemen and women along patrol routes and consultations with local community members may stabilize an operational area more than traditional methods could (Egnell 2015). Since conflicts in many parts of the world are protracted and violence becomes normalized, the impact on civilians (women and children specifically) requires non-traditional security thinking (Coomaraswamy 2015). It is difficult to imagine a successful humanitarian intervention involving women and non-combatants without the deployment of servicewomen. New competencies and perspectives are also offered by servicewomen in these environments that will improve the effectiveness and operational conduct of armed forces. These competencies only emerge once the relationship between women and war evolves, and are most evident when considering the security enforcement and reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Social norms, or how society understands the relationship between women and warfare, have evolved in the US and recently culminated in the elimination of the combat exclusion policy. This evolution is clear by looking at the history of legislation passed by Congress to determine how close women can be to the "frontline" and how women's service has evolved from support to forward deployed roles (Archer 2014). Contemporary feminist scholarship also traces the evolving nature of women's participation in war. Women's relationship to war has most commonly been associated with the idea of "camp followers," where women take on the roles of "soldiers, special agents, nurses, surgeons, laundry women, cooks, and prostitutes" (Kennedy-Pipe 2000, p. 39). The Cold War significantly shifted US military posture from employing massive forces to defense by nuclear deterrence, which in turn impacted the relationship of women and warfare. Enloe (1983) posits that military wives and girlfriends replaced the "camp followers" of yesterday and provided the infrastructure critical for sustaining armed forces. These women played a supporting role prior to and after the Cold War that ultimately increased force morale.

The Gulf War is a curious example of a moment when servicewomen were more present in militarized domains than ever before (more than 40,000 American servicewomen were deployed), yet the hard distinction between masculinity and femininity remained. The 1991 policy restrictions "meant that women on the whole served, despite their acknowledged skills

in areas such as driving, predominantly but not wholly in the kitchens or as logistical support” (Kennedy-Pipe 2000, p. 42). It is widely accepted today that servicewomen proved they were an important asset during the Gulf War and many scholars believed that greater female representation after 1991 would undercut some of the unproductive bonds between masculinity and war. However, until women serve across combat specialties, the reality is that women are integrated in ways that exclude them from participating fully in war, or reaping any benefits from that participation (e.g., promotion and career advancement predicated on war fighting). Elshtain (1987) suggests that the male “protector” and the female “nurturer” has been a long-held assumption that is central to any discussion of men and women’s respective roles in war. Enloe (1993) reiterates that this dichotomy has been important in keeping the militarized male domain intact. She states that militarism has not been sustained by drawing upon civilian notions of masculinity, but a specific brand of militarized masculinity that requires “...drill sergeants...and men’s willingness to earn their manhood credentials by soldiering: it also requires women to accept particular assumptions about mothering, marriage, and unskilled work...as well as policies, written and unwritten to ensure certain sorts of sexual relations” (p. 253). Enloe’s analysis is important because it suggests why the issue of combat has remained a male, militarized domain notwithstanding efforts to integrate women into the armed forces over the past 40 years. Despite this, recent military engagements have demonstrated that the warrior paradigm and military masculinity are crumbling under the pressure of adapting to new mission types and tactics.

### ***Cultural RMA Models***

The performance of American servicewomen in the most recent Afghanistan and Iraq wars has eroded some of those long-held categorizations. The United States Marine Corps (USMC) Female Engagement Teams (FET) and the Lioness program, along with Army Cultural Support Teams (CST) are a case in point. FETs have deployed with infantry patrols in Helmand Province to interact with and win over the rural Afghan women since servicemen are prohibited from such contact (Bumiller 2010). The FET mission is to gather with the Pashtun women, drink tea with them in their homes, and discuss everything from community projects to local politics in order to facilitate intelligence gathering. These “Tea as a Weapon” missions were successful because female Marines enjoy access to women in Afghan communities that men do not. They share universal experiences as women and have the opportunity to gain the trust of rural women which enables them to gather important information about the village and local politics. Such access to local women affords the military

