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"I'M NOT YOUR TYPICAL WHITE SOLDIER": INTERROGATING WHITENESS AND POWER IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

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Introduction

In recent years, the rise of white supremacist and neo-Nazi infiltration have been a growing concern and increasingly a preoccupation for senior military officials in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).[1] The rise of white nationalism has been considered an "active threat" resulting in the release of specific directives against "hateful conduct."[2] In 2022, The Toronto Star posed the question, "Why is it so hard for Canada's military to root out white supremacists?"[3] At first glance, it might be difficult for Canadians to consider such problematic, racist extremism in the ranks. However, a more complex question to ask is why is the CAF an attractive site for white supremacist and white national groups?

While these extremist threats of white supremacy should not be dismissed, focusing on these cases highlights the exceptionality of racism and systematically dismisses and ignores everyday forms of whiteness. This article is concerned with how racialized soldiers are constructed as "Other" through everyday encounters with whiteness and what this means for contemporary culture change efforts in the CAF. Very rarely is white supremacy addressed in nuanced, quotidian ways that work to consolidate whiteness in Western militaries. While there are practices and policies that call for strict uniformity in the CAF, racialized soldiers embody the "Other" and come to know themselves through settler colonial legacies of whiteness. In this article, I ask, what are the impacts of everyday whiteness to current culture change efforts in the CAF? What are the mechanisms by which institutional whiteness is produced? How is the CAF socially constructed as a place of white dominance? In what follows, I draw on my interviews with racialized members in the CAF to demonstrate how the Canadian military is constructed and preserved as a space of whiteness while simultaneously exploring how racialized bodies negotiate this space in a multitude of ways. I make visible the production of whiteness and how it "quilts together various racial practices" grounded in colonial history that has important implications for institutional culture change efforts going forward.[4]

First, I briefly introduce the literature on race and the military context. Next, I explore the theoretical underpinnings of institutional whiteness and how this applies to the CAF. I then introduce my research methods and explore the narratives of racialized soldiers, demonstrating how the CAF is made white while simultaneously revealing how racialized soldiers are continually negotiating their practices through expectations to approximate whiteness, while simultaneously demarcating difference. I showcase racialized service members' narratives to posit that they navigate military life and space differently from those in the white majority. In doing so, I call to attention the important nuances of service that are often ignored or even considered. This tension is central to understanding how to think about contemporary culture change efforts in the CAF both structurally and interpersonally.

Race and the Canadian Armed Forces

While there has been ample research and scholarly work on race and the military from a variety of perspectives (i.e., employment equity, diversity issues, racial patterns in enlistment, officer promotion rates, administration of military justice, risk of death in combat, and health care for wounded soldiers), particularly in the American context, very little scholarship has centered on the lived experience of racialized soldiers and how they negotiate national belonging within the Canadian multicultural context.[5] Literature on war and soldiering have largely dealt with markers of identity such as race, gender, and sexuality as characteristics and/or attributes and/or separate entities, rather than a focus on the practices of racialization and gendering as they are produced institutionally and are lived out on a daily basis. How wars and armed conflict produce, naturalize, and maintain race, gender and ethnic hierarchies is also instrumental to understanding the racial underpinnings of citizenship and notions of diversity in the contemporary moment. More recently, my work on racialized soldiers in the CAF expands on previously conducted work on race in military contexts and focuses on the lived realities of military members.[6] This paper centres the lives of racialized soldiers, and in doing so examines how power and whiteness are structured in the CAF.

