Be All You Can Be or Longing to Be: Racialized soldiers, the Canadian military experience and the Im/Possibility of belonging to the nation

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
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Abstract

Military conquest and intervention have played a central role in the making and maintaining of empires for centuries. The question of who serves in those militaries remains extremely significant in settler societies, particularly in the contemporary negotiation of citizenship, immigration, national belonging and identity. In this dissertation I ask the following questions: Who is the racialized soldier subject? How do racialized soldiers negotiate national belonging? What are their experiences in the Canadian military? This research study examines the racial underpinnings of citizenship through an exploration of the experiences of racialized soldier subjects in the Canadian Forces in the post 9/11 era. The study is based on in-depth interviews with twenty-five reserve and retired soldiers, both men and women from various racialized communities in Canada. Drawing on a “race cognizant” poststructuralism and feminist critical race theories of subjectivity, masculinity, nation formation, citizenship and racial discourse, this research reveals several important findings. First, this dissertation reveals that while the Canadian military projects itself as a racially diverse institution, the reality is quite different. In this thesis, I theorize military recruitment as a project of inclusion into a white culture. Racialized soldiers join the military family for a number of reasons, but often experience the military as duplicitous and are at times met with enormous bureaucracy. Their journeys into the military reveal complex structural conditions that make joining the military a viable option.
Once in the military, interviews with racialized soldiers reveal the visceral nature of whiteness within the Canadian military apparatus. The narratives of soldiers of colour also show that despite the amount of racial labour involved in negotiating this white space, there still remains a desire to belong. In battle zones, soldiers of colour often display an ambivalence if not a critique of the racist and Orientalist underpinnings of war. Yet they remain dedicated and are proud of their military service. These findings have important implications for understanding institutional diversity, the experiences of military life and finally, the undeniable role of racism in modern day warfare.
Acknowledgements

Every research project has a story, which is the story of an arrival.
-Sara Ahmed (2012, p. 2)

Writing a dissertation is no small feat. I am extremely fortunate to have had a community of loving support throughout this journey. What makes someone devote almost 10 years of their life to answering a few questions with the risk of never having them answered? The seeds of this project were planted years before I began graduate school and only now have I come to understand the depths of that curiosity and honoured it here in these pages. A project of this magnitude is never solitary effort; it took a select group of people to stand by me, fight with me, grapple with me, walk with me and believe in me. I am so grateful for their support, love, honesty and patience.

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you do. I will continue to work with you, support you and understand the complicated system you have navigated and continue to navigate.

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optimism, your sense of wonder, your focus have all influenced the way I see this work. This thesis is for you and your father – so that you may one day understand some of the questions and desires that motivated your mother, but more importantly be inspired and feel safe to ask your own questions in the years ahead.

My sincerest love and gratitude,

Tammy
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Dedication

For my Family – Where I truly belong, whether I have believed it or not.
Mama, Papa, Christina, Michael and Isadora
CHAPTER I

Introducing the Figure of the Racialized Soldier: Citizenship in the age of the War on Terror

What makes a nation entitled to ask someone to die for it?
-Michel Foucault, “What Our Present Is”

War is a crisis of citizenship because even as the line between citizen-subject and terrorist gets fortified, these terms are made tenuous.
-Ji-Young Um, 2012, para. 9

We all have a story; whether good or bad, we all have one to tell. Sometimes we can’t afford to sugar coat it, so we have to let loose with the raw truth. Telling the truth often involves telling a fairly long, somewhat complicated story. This is mine. We will travel through the years and you will see what I learned and what I had to endure. You are about to experience the dreadful truth that is my story, the unrighteous injustice that overtook my life. Events like these should not be ignored. What happened to equality? To justice and human rights? You decide.
- Wallace Fowler, former Canadian Forces soldier, 2015

1.1 Introduction

In an interview conducted towards the end of his life, Michel Foucault suggested that the problem of war and law troubled him and indicated that he would like to one day return to some important questions. While Foucault’s preoccupation rests on the nation in his question, “What makes the Nation entitled to ask someone to die for it”, the following research study is concerned with those individuals that are faced with this choice (or that respond to this call), and decidedly accept the state’s request to participate in defending their country. More specifically, this research seeks to understand the contradictions of citizenship through the lived experiences of the racialized soldier subject. How do racialized soldiers negotiate national
belonging? What can we learn about the racial underpinnings of citizenship, but more importantly how it is *lived*? The primary question I ask in this dissertation is: How do racialized soldiers experience the Canadian military and what do their experiences tell us about the racial structure of citizenship? Following this, how do we understand the making of the racialized soldier subject in Canada? My dissertation engages with the significance of these questions in the contemporary moment. I hypothesize that for the racialized soldier, the negotiation of white supremacy and modern day military life is complex and problematic. The racialized soldier is a significant figure in the contemporary moment in that s/he not only seeks protection from the nation but is quite literally the figure that protects the racial state by engaging in its violence globally. It is this contradictory position, wherein the racialized soldier is both the target and agent of racial violence that this work interrogates. To unpack the significance of this contradictory position for the racialized soldier, consider the following two scenarios in both the American and Canadian context.

**Scenario I**

On 9 November 2009, a Muslim-American man of Palestinian origin, Major Nidal Malik Hasan, set to deploy to Afghanistan in less than a month, opened fire in a mass shooting at a military base in Fort Hood, Texas. On 23 August 2013, Major Hasan, a 42-year-old army psychiatrist was charged with thirteen counts of premeditated murder and thirty-two counts of attempted murder under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Major Hasan was shot by civilian police officers and was paralyzed from the waist down. He was found guilty (August 2013), and sentenced to death (September 2013) by a jury of 13 army officers for the killing of
13 unarmed soldiers and wounding and/or shooting of 32 others. Immediately after the event, headlines and speculation began to surface that are particularly instructive of our current moment. Headlines included: “The Fort Hood Killer: Terrified or Terrorist?”¹, “Fort Hood Suspect: Portrait of a Terrorist”², “Terrorism or Tragic Shooting? Analysts Divided on Fort Hood Massacre”³, “60% Want Fort Hood Shooting investigated as Terrorist Act”⁴. On 14 November 14 2009, The New York Times asked: "Was Major Hasan a terrorist, driven by religious extremism to attack fellow soldiers he had come to see as the enemy? Was he a troubled loner, a misfit who cracked when ordered sent to a war zone whose gruesome casualties he had spent the last six years caring for? Or was he both?" The article goes on to say, "Major Hasan may be the latest example of an increasingly common type of terrorist, one who has been self-radicalized with the help of the Internet and who wreaks havoc without support from overseas networks and without having to cross a border to reach his target"⁵. One of the generic tropes that began to circulate and characterize Major Hassan was one of homegrown terrorism, although met with a slight reluctance given his role in the United States military. Others characterize Major Hasan as a Muslim convert, with potential ties to Al Qaeda. Furthermore, generic tropes depicting Major Hasan as a “loner” who frequented strip clubs are also attempts to characterize him as an outcast and thus an exception whose behaviour