with better knowledge of local conditions, but also increases the perceived legitimacy of the military among community members and improve the force protection of troops in the area. The USMC Lioness program also utilizes women in areas that require a culturally sensitive approach. Created in 2004, the exclusively female teams were tasked with searching Muslim women at community checkpoints. This program was tailored specifically to meet the needs of the Iraqi population while maintaining a level of security for both local people and for US troops (Alvarez 2009). Moreover, male Marines reported the importance of the Lioness program for both the mission and advancing women's status in the Marine Corps. Staff Sargent James Baker, the Combat Center Provost Marshal's Office Operations Chief, stated that he didn't "think there [was] a Marine out there who didn't understand the importance of having females [at checkpoints]. No one [he knew] ever questioned [a female Marine's] abilities or their knowledge" (Dunn 2009). Staff Sargent Baker's testimony shows the importance of gender as a dimension of RMA. Societal norms have shifted to the extent that no one questioned the ability of female Marines to perform their duties given the technology they use, conflict type, and location that required cultural sensitivity to be successful in the mission of reconstruction. Furthermore, the USMC FET model was deemed to be such an important operational asset that the Army soon followed suit with their own CSTs, where female soldiers perform a multiplicity of functions such as key leader engagements, medical outreach, and coordinate their efforts with Special Operations Forces in support of Village Stability Operations (Lemmon 2015b). These positions are entirely new territory for Army women and require a combination of at least three jobs: the military police officer, civil affairs soldier, and human intelligence collector (Nicholas 2015). The employment of servicewomen in combat roles like FETs/CSTs illustrates that gender is an important dimension in fighting twenty-first century conflicts. These teams meet the objectives of UNSCR 1325 and the 2011 American NAP "for the inclusion and empowerment of women by listening to Afghan and Iraqi women on the ground, encouraging the rule of law, and allowing the women to feel more secure by decreasing the chances of violence through accountability" (Grass 2015, p. 52). FETs and CSTs model the convergence of technological innovations (e.g., technology used to gather intelligence), conflict type (e.g., counterinsurgency operations, security enforcement), and social norms (e.g., common experiences as women, incorporation of gender perspectives in order to respect Afghan cultural norms) to create the cultural RMA. The addition of gender perspectives improves the competencies of all soldiers.

To the extent that the Female Engagement and Cultural Sensitivity Team model fits within the existing RMA literature, women's integration into combat arms is best described as a minor RMA. The integration of women in areas previously off limits, along with more fluid understandings of performance and gender, allows the military to harness new capabilities (FETs/CSTs), which in turn gives the government a new menu of capabilities from which they can draw to achieve political ends. This is the primary effect of gender initiatives in the context of RMA. The secondary effect is how these initiatives bring society in line with the military. Specifically, when the military applies strategies that include gender initiatives, society sees their military adopting values and behaviors that they endorse. Thus, the "Tea as a Weapon" mission is not merely about intelligence collection through new methods, but also about engaging in the cultural elements of warfare by demonstrating to others – namely, Afghan men and women – the various social constructions of woman/female. Because all of these relations are reciprocal, gender integration and mainstreaming also shifts the warrior identity that is mirrored back to society and makes room for possible changes in how society largely understands the interplay of masculinity and femininity. It is relatively easy to see how gender initiatives (e.g., integration of women into combat arms and gender mainstreaming) challenge the warrior identity, but these initiatives will change the way men understand and perform masculinity as well. Women's military histories, both American and cross-national, show that women have continually expanded their views, roles, and behaviors to include more masculine characteristics that meet soldiering (masculine) standards. Perhaps the most significant change that will result from the incorporation of gender initiatives in the military context is facilitating men to do similar work – that is, adopt a range of masculine and feminine perspectives and behaviors so they can be more effective soldiers.

Women's integration into combat arms, along with the adoption of a gender perspective, will ultimately result in new capabilities, more dynamic soldiers, and improved operational effectiveness across the military. First and foremost, the integration of women into all echelons of the military will make the organization smarter, more physically fit, and capable. As evidenced by the two women who graduated from Army Ranger School in September 2015, there are some servicewomen who can meet the existing standard and bring different skills to the table by virtue of their life experiences. Those women that can meet the standard set for combat military occupational specialties and have an enthusiasm for those particular occupations could replace the approximately 30 percent of male infantry troops who did not volunteer to be in front-line combat and have no

desire to be there (Sisk 2015). This would amount to a more focused and agile combat force. Furthermore, women's integration could precipitate more coordination and cooperation between the military and humanitarian organizations in campaigns that include a broad set of actors. The military's hyper-masculine culture has been at odds with the organizational culture of humanitarian groups often deployed to stabilize war torn areas. Women's inclusion would almost certainly make these relationships more productive, but as Egnell suggests, this impact is "likely to be limited until a more general mainstreaming of a gender perspective on operations is achieved" (2013, p. 40). Finally, the UN maintains that women are absolutely necessary to some tasks in peacekeeping operations. Servicewomen in peacekeeping operations can better address the needs of female combatants through the process of demobilization, they can interact with women in societies that are off-limits to men for a variety of reasons (e.g., counsel survivors of gender-based violence, mentor female cadets), and they can serve as role models to young women who are interested in participating in the peace processes of their local communities. Multiple studies by NATO and the UN indicate that widespread adoption of a gender perspective "improves the operational effectiveness of missions in three key ways: it enhances the situational awareness of a mission, increases credibility and confidence in the mission, and helps to address defensive measures" (Dharmapuri 2014). These competencies are essential for a military that increasingly participates in and leads stability operations.