Theoretical Considerations

My understanding of how whiteness operates at the institutional level is informed by Sara Ahmed's (2007) conceptualization of how institutional whiteness functions. She states, "Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space, and what they do."[7] However, I want to stress that the institutionalization of whiteness requires ongoing work by individuals who uphold white settler norms. Therefore, it is important to unpack how whiteness is upheld in the CAF. Ahmed examines the ways in which "white" subjects are permitted to constitute themselves as national subjects through the spaces that they occupy. She situates her discussion of whiteness in bodies that are both spatially and temporally located. Bodies, she argues, are "shaped by [their] contact with objects."[8] That is, bodies are understood within public spheres through their orientations to dominant structures of power and subordinate others. Addressing people of colour occupying whitened spaces Ahmed states,

> [w]hiteness is not reducible to white skin, or even to 'something' we can have or be, even if we pass through whiteness. When we talk about a 'sea of whiteness' or 'white space' we are talking about the repetition of the passing by of some bodies and not others, for sure. But non-white bodies do inhabit white spaces; we know this. Such bodies are made invisible when we see spaces as being white, at the same time apart'. You learn to fade into the background, but sometimes you can't or you don't. The moments when the body appears 'out of place' are moments of political and personal trouble.[9]

These moments are critical junctures in the production of race, gender, identity, and resultant marginalities, oppressions, and resiliencies. However, borrowing from Ahmed, I am also concerned with "how whiteness holds its place" in the CAF and with what consequences for racialized soldiers? According to Ahmed, understanding how the habitual can be thought of as a bodily spatial

form of inheritance is instructive here and applies to how we can view the habitual formation of soldiers' lives and how that impacts the spaces in which they operate, train, and exist. Military spaces in the forms of barracks, bases, mess halls, and training grounds require bodies to operate in a particular manner which ends up producing the spaces in which soldiers operate. While a large part of the soldiers' life is one of conformity and performing a particular type of "white homogeneity," soldiers of colour who conform, gain authority in their ability to align themselves[1] with white settler identities.

Often considered the invisible norm in the West, understanding how whiteness operates in the everyday lives of racialized subjects is central. I contend that to name whiteness is to refer to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically and culturally produced that are intimately connected to dynamic relations of domination.[10] According to Frankenberg, the way in which whiteness operates is multidimensional: "Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which white people look at [them]selves, at others, and at society.[11] Third, whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed."[12] Therefore, for Frankenberg, whiteness works as a series of processes and practices rather than a singular bounded identity.

In seeking to examine whiteness as a process, I trace some of the dynamics involved in its production, that is the unmarked norms, behavior patterns, traditions, symbolism and colonial underpinnings that often bolster the social position of white military members thereby establishing who can belong in the contemporary moment. As Dyer suggests, race is "never not a factor, never not in play."[13] To conceptualize the ever present operations of race and its unbounded process of domination rather than as isolated discrete episodes, particularly in military life is to acknowledge whiteness is present in the productions of the military apparatus. The deeper implications of understanding the operations of whiteness as a form of power alongside the everyday processes of military life are central to

grappling with culture change. Dyer argues that "the point of seeing the racing of Whites is to dislodge them/us from the position of power, with all the inequities, oppressions, privileges and sufferings in its train, dislodging them by undercutting the authority by which they/we speak and act in and on the world."[14] Naming whiteness and linking it to its colonial legacies with respect to projects of assimilation and erasure reveals some of the foundational elements of the construction of the Canadian nation of which the military apparatus is an integral part. Naming whiteness displaces and dislodges it from the unmarked and objective status that itself is an effect dominance.[15] The silence surrounding whiteness and its attendant racism create unjust power differentials that are invariably manifested within the CAF and among its serving members. As I have discussed elsewhere, these power differentials are grounded in the dominant narrative of meritocracy where service members are often judged solely on their performance as soldiers.[16]

Methods

This paper discusses part of a larger qualitative research project that involved semi-structured interviews with a total of 30 retired or serving CAF members (17 men and 13 women) from the Toronto, Ottawa, or Halifax regions who identify as racialized. Participants varied in age, rank, and commission status. Purposeful and snowball sampling techniques were used, and all the participants were approached through contacts with retired, Reserve and Regular Force military members in the army, navy and air force.[17] The conversations with the participants occurred between 2015- 2016 and lasted between one and three hours. I sought to understand how soldiers' racial and gendered positioning shapes their experience of the military, as well as their relationship to military life, citizenship, and organized violence more broadly. I posed questions to explore the values placed on military service as a profession; what it means to be a soldier in the post 9/11 era; their experiences with training and education on equity, diversity and inclusion and cross cultural pre deployment training; and, their encounters with various forms of oppression. I asked about their experiences of being a racialized