separated him from other soldiers. Perhaps a more sophisticated but equally problematic analysis depicts Major Hasan as a victim of secondary trauma; where his position as an army psychiatrist and an avid dissenter of the war on terror resulted in him in being privy to gruesome war details and as such, he simply snapped. In a testimonial, Major Hasan expressed that he should have been fighting for the other side. In August 2013, Maj. Hasan was sentenced to death and transferred to Fort Levinworth, Kansas to carry out his sentence on death row.

Scenario II

Closer to home, I return to the 1993 Canadian peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Known as the “Somalia Affair”, Canadian soldiers were involved in humiliating and beating detainees, some as young as six years old which resulted in the death of a Somali teenager, Shidane Abukar Arone in March 1993. Arone’s tragic death, and the shooting two weeks earlier of two Somali men by Canadian soldiers, sparked a series of court martial proceedings and eventually prompted the Canadian government to launch a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the

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6 More recently (July 2011), a Muslim American soldier was arrested along similar suspicions. An active dissenter of the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, Private Nasser Jason Abdo was recently charged in an alleged plot to attack soldiers at Fort Hood. He had been granted conscientious objector status in 2010 prior to his deployment to Afghanistan on the grounds that he is a Muslim and found it difficult to wage war against members of his own faith. “I don't believe I can involve myself in an army that wages war against Muslims. I don't believe I could sleep at night if I take part, in any way, in the killing of a Muslim” (The Middle East Media Research Institute, 2013). In August 2012, Private Abdo was found guilty of several counts, including: one count of attempted use of a weapon of mass destruction; one count of attempted murder of officers or employees of the United States; two counts of possession of a firearm; two counts of possession of a destructive device in furtherance of a federal crime of violence. He was ultimately convicted and received two life sentences plus 60 years on prison. These complex acts violence on American soil by soldiers are more often characterized as the result of PTSD and often less read as a critique of the effects of modern warfare and the impact of American imperialism.

activities of its Forces in Somalia. Intended as much to resuscitate the image of the Canadian military and Canada’s reputation internationally, many of those investigations focused on problems of a “few bad apples” or otherwise lamented a decline of traditional military values. According to David Bercuson (1996), “the events in Somalia were due to Canada’s government, military and specifically its army that have failed to keep real soldiers, combat effectiveness, and traditional military leadership at the centre of the Canadian army” (p.238). Despite the explicit racism and brutality, more rarely were the events of Somalia associated with complicating peacekeeping missions, militarized masculinity or systemic racism, but rather the problem was attributed to the failure of traditional military values. Somalia was a crisis for Canada not due to the racist brutality enacted on the bodies of Somali men, but as a result of what it said to Canadians about their cherished military.

Focusing on the explicit racial violence of the Somalia affair, Sherene Razack (2004) explains that what transpired in Somalia was not merely the case of “a few bad apples”, but of white supremacy sustained by colonial violence that fundamentally underpins the Canadian nation state. Similar to the violence of occupation, peacekeeping violence performed by white militaries is openly practiced, sexualized, and recorded in photos, videos and diaries. An added layer of complexity and significance to this work is that the peacekeeping mission in Somalia involved two Aboriginal soldiers, Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown. It is these two Aboriginal soldiers who participated in the torture and murder of Shidane Arone. Holding in constellation the history of colonial violence in Canada, how do we begin to theorize racialized bodies participating in racial violence? These men, argues Razack, were not attempting to secure the benefits of a particular hegemonic masculinity by “outwhiting the white guys”; rather, their bodies were invited into a system of Empire that perpetuates the ongoing colonization and
genocide of First Peoples in specific and appealing ways. According to Andrea Smith, she observes that this is the magic and appeal of militarization— it works to conceal the processes of colonialism while at the same inviting those colonized bodies to participate in and secure the material benefits of that process.8

The two scenarios outlined above are highly instructive of our current moment. Drawing on these “diagnostic events”, the theoretical premise of this research project becomes apparent. According to Sally Falk Moore (1987) a “diagnostic event” describes those moments when established explanations and collective mythologies can no longer function smoothly. Moreover, they are “moments of powerful contradiction that lay bare cultural logics, identify the diverse stakeholders in social conflicts, and reveal the genealogies of ideas linking institutions” (Ortiz & Briggs, 2003, p. 41, in Cowen, 2007). This research attempts to highlight our paradoxical and complex moment around race and citizenship, but more specifically, suggests engaging with racialized soldiers to further understand racialized subjectivities, their involvement in state sanctioned violence and national belonging in the current imperial moment. This research purports that examining racialized soldiers and military labour are vital to thinking through the everyday violence at home and abroad. Furthermore, given the tenuous place of racialized bodies in Canada and globally, a more intimate understanding of negotiated subjectivities, issues of belonging and structures of citizenship become paramount.

In the first scenario, a Muslim American soldier was charged with shooting 17 American soldiers at Fort Hood Naval base. Theorizing this event in terms of a desire to belong

8 Key Note Address by Andrea Smith entitled Blazing the Trail of Indigenous Feminism. March 25th, 2010. University of Toronto/OISE.
to the nation is still appropriate; however, it is complicated by the fact that Major Hassan is simultaneously seen as the foreign enemy upon which the “war on terror” is predicated and as such, he is deemed the enemy within. What is compelling about this event is how the media and critics alike began theorizing this event as one of “home grown terrorism”. Other explanations attributed his actions to his role as a military psychiatrist who was hence susceptible to second-hand post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The logic is such that Major Hassan was on the front lines to witness men and women coming back psychologically wounded from warfare and therefore, it was only a matter of time before he snapped as a result of the information he was privy to in the sessions with his patients. Very few reports briefly engage with a slightly more nuanced approach: that perhaps Major Hassan, a practicing Muslim, was possibly conflicted about being an American soldier soon to be deployed to Afghanistan. In fact, he refused to deploy on the grounds that he did not agree with the mission and the unjust attacks on his “fellow brothers”, a political explanation in contrast to a psychological one as commonly reported. Furthermore, Major Hasan’s explanation is altogether not uncommon when examining the literature on conscientious objectors. This scenario begs the question: Can racialized citizens participate in citizenship in the same ways as others? Furthermore, does this scenario reveal something about the racialized structure of citizenship? Indeed it does, as even while enacting his patriotic duty as a soldier, Major Hassan’s body, is constructed as outside of the nation as evidenced by the dominant discourses that circulated after the shooting especially with respect to the discourse on home grown terrorism. Focusing on the narratives of home grown terrorism and the impacts of post-traumatic stress disorder denies the racial