Women bring real critical skills into the context of combat that help armed forces generally and the American military specifically do a better job on the ground. But women's employment in FETs/CSTs has so far amounted to an additive change rather than a transformative change. The transformative change – the cultural RMA that I envision – will come about only with women's integration and the application of the gender perspective to the contemporary strategic context. Women's complete integration can positively change the culture and competency of combat units, and the ways violence is operationalized in military organizations. If one thinks of military culture as elastic rather than static, as something that can be improved on rather than an existing perfect order, the military has profound opportunities to recruit, train, and deploy servicemen and women of all ranks into combat and stability operations. Every soldier, at all levels, must have keen intellectual abilities (e.g., cognitive skills, problem solving, agility) rather than an aggressive warrior mindset to be successful in today's military engagements. Physicality will remain important, but brute strength founded on a hyper-masculine posture is not the standard that will guarantee

success. By these measures women have so far been an underutilized resource that can improve military effectiveness in a globalized world.

## **Conclusion**

Globalization is a double-edged sword. At its best, it promises economic prosperity, widespread acceptance of democratic values, and the connection of communities. At its worst, it creates antagonisms that result in bloodshed, the erasure of indigenous cultures, and human rights violations of disenfranchised groups. In the case of global conflict, the lives of women and girls are changed forever. Indeed, “war has never been a tidy, closed activity, taking place on a clearly demarcated battlefield between two uniformed entities...Rather, war marches right through the center of everything — through house, hearth and field — ripping a hole into the center of things that can never be entirely repaired” (Pynchon 2011). While many women and girls find themselves victims of twenty-first century conflict, others serve in armed forces and actively work to shift military culture such that militaries can be more effective at peacekeeping and post-war reconstruction. Servicewomen offer militaries new capabilities that make them more effective advocates for marginalized communities than ever before.

The integration of servicewomen into the US Armed Forces, and the longtime integration of women in militaries abroad, constitutes an RMA that demands a new level of conceptual and organizational clarity. Gender initiatives are becoming quite visible with regards to rethinking operational strategy and tactics, and this is consequently breaking down the warrior framework that has characterized the foundation of western armed forces for so long. Although RMA has been extensively theorized and rigorous debate continues regarding how to measure an RMA, I argue that RMA as currently described is incomplete because it does not incorporate gender as an analytical variable. Completely absent from the debate is a discussion of the cultural RMA; specifically, the ongoing integration of women and gender perspectives in western militaries are creating cultural shifts within militaries. Scholarship on women’s integration into western militaries is rich, but it stops short of making a connection between gender initiatives and revolutionary change. I have argued that gender integration and the use of gender perspectives operationally drives a change more profound than just greater visibility and representation. These integrative steps create a shift in organizational culture and thinking such that it empowers the military to recruit, train, and operate in ways compatible with new operational mandates. Gender integration in this context displaces the gender assimilation women have historically practiced to fit into the traditional



warrior paradigm. The military's prototypical soldier no longer can meet the needs of twenty-first century warfare. In short, the introduction of gender into the RMA debate is transformative; it opens the opportunity to understand global security and conflict in a completely new way.

Gender initiatives, if implemented seriously and uniformly across services, can be a game changer in twenty-first century military operations. So many of the military engagements confronted by western armed forces today requires that cultural sensitivities be considered in order to reach outcomes that result in better intelligence, increased security of troops and the community members those troops serve, and widespread stability such that men and women flourish once objectives are met. FETs and CSTs are the clearest model of what is possible when women are integrated into combat arms and gender perspectives are considered essential in operations. More models will emerge as gender initiatives are prioritized. Special Operations Commander (SOCOM) Major General Bennet Sacolick emphatically expressed that CST members "very well may provide a foundation for ultimate integration" (Lemmon 2015). The CSTs and FETs who support combat troops and special operators in the Afghanistan and Iraq wars provide a new exemplar for the twenty-first century warrior.

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