subject in a predominantly white space and how they themselves constitute difference. I also engaged with their nuanced encounters with racism with fellow military members, superiors, and civilians in Canada and during their deployment overseas, to trace the complex expressions of whiteness operating in the Canadian military. All conversations were tape recorded, transcribed, and then organized with the assistance of the QRS Nud*ist qualitative data analysis package. To ensure anonymity, self-chosen pseudonyms were used in the transcriptions and ensuing publications. This paper draws on all interviews with illustrative examples from 5 racialized service members with various racial backgrounds (East Asian, South Asian, Caribbean, and African). In what follows, through the experiences of racialized service members, I explore how whiteness is constructed, maintained and often normalized with important implications for culture change in the CAF.

Constructing Institutional Whiteness in the CAF

Of all serving members in the CAF, 89.2% are white Canadian. According to a 2019 report entitled Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces, 8.1% of currently serving members identify as a "visible minority" and 2.7% of identify as Aboriginal.[18] Based on these quantitative statistics a clear majority of the CAF identify as white Canadian. My conversations with racialized soldiers involved describing the CAF as somewhat welcoming. Others struggled to find their place. Many soldiers articulated that they were warned of racism and that it was "so white" [19] or a "not a very diverse place"[20] but that service "might get better over time."[21] The following underscores how Chester, a Chinese-Canadian in the Reserve Force, understood the CAF to be a "white space."

Chester: *I was thinking about joining for a long time. I enjoyed being part of something bigger, but a lot of my friends and family warned me that the military is really "white" (laughs). It's not very multicultural or diverse, and that you wouldn't see many people that look like you and me around. Also, being a soldier means that you have to be a certain way, there's a strict way of being with little room*

for anything else.

Chester conceives of institutional whiteness in terms of the bodies present and the company he is surrounded by in the CAF. According to Chester, a "white space" is constructed by the absence of diverse bodies. He addresses that to be a soldier one must perform soldier in a homogenous way with very little room for different ways of being. Elsewhere, I have argued that racialized military members deviating from this homogeneity are quickly reminded that they are not part of the hegemonic norm and are encouraged to conform to ensure operational effectiveness.[22] The implication is that operational effectiveness and order are incompatible with racial difference. For Sara Ahmed, in her work on diversity and inclusion, when institutions are described as being white, she demonstrates how institutional spaces are shaped by the presence of some bodies and immune to others. Another common expression of the military as a "white space" was often explained by the lack of racialized members in the senior ranks. Alfred, who identifies as Black-Canadian, remarks on the difficulties with moving up in the ranks and the challenge he had imagining his career expanding because he did not see himself reflected in the senior membership.

Alfred: *That's how I got jaded, because I don't see myself in the leadership. When you don't see yourself in the leadership or have to fight tooth and nail for every single promotion, it sends a message that this is as far as you will go.*

Alfred began his journey in the military as a reservist "beaming with optimism" and desiring "to make a difference." As I continued to speak with him, his experience appeared to be marked by struggle. Six years into his service, he expressed how "something just switched off in me and I stopped caring." He described an apathy and a disappointment that has built over the years centered on how white supremacy manifests itself in the ranks and in everyday military life. My interview with Alfred revealed that his career was impacted by the lack of diverse leadership. His comments illustrate that he became aware of the daily practices and active systems of oppression in hiring

practices. He felt the lack of diversity in the ranks affected his career mobility resulting in the limited contribution he could make to the organization. His comment on "fighting tooth and nail" illustrates that he became aware over the years of the processes of hiring and promotion grounded in larger systems of oppression that prevented him and others from moving upwards in their careers. Later in the interview, Alfred reveals that he rarely saw racialized leaders promoted, but that "the system does work for white women" in the organization. That is, diversity initiatives work for white women, but not racialized service members.