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underpinnings of citizenship and how soldiers of colour negotiate the terrain of warfare in the new world order. 10

The second scenario unpacks these contradictions more profoundly within the Canadian nation state and provides much of the inspiration of this thesis. In, *Dark Threats White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping and the New Imperialism*, Sherene Razack (2004) makes a critical argument around racism embedded within peacekeeping violence. Examining modern peacekeeping, more specifically the Somalia Affair, Razack puts forth that Canadian peacekeeping preserved the myth of an innocent, morally superior middle power nation. However, by tracing the violence, Razack concludes that peacekeeping violence is crucial in maintaining a colour line between a family of white nations on one side of the divide and the Third World constructed as a dark threat in need of civilizing on the other. The significance of Razack’s work is her attempt to theorize the racialized violence committed by two Aboriginal soldiers. As Razack aptly points out, the question of race is one that is often stifled during military trials and public inquiries and therefore raises the question with respect to the Somalia affair, “how does race operate in this particular circumstance” (Razack, 2004, p. 88)?

To answer this question critically, Razack carefully examines the actions of the two Aboriginal soldiers, Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown. While this does not exempt the other soldiers with respect to their complicity, examining the actions of Matchee and Brown offers some insight with respect to the contemporary neocolonial context and the nuanced roles bodies of colour play in colonial violence. In an attempt to get at these

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10 See Sherene Razack’s critique of the use of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a deterrent to speaking about racialized violence in peacekeeping and warfare.
nuances, Razack unpacks the notion of a compensatory framework – a framework that suggests that Aboriginal men, as racialized subjects, are compensating for their racialized masculinity in an attempt to belong. As Anthony Chen explains in his work on Chinese American men, “[A] Chinese [man] may follow a strategy of compensation when he is aware of the negative stereotypes about himself and consciously tries to undermine them by conforming to them par excellence to the hegemonic ideal” (p. 592). In Razack’s work, this line of inquiry helps to unpack certain ideas and leaves others untouched or unresolved. For example, as Razack contends, a compensatory framework might suggest that because racialized men and women might have been burdened by racism, this results in compensating for their difference in various ways. In the case of Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown, they did so in very violent ways. However, in Razack’s critique of the compensatory framework, she explains how this ultimately situates these two men as exceptions burdened by racism and in doing so “exonerates them for what were clearly acts of inhumanity” (p. 113). Her critique of compensatory practices demonstrates that this position ultimately takes away from the structural conditions of racism and misses, what in essence Razack argues, is a colonial encounter. A compensatory framework then, tends to localize the violence on very specific bodies and thus individualizes this process, rather than looking at peacekeeping military violence as systemic and structural.

The inherent contradiction evident in the previous two scenarios is the racialized structure of citizenship and how the body of colour continues to try and navigate his or

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11 While Anthony Chen’s notion of compensation among Chinese American men is not new. It has been employed in previous work to describe subaltern masculinities. See Pyke, K. (1996). Class Based Masculinities: The Interdependence of gender, class and interpersonal power. Gender and Society. 10: 527-549.
her place within that narrow scope. Participation within the military apparatus features prominently in both, as the military is a crucial nerve centre for what is perhaps considered the ultimate demonstration of nationalism, patriotism and belonging. When racialized bodies are willing to sacrifice their lives for their country, a country predicated on colonial violence and historical injustices against its Indigenous population and people of colour, I ask: What does it mean to give one’s life for one’s country when s/he encounters racism and has a subordinate status in the nation? Similarly, how do racialized bodies that are called upon in times of defense and securitization for one’s country, negotiate their subject position when they embody the very threat they are called upon to defend?

The first scenario involving Major Malik Hassan also potentially reveals something about the racialized structure of citizenship. Major Hassan, a Muslim man called to carry out his military duties in Afghanistan, snaps possibly because he is unable to carry them out. However, based on the headlines that circulated, this was not the predominant discourse circulating around the issue. Does this scenario not reveal something about the racialized structure of citizenship? It begs the question: can we all participate in the same manner? Based on this scenario and various others highlighting the systematic eviction of racialized bodies from the nation in both the Canadian and American context, it is clear that there are grave injustices with respect to paths to citizenship. While this is an American example, I draw on this case to illustrate how the racialized soldier is discursively constructed as the enemy within in the contemporary moment. In this example, the lived contradiction of citizenship becomes especially acute in that Major Hasan is both a target and agent of racial violence.
The final scenario demonstrates most acutely that to join the nation, one must forget the racial basis of citizenship. This is clearly illustrated by Abouall Farmanfarmahan in his work entitled, “Did You Measure Up?” when he expresses, “To join the nation you must forget the violence done unto you, much like joining the family requires forgetting the possible violence of abuse, incest and neglect” (in Razack, 2004, p. 87). The evocation of the nation as a metaphor for the family is not uncommon and is quite provocative in the sense that we must begin to engage with what needs to be forgotten in order to belong to the national family. Farmanfarmahan’s analysis demonstrates that for racialized individuals belonging is contingent on forgetting the particulars of racial violence committed by the state.

What these two scenarios reveal is the racial basis to citizenship. They beg the question, how do racialized soldiers live with the contradiction of their position in the Canadian military? Both Chen and Razack’s on racialized masculinities are important contributions to understanding racialized subjectivities. Chen (1999) asks what “hegemonic bargains” racialized men make to belong, trading different assets in order to perform hegemonic masculinity. In their negotiations, racialized men are sometimes complicit with white supremacy as they engage in behavior that secures a provisional belonging. Chen highlights four gender strategies, compensation, deflection, denial and repudiation, of which the first three keep the hegemonic ideal of masculinity in place. Drawing on Chen, Razack discusses how Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia, including racialized men, engaged in violence against the Somalis they had come to protect and in so doing proved their manhood (Razack, 2004, p.105). Drawing on Chen’s conceptualization of the hegemonic bargain, and Razack’s exploration of the ways in
which racialized soldiers can become drawn into violence against racialized others, I explore how the racialized soldiers I interviewed secure national belonging. This question becomes central when examining Canadian military participation in current conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places, particularly since these conflicts have been described as colonial and racial in nature and potentially requiring the performance of a hegemonic masculinity (Razack, 2004; 2008; Gregory, 2007; Thobani, 2008).

1.2 A Re-emergent Militarism: The Canadian Context

These preceding scenarios reveal the complex and curious nature of our current imperial moment, particularly with respect to the paradoxical position of racialized soldiers in the military. My interest in the preceding events revolves around my struggle with national belonging and the daily evictions of racialized bodies from the national imaginary in a post 9/11 era. More than fifteen years after September 11th, 2001, the issue of national belonging in Canada continues to intensify for very specific communities. There have been various measures that have been implemented by the Canadian government that generate intense surveillance in the name of national security. With the advent of the Patriot Act and the Anti-terrorism Act signed into law in both the United States and Canada respectively (and which continue to be resigned), these measures significantly compromised civil liberties. Within the Canadian context, they included the strengthening of state powers of surveillance and detention, the imposition of greater restrictions on immigration and refugee policies, the increased scrutiny of immigrants and refugees (both at the borders and within the country), a strengthening of
powers of deportation, and most notably, a commitment to fighting the war against terrorism in Afghanistan which has resulted in the intensification of intelligence, security and military alliances with the United States (Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2007; Young, 2003).\textsuperscript{12} A more significant case demonstrating the erosion of citizenship rights particularly for the Muslim community in Canada was evidenced by the case of Maher Arar.\textsuperscript{13} While there are other examples, Arar’s case has demonstrated the cavalier manner with which the Canadian nation state, with full support from the U.S., claimed the unilateral power to decide whether the Canadian citizenship of Muslims is to be upheld or whether it is to be formally retracted. Whether it is the suspension of detainee rights at Guantánamo Bay, or as Agamben describes the “bio-tattooing”\textsuperscript{14} of Muslim bodies, or the deportation of Canadian citizens to other countries, Canada has colluded with the U.S. and asserted a globalized sovereignty that overrides the citizenship rights extended by other states to their respective citizens (Thobani, 2007). As Jerome Klassen (2013) points out, by 2011, funding for the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) also increased to $506 million, giving CSIS new capacities and leverage for foreign and domestic intelligence work. The Canadian government and CSIS have also been

\textsuperscript{12} In the summer of 2010 in Toronto, the G20 Summit took place in Toronto, Canada. The event culminated in a conflict between the states security forces and protestors of the G20 summit. The event resulted in massive violations of civil liberties all in the name of securitization. These events point to the intensified presence of security at the cost of civil liberties in the Canadian nation state.


\textsuperscript{14} Referring to the technologies of surveillance on bodies in the form of mug shots and fingerprinting of foreigners particularly in the US, Giorgio Agamben referred to these technologies as “bio political tattooing” and suggests that this is perhaps a precursor to the West’s future political paradigm. Agamben theorizes the parallels between these technologies of surveillance and the numbers tattooed on bodies deported to concentration camps. See G. Agamben. (January 13th, 2004). “No to Bio-Political Tattooing. \textit{Le Monde}.”
implicated in the detention and torture of Muslim Canadians abroad, as evidenced by the cases of Maher Arar, Abousfian Abdelrazick, and Omar Khadr, among others.\(^{15}\)

In Canada, such audacity was and is met with minimal resistance. We must pose the question then, if anti-terrorism laws are not meant for terrorists then for whom are they meant? As Arundati Roy states, “they are meant for people that governments don’t like”.\(^{16}\) We only have to look at the conviction rate of less than 2% of those detained worldwide to see the significance of Roy’s claims, not to mention profound restructuring and denial of citizenship that is occurring consistently among racialized communities in Canada. In this sense, the citizenship afforded during these times for racialized individuals in particular, suggests that their belonging is tenuous, safety fleeting and freedom limited. These systematic evictions only contribute to the widening of the gap between racialized communities and “old stock” Canadians, recognizing that in a “racial state” (explored in detail in Chapter Two), belonging is tenuous and always negotiated.\(^{17}\)

With Canada’s staunch support for the “War on Terror”, and now its shifting training and security role in Afghanistan, its prominent role in Syria, and targeted bombing campaign against ISIL, the past several years have marked a noticeable presence of the Canadian military

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\(^{16}\) See Roy, Arundati. (December 13, 2008) “9 is Not 11 (And November isn’t September)”. Outlook Magazine.com.

\(^{17}\) During the 2015 election campaign, Prime Minister Stephen Harper during a televised national debate referred to “old stock” Canadians in contrast to immigrants and newcomers.

at various ethnocultural events domestically, particularly when Canadian troops were deployed to Afghanistan. The Canadian Forces’ aggressive recruitment campaign was not without criticism and has evoked a variety of sentiments from ambivalence to concern given the CF’s clumsy and complex historical policies around diversity with respect to racialized soldiers in the military (see Chapter 4). Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq marked a re-emergent militarism within the Canadian landscape. The Canadian military’s presence at various cultural events revealed the military’s intentions of active recruitment of specific bodies. As part of Operation Connection during the height of its mission in Afghanistan, the Canadian military made significant efforts to weave itself through public life in the name of increasing their numbers for active service. With systematic targeting and recruitment taking place, it becomes essential to focus on the historical participation and significance of racialized bodies in the military and shed light on the spaces of selective inclusion. Paradoxically, alongside the Canadian Forces’ selective recruitment strategies are the everyday realities for many racialized Canadians. The excessive police presence in certain communities of colour employing mechanisms of carding, racial profiling, deportation, unequal treatment in prisons, and rights violations under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms remind racialized bodies that they are in constant need of surveillance, situated outside the nation as criminal and/or deviant other and cannot be detached from the settler colonial foundations of contemporary Canada. It is this tension that compromises our notions of multiculturalism and citizenship, and at best reproduces an ambivalent place for racialized peoples in the national imaginary.