Reproducing Whiteness: Preservation of Military History, Tradition and Culture

Another way in which whiteness has been consolidated in the CAF is through the preservation of tradition and particular histories. Jane, a mixed-race woman in the Regular Force, described the appeal of belonging to an institution steeped in Canadian military tradition. For Jane it is being part of family with a long historical legacy. While she is uncritical of what that family entails and how it is further entrenched and privileges a specific whiteness, she does state that deviating from this tradition, or trying to break away from it might be an issue for members of the CAF, particularly if they are non-white:

Jane: *The military in general is quite traditional. You're based in a history; the history of your regiment is of utmost importance. When you join that regiment, that battalion or platoon, you are part of all of those who have been there before you and have fought in the battle. You're part of a long history. Anything that's traditional, you don't tamper with. If you're a person who rebels in a sea of change, then maybe military tradition is something that you would find a bit frustrating.*

Jane's evocation and conflation of the military family linked to tradition is significant here. Several military members I interviewed felt that being part of something larger was important to them. The discourse of the "military family" and how that is constructed

through a variety of historical military traditions and everyday practices is significant in the lives of some of military members and provides an emotional and occupational security. The notion of "brotherhood" and establishing this bond through these traditions is viewed as a litmus test for how one would perform in combat. Blaze powerfully discusses the connection between family and combat, but is also critical of the limitations placed on him.

Blaze: *Being part of the military is a really strange thing. Because I wasn't your typical white soldier everything seemed so foreign compared to civilian life. But they slowly bring you in... You do feel part of something bigger than yourself, but every now and then something will happen that lets you know, this place is not for you. It's as if they're saying "Don't get too comfortable because this place isn't really meant for you, but you can try..."*

Blaze, a Black-Canadian in the Regular Force, demonstrates that there are some real benefits of the military family highlighting that the bonds established are necessary to feel secure in the field. However, he also felt that "putting on one's soldier" was also very difficult at times and expressed frustration with wanting to be free of that mold. Both Blaze and Jane have expressed that for anyone trying to display or express any kind of difference or uniqueness (suggesting other sports, or resisting social gatherings, formal dinners or outings) within a military life which is grounded in tradition would have difficulties. Following my argument that the military is by and large constructed and produced as a space of whiteness, I often wondered whether racialized members could exist and benefit in the same manner as white service members. Reflecting on both Blaze's and Jane's concerns, I contend that racialized soldiers struggle with military tradition and being part of the white military family precisely because they are seen as different, foreign and other. Both Blaze and Jane's narratives illustrate how power and oppression work on a daily basis and how they experience military life differently from the dominant majority. If you are part of the majority and these social events, norms and traditions such as mess dinners, institutional observances, ceremonial customs and dress codes are part of your

history there is little need to question the status quo. Racialized soldiers are acutely aware that they do not often fit the unmarked and unnamed norms of which the white majority does not see or is unable to see. It is a point of privilege to not have to question the norm and simply belong. Socially constructed traditions entrench the status quo and allow racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression to operate without having to acknowledge or challenge them. Shannon's narrative below speaks quite frankly about military culture and its connections to whiteness and the status quo, not to mention the onus on racialized service members to belong:

Shannon: *Go to Kingston and you'll see what's important and in the CF it is curling, its hockey, and its darts. That's been my experience and those are sports of interest to your typical white person in the military. So they set up social events around those things, right? So while you can sit here by yourself and have no friends or you can get in there and throw a rock down the ice and have a beer and just try to like it because that's what the dominant crowd is doing. That's what I mean by just fitting in. Just kind of accepting what already exists and just trying to be part of it.*

Shannon, a Filipina woman in the regular force, conflates this notion of military tradition with everyday culture in the CAF, but also links activities like hockey and darts with Canadianness and whiteness and expresses that for racialized service members the choice is theirs with respect to inclusion and belonging. Hockey, curling and darts are seen as neutral activities, where everyone is encouraged to join and the onus is on the racialized member to join rather than thinking about how these activities are grounded in history of whiteness and exclusion.[23]