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19 Operation Connection was launched on February 6th, 2006 by the Canadian Armed Forces in an attempt to “connect with Canadians” through a broad range of coordinated, community based activities. Its purpose is to “revitalize the Canadian Forces’ recruiting culture by engaging the entire chain of command in an aggressive and comprehensive recruitment strategy” (Canadian Forces News Letter, 2006). In addition to attracting potential recruits, Operation Connection also involved demonstrating that the Canadian Forces are also important members of the community and is encouraged to demonstrate themselves as such.
1.3 Research Design

Drawing on various scholars (Abu-Laban and Gabriel, 2002; Cowen, 2007; 2008; Enloe, Goldberg, 2002; 2009; 2010; Razack, 2004; 2008; Mbembe, 2003; McCready, 2012; Thobani, 2007; Giroux, 2004; 2005; 2007), I propose that the main condition is a heightened militarism and racial violence constitutive of a neoliberal new world order that only places the soldier of colour in a more intense set of contradictions. This dissertation also claims that there is a racial structure of citizenship within what David Theo Goldberg terms the “racial state” (Goldberg, 2002). Goldberg has defined the racial state as one where race is constitutive of modernity, an argument he arrives at by examining two bodies of work, notably nation state formation and critical race theory. Describing the characteristics of the racial state (Chapter II), I argue that the Canadian nation state operates as a racial state. To narrate the Canadian military as a neocolonial enterprise requires an understanding of the racist nature of the Canadian nation state. I characterize Canada as a white settler society that continues to be racially structured (multiculturalism notwithstanding) and supported by a growing body of academic and popular literature analyzing and documenting racism in Canada (Bannerji, 1996; Dei, 2000; Dua and Robertson, 1999; Heron, 2002; McKittrick, 2006; 2007; Razack, 2003; Thobani, 2007; Walcott, 1997). The colonial context from which the Canadian nation operates is central to understanding the place of Aboriginal and racialized bodies in this country. Several scholars have described Canada as a white settler society, one established by Europeans on non-European soil (Coulthard, 2014; Jiwani, 2006; Razack, 2002; Simpson, 2014; Smith, 1999; Thobani, 2007). According to Razack (2002), “its
origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans. As it evolves, a white settler society continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy” (p. 1). Such a mythology is characterized by the presence of white Europeans as the primary settlers and developers of the land and as such, leaves Aboriginal peoples to be mostly dead or assimilated (p.2). This violent history of dispossession thus positions white Europeans as the original inhabitants and the ones most entitled to the core tenants of citizenship. In Canada, European conquest and colonization are still denied, a denial that is sustained by the myth that North America was peacefully settled. Canada continues to be haunted by this history as is evidenced by the current plight among Aboriginal peoples across the country, in addition to marking a constant struggle for racialized communities to belong to the nation. As various scholars reveal, within the “racial state”, national belonging is always negotiated among racialized subjects (Razack, 1998; Thobani, 2007; Walcott, 1997. Therefore, the figure of the racialized soldier is a curious and complex figure where s/he protects a state in which s/he is marginalized.

In order to answer the central questions of this research, I have designed and conducted a qualitative study involving 25 soldiers, both men and women from the Canadian military, who identify as racialized. I frame my analysis around a “race cognizant” poststructuralism (Foucault, 1978; 1980; Davies, 1994; 2000; Razack, 2004; Weedon, 1997). From such a standpoint, an individual’s subjectivity is made possible through the discourses to which s/he has access. While feminist poststructuralism contributes to theories of language, subjectivity, social processes and institutions to understand existing power relations, it also focuses on how we can participate in creating a
sense of self (Weedon, 1997). Further, I endeavor not only to map the range of discourses to which people have access in constructing their meaning for belonging and nationhood, but also to unpack how they position themselves in relation to these discourses. Complementing feminist poststructuralism, the postcolonial stance allows for the effective theorizing of issues emerging from colonial and colonized relations. Moreover, a postcolonial discursive framework emphasizes the saliency of colonialism and imperialism and their continuing effects on marginalized communities.

1.4 The Canadian Military as a Site of Analysis

The Canadian Forces (CF) have been selected as the investigative terrain because they are often an “overlooked form of national work and belonging” in academic and popular discourse (Cowen, 2008, p. 20). Furthermore, this terrain is under-researched as a matrix of racialized national belonging and citizenship in the West. The Canadian military is an important site of analysis because it is a crucial nerve centre for the formation of Canadian identity and the construction of the Canadian nation, notions that are deeply racial. Typically, Canada is not recognized as a military power in most parts of the world; however, I argue this perception has changed given its prominent role in Afghanistan, Iraq and other parts of the Middle East and Africa. Positioned between the British and American empires, Cowen states, “This has shaped foreign and domestic policy and makes it a fascinating vantage point on global relations of power and force” (p. 21). Known as a classic “middle power” prior to its involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, Canada has not been involved in active military force in the last fifty years. That being said, Canada raised the largest ever known all volunteer force during World
War II, in addition to maintaining a very large army and navy for the two great wars, not to mention extensive participation during the early Cold War years (Cowen, 2008). However, perhaps one of Canada’s most significant contributions to military work in the twentieth century was peacekeeping. Canadian peacekeeping has been described as the classic middle power activity (Granatstein, 2004; Whitworth, 2004). Lodged between powerful empires, first the British and then the American, peacekeeping has historically been seen as enabling Canada to grow up outside the shadow of Great Britain and the United States (Razack, 2004). The vivid image of Canada’s peacekeeper has long served as one of the core myths of Canada’s “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991). As Whitworth (2004) states, “the myth locates Canada as a selfless middle-power, acting with a kind of moral purity not normally exhibited by contemporary states” (p.14). Canadian representations of nation and the military rely on the notion of the altruistic and benevolent peacekeeper, which in turn comes to formulate a background knowledge that sustains the Canadian military and the Canadian nation. Furthermore, it also reveals a great deal about who is involved in conducting peacekeeping missions (“us”) and who requires these missions (“them”). As Sandra Whitworth (2004) explains, “inherent in this view, the well ordered, rational, liberal, free market global North brings peace in a variety of ways, not least by delivering through peacekeeping the very principles of rationality, liberalism, and free market economics so clearly absent in the anarchic global South” (p.25). The notion of the peacekeeper is a powerful image that is entrenched in the Canadian psyche and hence a figure upon which characteristics of benevolence and humanitarianism are conferred. The figure of the peacekeeper is key to understanding notions of citizenship, Canadian identity and belonging. Emerging from a military
context, the peacekeeper becomes a central figure in understanding quintessential nation belonging.

The Canadian military as a site of analysis also becomes important because in an attempt to shed its middle power image, the nation is also trying to exert a reconfigured masculinity globally in the post 9/11 era. This newfound machismo internationally has implications for the formation of Canadian identity. While it has played a relatively low-key role internationally in the past, this is not the case on the domestic front. We only have to return to the 1990 Oka crisis, the standoffs in Caledonia against the Six nations, and most recently the Vancouver Olympics, to see how the Canadian state itself has deployed thousands of troops on its own citizens. These moments become extremely significant when trying to understand negotiations around national belonging. The Canadian Forces has a contested and complex history around issues of multiculturalism, bilingualism and diversity (which will be explored in Chapter 4). Labouring for the nation was once an obligation of citizenship and was held as the ideal marker of patriotism and dedication. However, it has also come to mean, as Cowen (2008) points out, “categorizing, organizing and ‘othering citizens’” (p. 26). That is to say, soldiering is a form of national labour that has come to be gendered and racialized, which in these moments makes the Canadian Forces a crucial nerve centre for subject formation.

1.5 Organization of the Thesis:

In Chapter Two, I begin to unpack some of the theoretical underpinnings of this research project. This chapter is guided by two central questions. The first asks: How might we understand the conditions of existence under which soldiers of colour do their
duty? In answering this question, I come to understand that soldiers of colour serving in western militaries are living in an imperial moment characterized by a striking paradox - one in which racialized terror is ubiquitous, but simultaneously existing alongside a postracial neoliberalism, where the denial of racial violence is central. As David Goldberg has argued (2009), we are in an era of “born again racism” or “a racism purged of historical roots, of its groundedness, a racism whose history is lost,” a racism as “individual faith, of the socially dislocated heart, rather than as institutionalized inequality” (p. 23). The second questions this chapter asks is: Who is the racialized soldier subject? Throughout this chapter, I also weave in an exploration of the scholarly work that addresses soldiers of colour and what their lived experience reveals about the racial basis to citizenship. I unpack how the literature on the Canadian military and soldiering have taken up the issues of race, diversity and culture in Canada to understand how the scholarly literature has positioned the racialized soldier, in addition to understanding how the concept of race features in this body of work in the contemporary moment. I end this section by asking the following: who is the racialized soldier on the “home front” and “battlefront”? The available scholarly research reveals that this is a subject that exists in specialized circumstances and comes into existence during conversations of diversity and multiculturalism and in some instances objects of discrimination and racism.

In Chapter Three, I describe the theoretical tools I draw on, as well as the methodological approaches I employ. Critical race scholarship, post-structural feminism and Foucauldian discourse analysis feature centrally in this thesis and provide the analytical lens through which I seek to explore the primary research question. In addition,
this chapter outlines my use of Foucauldian discourse analysis as a methodology to support my engagement with and interpretation of participant narratives. I begin by explaining the benefits of a “race cognizant” poststructuralism to this research. I then move to outline key concepts which figure centrally in this thesis: power, knowledge, discourse and subjectivity. I detail how I apply these concepts before moving into a discussion of the interview methodology. I then provide a demographic breakdown of the soldiers interviewed in this study and go on to describe how I was able to locate racialized soldiers and describe methodological or logistical hurdles I faced when approaching an institution such as the Canadian Forces. In this section, I explain my experience with the Access to Information Program (ATIP) in Canada in order to obtain information that supports the interview analysis. I then describe the methodological tools I employed and discuss scholars who inform my research. I close this chapter by addressing a number of challenges experienced while undertaking this project and outline methodological and ethical dilemmas encountered.

Chapter Four Join Us: Military Recruitment, Institutional Diversity and National Belonging in the Canadian Forces considers that an important condition of existence for the racialized soldier is that he/she is constituted as “diversity”. This chapter then discusses how diversity has historically been addressed by the Canadian Forces, moving into how diversity is featured centrally in the recruitment campaign during Canada’s involvement in the War on Terror. In this chapter, I also feature the reasons why racialized soldiers have joined the Canadian military and feature their journeys into the institution. While the Canadian Forces have appeared to promote racial progress through
their promotion of diversity, this research focusing on its recruitment practices and integration of racial minorities reveals the opposite.

Chapter Five entitled, *Military Encounters as Racial Encounters: Racialized Soldiers and the Discursive Construction of Whiteness in the Canadian Armed Forces*, argues that the military is a space of whiteness from which soldiers of colour must negotiate. I put forth that the military encounter is fundamentally a racial encounter. I demonstrate through my interviews with racialized soldiers how whiteness and dominance are produced through the military’s production of particular knowledge (or lack thereof) around race. Through the soldiers’ narratives, this chapter illustrates how the Canadian military is “made white” and in doing so, it closely examines institutional scripts of whiteness and racist practices of everyday encounters for racialized soldiers. I contend that these every day racial encounters are not new, but grounded in a colonial history that continues to operate in the present.

Chapter Six: *The Burden of Becoming: Living with the contradictions in the theatre of war* is the final data chapter that engages with soldiers and how they make sense of the lived contradiction of citizenship on the battlefront. With this particular condition in mind, I ask the following questions: How do racialized bodies negotiate this potentially contradictory terrain? What do “colonial continuities” look like when the active agents are settlers of colour (Heron, 2012)? In this chapter, I demonstrate how racialized soldiers grapple with their racial positioning and confront the contradictions in warfare. While some are aware and accept their racial positioning and what this potentially affords them in their encounters with locals, others are critical of warfare and demonstrate an ambivalent patriotism. What is revealing is that the space of the national is not a
comfortable place for racialized soldiers. I conclude on suggesting some of the implications for how we might think about contemporary warfare.

Finally, Chapter Seven marks the conclusion of this thesis. My concluding thoughts summarize the implications of this study and discuss the possibilities for future research arising out of the particular concerns and limitations outlined in this thesis. A central aspect of this discussion encourages an ongoing critique of white supremacy and neoliberalism and the ways in which they operate alongside militarism with important implications for racialized soldiers. I go on to describe the scholarly contributions this thesis makes for social citizenship and racialized subjects thereby illustrating that this thesis is not only about subject formation, but also historical formation. I conclude by trying to push the boundaries of national belonging and consider what it means not to be seduced by its promises. Buying into its promises is ultimately self-defeating and carries with it a high price. It is through this research that our conceptions of national belonging and citizenship can be challenged in the hope that a space for inclusion can be crafted which lies outside the tradition notions of formal citizenship and without asking symbolically and materially for one’s life. Liz Lee (2013) states, “Political membership in exchange for death is what the modern-day socio-political contract of liberal citizenship requires of some who are otherwise excluded” (p.2). My research is an attempt to think beyond the desire for national belonging within a limited set of possibilities that the national project(s) provides. Moving in new directions, I am committed to thinking about ways that trouble the notion that political inclusion via citizenship is the final solution – that somehow, nothing lays beyond citizenship, but perhaps a form of belonging on others’ terms.
CHAPTER II