Geographies of Whiteness: The Making of National Warriors in Rural Spaces

Both Reserve and Regular Force members are often sent to spaces located outside of urban centres to train and carry out specific postings. Soldiers from urban centers sought both comfort and

invisibility in urban spaces, and expressed concern and trepidation with respect to training or being posted in smaller rural towns. Most of the racialized soldiers I interviewed were from urban centers that were required to train in rural spaces, foreign to many of them. Small towns such as Petawawa and Gagetown located a few hours from urban centers were often understood by service members as "white places," and "not really diverse," from which their bodies could not hide or "blend in" despite being shielded by the uniform. In my exchange with George, a mixed race solider in the Regular force, he explains his concerns and fears of these rural training grounds:

George: *When I was younger in the military, I didn't notice race or ethnicity having an impact because I was too busy keeping my head down and trying to work when I first joined. I was the lowest man on the totem pole*[24] *and I'm getting yelled at non-stop, I didn't have time to think about why he's yelling at me and I never put the two together, that I'm being treated this way because I'm a minority. I didn't really notice that until later on in my career. It happens a lot more with the units that further away from bigger cities, small towns. I think a big part of it is racism in the small towns. If you don't ever experience it, you don't notice it. I have a lot of friends in the military that are white and they just don't get it.*

George first articulated a discourse of meritocracy, the idea if you work hard, you will be rewarded. Only later George began to consider that race and racism may have had an impact on his career and treatment he received in the military. George further expressed that he feels much safer and comfortable in big urban centers because of the presence of various racialized groups. He expressed concern when having to travel to smaller towns suggesting the different treatment he receives, however subtle. George's alienation is also evident when he tries to speak about these incidents with his comrades and they fail to acknowledge the difference in treatment he receives thereby isolating him further. His comrades' denial and lack of understanding that race and racism are part of his everyday lived experience in a small town where he works and trains is dismissed. Whiteness in this instance is operating through the

inability of George's friends to acknowledge how they are benefiting from white racial privilege. They cannot consider or see how George and his comrades could be positioned differently in rural space. George's fears of encountering racism or experiencing racial violence in rural small towns is not unfounded. Petawawa evoked much anxiety for racialized solders in this study. One of my participants described seeing a confederate flag on a business on her first day in Petawawa and related her disappointment and uneasiness.

Making the connection between the rural space, militarism and masculinity Deborah Cowen states, "the rural ideal has hardly been explored in relation to the particular and powerful form of nationalism that constitutes contemporary militarism."[25] She goes on to demonstrate that rural spaces, in modern history "come to constitute the labour geography of the vast majority of military personnel. A powerful cultural discourse of the rural ideal identifies the rural as the authentic space of patriotic militarism."[26] In a feature article in the Globe in Mail on previously appointed Canadian Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier, his mother is quoted saying that she "believes his Newfoundland upbringing made young Rick a natural for the army. People from the outpost of Newfoundland lived their lives in the woods and on the seas in rugged activities and fit into the armed forces quite easily."[27] This white rural idealism lies in stark contrast to how racialized soldier subjects experience the rural places like Petawawa, Gagetown, and others.

Racialized soldiers' fear and concern, both anticipated and lived, is viscerally felt through rural spaces of military labour and life. Most of the soldiers I encountered are keenly aware of the spaces in which they belong and which ones are sources of anxiety, stress, fear, and exclusion. David, a Chinese soldier and newcomer to Canada in the Reserve Force describes when his nationality and hence his suitability to be in the CAF was questioned in a small town out east:

David: *This one regular force guy that I met in a small town out east said to me when I first arrived, "How does it feel like to wear that flag when you're not even a Canadian"? I am not really Canadian by*

blood you know, but as long as I have my citizenship and I'm wearing this flag that pretty much qualifies me as a Canadian. I was so shocked.

David's narrative reveals one of the many racial microagressions that he and others experienced in a rural military town. In this moment, David's body and commitment to the nation is questioned despite wearing the uniform and serving in the Canadian military. David is reminded that, for bodies like his, it is a privilege to wear the flag from which he should be grateful. Marking David's body in this particular rural space also marks the existence of whiteness thereby indicating who can and cannot be part of the nation. When David says, "I may not be Canadian by blood [emphasis mine]," it signals that he is grappling with Canadian identity in a way that reveals a particular authenticity around who is and is not Canadian. What does the evocation of "Canadian by blood" mean for racialized bodies? Examining the relationship between blood, nation and whiteness, Dryden explains that "the hermeneutics of blood operate in the management of populations through the categorization (and thus creation) of multiple body types that delimit those of the nation, those outside of the nation, and those considered to be out of place, to occupy outer—(not here)—space, to be outer national".[28] David's linking of citizenship to blood is not unfounded in that nations have laid claim to space through blood. Nations rely on the understanding of blood to deploy the language of lineage, where purity is used to dominate and inform the construction of the nation and national identity.[29] In the Canadian context, the colonial significance of blood is connected to the production of Canadian nationalism. Dryden drawing on Picard's work examines how in 1940s the Canadian Red Cross Society held its first public, non-military blood donor clinic. They state,

> With the slogan "Make a Date with a Wounded Soldier" Canadians were urged to donate blood, with all donations being reserved for use solely within the military. The formation of voluntary blood donation during and in response to the Second World War effectively configured the practice of donation as one of citizenship and nation making, and by recruiting citizens to identity with Canadian soldiers and then donate blood, it further consolidated the nation.[30]

What this intimate relationship of blood, military and nation makes clear is that donating one's blood for those literally 'spilling their blood' for the nation became emblematically a white practice. In the military context, the first individuals to receive blood transfusions were white American and British soldiers who did not receive blood from non-white bodies. This history reveals that there are racial practices of exclusion with respect to blood donation practices, and these practices have their genesis in the Canadian military and how it produces itself as a crucial site of blood and belonging. In this context, David's evocation of blood citizenship reveals a legacy of the connection between whiteness, citizenship and belonging.

Conclusion

By centering the lived experiences of racialized soldiers in the CAF, this paper reveals the ways in which whiteness itself is reproduced, consolidated, and negotiated through social practices in both visible and less visible ways. This paper revealed how institutional whiteness operates in various ways that are often unmarked and unnamed—that is they are not often seen and/or addressed by the white majority. As such, what are the impacts of everyday whiteness to current culture change efforts in the CAF? Meaningful, sustained culture change requires engaging with racism, whiteness, and power that not only manifest in overt individual acts, but with those that are systemic and constitutive of the CAF as an institution. It is imperative to move beyond superficial and performative responses to deeply changing structures and systems. For example, specific experiences

illustrated by participants in this study may inform decision makers to reflect on promotional and reporting procedures, normalized recreational and socialization activities, and rural postings. These are key areas in which policies and procedures could be reviewed and examined further.

When we look historically at projects of inclusion in the CAF, primarily mobilized through equity diversity and inclusion initiatives, many efforts are focused on bringing those on the margins into the institution or superficial attempts at modifying the status quo. The data presented here reveals that racialized soldiers make concessions to belong, but at what cost? Within the mental health profession, traditionally Post Traumatic Stress Disorder often connected to military service, particularly deployments, is now widely known to be caused by racial trauma in service.[31] The recent Lionel Desmond Inquiry cited that systemic failures and racism were partly to blame for the chain of events that led the Afghanistan war veteran to kill his family and himself in 2017. Ruben Coward, a Black-Canadian and a former serviceman in the Royal Canadian Air Force and now a community activist, has stated, “Complex PTSD is not only caused by war. Racism is a war that (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) are fighting.”[32] In order for meaningful, sustained culture change to occur, there must be a recognition by the white majority of the way in which whiteness organizes lives in different, yet powerful ways with important and distinctive implications.

Endnotes

[1] Jacques Gallant, “These people are serious national security threats. Why is it so hard for Canada’s military to root out white supremacists,” *Toronto Star.* May 2nd, 2022, https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2022/04/29/these-people-are-serious-national-security-threats-why-is-it-so-hard-for-canadas-military-to-root-out-white-supremacists.html.