The Racialized Soldier Subject: Mapping the figure of the racialized soldier in the post 9/11 era

Who do we imagine ourselves to be? That’s a really good question...
- Harvey, Retired Soldier

I gotta say, there just aren’t many of us around. In the places like Toronto yes, you will spot a few of us, but in more remote places out across Canada I’m not sure. Some days I felt like I really stood out, others, I tried not to think about it.
- Anonymous Soldier, Toronto

The racialized soldier experience is vastly different in the Canadian military. Over the course of the last 30-35 years we’re dealing with systemic discrimination and institutional racism and it has been in my experience that racialized voices have been silenced. They have tried to silence me, but it’s not like me to stay silent on such an issue.
- Rubin “Rocky” Coward, Retired Canadian Solider

2.1 Introduction

This research is informed by critical race scholarship (Goldberg, 2008; Hesse, 2007, 2010; Razack, 2004; Stoler, 1995; Thobani, 2007), post-structural feminism (Davies, 1995; Weedon, 1997), and a Foucauldian analysis of discourse, power and knowledge (Foucault, 1981; 1982). Together, they work in concert to anchor this thesis and provide the analytical lens through which I seek to explore my central research questions. The following chapter poses two questions central to the foundation of this thesis. First, I ask: What are the contemporary conditions under which soldiers of colour
do their duty? By addressing this question, I unpack the relationship of the racial state to neoliberalism and racial violence and the attendant role of militarization both in Canada and transnationally. Second, I ask: Who is the soldier of colour? In the Canadian context, literature on racialized soldiers is limited, but recently, a few scholars have begun to engage with the racialized subjectivities of soldiers transnationally (mainly in the United States and United Kingdom – see Victoria Basham, Liz Lee and Vron Ware) and implications for citizenship. My theoretical task then involves theorizing the racial state and the racial underpinnings of the new world order and I trace the conditions under which the soldier of colour emerges in this neo-imperial moment. I suggest that the main condition is a heightened militarism and racial violence that is evidenced by the contemporary assault and evictions from citizenship constitutive of a neoliberal new world order. Specific to the Canadian context, I contend that this moment concomitantly and paradoxically relies on myths of multiculturalism and peacekeeping that only places the soldier of colour in a more intense set of contradictions with respect to social citizenship and national belonging.

2.2 Theorizing race and the “racial state”

Race ideologically is defined “as a social construction, a human contrivance used to frame and rationalize hierarchical divisions between population groups in the modern world” (Baldoz, 2011, p.8). Racialization sets the stage for pointing out specific groups for unequal treatment based on real or imagined phenotypical features (Li, 1999). More importantly, it is the process of turning physical differences into social markers, and typically, enforcing them in a regime of oppression that gives race its significance. Miles (1989) rejects the analytical validity of the notion of race and instead prefers the term
racialization. He himself employs the concept of “racialization” to refer to “those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities” (p. 75). It also refers to “the historical emergence of the idea of ‘race’ and to its subsequent reproduction and application” (p. 79). David Theo Goldberg also contends that a racialized (and racially marginalized) subject is one that has “racial significance” (Goldberg, 1993). He uses the term racialized to “identify the peculiar intersection of race and class by referring to those social groups or fractions of social groups that are, or traditionally have been, deeply excluded from social powers, rights, good, or services in racial terms or on racial grounds” (p. 265, note. 5). In what follows, I refer to the social construction of race and gender and the historical, economic, political, and cultural processes through which modernist categories of race are (re) produced (Hesse, 2007). The concept of racialization emphasizes that all designated racial categories are performed and historically produced. Racialization reveals the processes wherein, for example, black subjects become racialized subjects and other bodies become racially unmarked as white. This view supports the notion of race as a social construction which is at the heart of the racialization process, and which is converted into racism when it is imbued with negative value.

The history of the modern state and race are intimately connected (Lee, 2012). In David T. Goldberg’s (2002) seminal text, “The Racial State”, his primary thesis is that race is constitutive of modernity, an argument he arrives at by examining two bodies of work, notably nation state formation and critical race theory. Central to his text are the ways in which racial exclusion, management and violence have been historically the
reason and practice of the modern state. By examining nation state formation, he argues that very few theorists truly delved into the notion of race with respect to nation state formation. He argues, “[R]ace is integral to the emergence, development, and transformation (conceptually, philosophically, materially) of the modern nation-state” (p.4). Furthermore, his understanding that “the modern state […] was understood as the space of white men” (p. 47) is in sharp contrast to the knowledge and commonsense understandings that circulate in the everyday culture of white settler society, such as Canada.

Goldberg (2002) advances the concepts of “naturalist” (biological) and “historicist” (cultural or developmental) racism as one way of conceptualizing contemporary operations of racism in spaces where overt racism is publicly unacceptable. Naturalist racism, or simply naturalism, conceives of racial differences (and racial inferiority) as being permanent and irremediable - a function of biology. Historicism, on the other hand, sees racial differences as being a matter of culture and development; therefore these differences, in this view, might someday (but never quite yet, Goldberg emphasizes) be overcome.

In essence, as Goldberg convincingly argues, historicist racism relies on and propagates the powerful myth of “racelessness” or “colourblindness” that is manifested in a powerful set of discourses (such as multiculturalism and more recently, postracialism) and practices that deny the persistence of everyday racism as a contemporary marker of social worth. These discourses, grounded in historicist racism, also fail to acknowledge historical injustices at the core of contemporary racial inequalities and violence. Moreover, in the wake of the latter discourses, the perpetuation of the myth of
racelessness and/or colourblindness continues to contribute to contemporary racial inequalities which structure the present. As such, the racial state

is a state characterized in the final analysis as racelessness. It is achievable only by the presumptive elevation of whiteness silently as (setting) the desirable standards, the teleological norms of civilized social life, even as it seeks to erase the traces of exclusions necessary to its achievement along the way. […] The colourblinding state can be understood in this scheme of things as the ultimate victory of states of whiteness purged of their guilt and self-doubt, the language of race giving way to the lexicon of a bland corporate multiculturalism and ethnic pluralism. (pp. 206-207)

Colourblindness then avoids the charges of racism by articulating its commitments to universalism and equality that are distinctive from the overt racism grounded in the biological. This distinction Goldberg states, “explains how liberals and conservatives alike assert that racism is alleviated once the naturalist articulation of it fades from view” (p. 88). This project attempts to speak against this notion, by attempting to theorize how historicist and biological understandings of race and racism are lived at home and abroad among soldiers in the Canadian military. Therefore, I situate race at the centre of this research project on militarized citizenship.