[2] Alex Boutilier, “White supremacists in Canada’s military pose “active counter-intelligence threat’: watchdog.” *Global News.* December 13th, 2021. https://globalnews.ca/news/8446253/white-supremacists-canada-military-active-threat/

[3] Gallant, “These People Are Serious Threats.”

[4] Bruce Erickson, “A Phantasy in White in a World that is Dead: Grey Owl and the Whiteness of Surrogacy,” in eds. Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron and Audrey Kobayashi Rethinking the *Great White North: Race, Nature and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2012), 19-38.

[5] See: Ito, Roy. *We Went to War: The Story of Japanese Canadians who served During the First and Second World Wars*. 1984. Patricia E. Roy, “The Soldiers Canada Didn’t Want: Her Chinese and Japanese Citizens." *Canadian Historical Review*, 59, (1978): 341-358. James W. St. G Walker, “Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force,” *Canadian Historical Review*, LXX (1989): 1-26. Victoria Basham, *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday Experiences of the Geopolitical in the Armed Forces*. (New York, USA: Routledge, 2013). Vron. Ware, *Military Migrants: Fighting for YOUR Country* (UK: Palgrave, 2012).

[6] Tammy George, “Race and Belonging,” in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Through Diversity and Inclusion*, eds. Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, Bessma Momani (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 114–134

[7] Sara Ahmed, “A Phenomenology of Whiteness,” *Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (2007): 149.

[8] Ahmed, “Phenomenology of Whiteness,” 152.

[9] Ahmed, “Phenomenology of Whitenes,”159.

[10] Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness.* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

[11] In this paper, the term Black will be capitalized and white will be in lower case unless otherwise specified in a direct reference. In this paper, capitalizing “Black,” aligns with the long-standing practice of capitalizing other racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, such as Latino, Asian, Indigenous, Native American, and others. While “white” is also racialized, white supremacists routinely capitalize “white” in their writing and I do not want to risk conveying legitimacy to such beliefs. Lowercasing ‘white,’ therefore, acts to distance us from the beliefs and writings of white supremacists, but carries significance in its social construction.

[12] Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 1-2

[13] Richard Dyer. *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge 2007).

[14] Dyer, *White*, 2

[15] Ruth Frankenburg, White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

[16] Tammy George, “Be All You Can Be or Longing to Be: Racialized Soldiers, the Canadian Military Experience and the Im/Possibility of Belonging to the Nation,” PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2016.

[17] Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto, *Fundamentals of Social Research* (Toronto: Thomson Canada Limited 2002).
[18] Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on National Defence. Improving Diversity and Inclusion in The Canadian Armed Forces 1st sess., 42nd Parliament, 2019.
[19] Interview with Blaze, 2015
[20] Interview with Maya, 2014
[21] Interview with Chester, 2014
[22] George, "Be All You Can Be."
[23] Andreas Krebs argues that the sport of hockey in Canada is intimately connected to what he calls the "whitestream". The whitestream constitutes a core assemblage of masculinity, whiteness and classism that reproduces and sustains the colonial order in Canada. See: Andreas Krebs, "Hockey and the Reproduction of Colonialism in Canada," in eds, Simon Darnell, Yuka Nakamura, Janelle Joseph *Race and Sport in Canada: Intersecting Inequities,* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. 2012), 81-106.
[24] George's use of the word totem pole is interesting here. The totem pole is the result of over two centuries of cultural contact, exchange and colonialism. It is about a long complicated process of settlement, Native responses to settlement, changing policies, practices of representation and artists responding to these changing historical circumstances. George's evocation of use of totem pole, illustrates the Indigenous imagery he relies on to describe his positioning. See: Aldona Jonaitis and Aaron Glass, *The Totem Pole: an intercultural history*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2010)
[25] Deborah Cowen, "National Soldiers and the War on Cities," Theory and Event 10, no. 2. 11. DOI:10.1353/tae.2007.0057
[26] Cowen, "National Soldiers and the War on Cities," 12.
[27] Cowen, "National Soldiers and the War on Cities," 12.
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