The history and legacy of the Canadian Forces has typically not been narrated as a racial history or even as one marked by race. However, the Canadian Forces, a state institution, has served various racial interests in different spaces at different times (Cowen, 2008; Gregory, 2004; Razack, 2004; Whitworth, 2004), including during the War on Terror. Canada’s military engagement colonially and post-colonially at home and abroad has served to modify and reify racist exclusions. For example, the Oka crisis of
1991 marks a low point in Canadian military history and its relationship with Aboriginal peoples. For the Canadian state, this indigenous revolt was one of the largest and most expensive military operations. Deploying almost 14,000 military personnel at the height of the crisis, this marked a significant moment between Aboriginal people and the Canadian nation state (Cowen, 2008; Coulthard, 2014). The late 1980s witnessed frequent eruptions of indigenous uprisings across Canada’s claimed territories in defense of land, culture, and nationhood. Throughout these resistance movements, the Canadian military continued to recruit Aboriginal peoples into the CF, but did so cautiously and with minimal reference to the “Oka Crisis” and other indigenous uprisings, understanding that it was still an emotional issue for many in the Aboriginal community (Edwards, 2002). Targeted by the state for indigenous uprisings and protest, and yet, simultaneously heavily targeted for recruitment as part of the military apparatus points to a complex and contradictory relationship between racialized soldiers and the colonial conditions of the Canadian nation state and illustrates the ways in which the Canadian military apparatus has been a colonial vehicle driving the racial interests of the state. Goldberg’s notion of the racial state alongside critical race feminists (Bannerji, 2000; Ong, 2006; Razack, 2004; Thobani, 2007) are useful to this research project, in that it I am able to map out the connections between the state and racial exclusions and examine how they manifest conceptually, theoretically, materially and spatially through the Canadian Forces. Following Lee (2012), I explore the racial state as “a set of projects, practices, institutions and conditions, laws and principles that are not easily escaped” (p.29). These explorations also provide an opportunity to examine how society might be
defended in modern states by ensuring the security of the life of the population through the death and management of racialized others (Foucault, 2003; Lee, 2012).

**2.3 Neoliberalism and the Racial State**

While the racial state is characterized by Goldberg as “colourblind” or “raceless”, it becomes important to trace how this colourblindess or raceless condition takes form and comes to have symbolic and material effects on its people. Goldberg asserts that colourblindness is a contemporary form of white supremacy constitutive of neoliberalism. In what follows, I unpack some of the central tenants and strands of neoliberalism relevant to this research project. Often popularly referred to, but often dehistoricized and unnuanced, neoliberalism has been generally described as a set of top-down economic and political policies, whereby nation states should reject social welfare in favour of free-market capitalist policies geared towards the liberalization of trade regulations and tariffs, the deregulation of industry, privatization, deep cuts to social programs, and tax cuts to private and corporate interests (Harvey, 2005, p.13). In what follows, I offer a more nuanced understanding of neoliberalism and pay attention to its mobile, flexible and contingent character.

At the beginning of the twenty first century, a number of scholars from various disciplines examined neoliberalism (see Harvey, 2003; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Peck, 2001; Jessop, 2002; Hindess, 2002; Brenner & Theodore, 2002; Bourdieu, 1998; Castree, 2008; Larner, 2000; Barnett, 2010; Springer, 2012, Ong, 2006; Duggan 2004) These analyses describe a shift from Keynesian welfarism towards a more “right wing” agenda favoring
the unfettered operations of capitalist markets. Upon closer examination, many of these critiques span various disciplines and are based on key theoretical texts from Karl Marx (1977) and Michel Foucault (2003 & 2007). A neo-Marxist school of analysis focuses on upward redistribution of economic resources from the poor and working classes to elites (Harvey, 2003). Those who adhere to a neo-Foucauldian school of thought regard neoliberalism as a cultural project in which market rationalities become embodied and self-regulated (Rose, 1999; Brown, 2005). The third school of thought centers on neoliberalism as a new mode of state-craft, entailing a shift from the welfare state to the carceral state (Bernstein, 2010). In what follows, neoliberalism as a contested concept is explored in the following three areas: policy, ideology, and governmentality. I also demonstrate how neoliberalism has shifted the Canadian nation state politically and militarily in order to highlight its conceptual relevance on the broadest foreign policy level, but also more importantly its impact on racial subject formation.

**Neoliberalism as Policy**

If we follow the popular notion that neoliberalism is regarded as a theory of political economic practices that champions private property rights, free markets and free trade (Harvey, 2005), often grounded in specific *policies*, then as Angela Larner (2000) argues, we risk missing the underlying values grounded in “the individual freedom of choice, market security, laissez faire and minimal government” that support the overarching neoliberal framework (Larner 2000, p. 8 as cited in Russell, 2015, p.27). As such, these values become universal and focus is placed on how best to achieve “success” by striving for these values for a particular program or policy initiative rather than questioning the appropriateness of these values from the outset (Russell, 2015).
Typically, the ubiquitous nature of neoliberalism from a policy perspective unfolds in the following manner. Critics demonstrate how international regulating bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or the World Bank (WB) operate on a global scale. They discuss how these entities have been able to successfully drag world economies away from classical social democratic strategies such as full employment, high levels of public expenditure and progressive taxation by issuing dictates about the “harsh economic truths” of “good fiscal housekeeping” (Clarke, 2000; Mishra, 1999; Teeple, 1995). For example, since the 1980s several nations (e.g. Jamaica, Ghana, Zambia and others) have found themselves in debt traps with Western and other private financial institutions. At this point, the IMF and the WB offer financial assistance in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) in order for the indebted nations not to default on their loans and risk the chance of being cut off from the global market. Feminist political philosophers are also concerned with the gendered and racialized effects of structural adjustment policies (SAPs), which many poor countries have been forced to undertake as conditions of borrowing money or rescheduling their existing debts. The resulting reductions in publicly-funded health services, education, and childcare undermine the health and well-being of everyone they affect and the burdens of SAPs are disproportionately borne by women of colour.20 Therefore, neoliberalism operating as policy and the values that underpin it go unquestioned because it is assumed that these universal values are what are deemed most beneficial for all those involved.

In the Canadian context, the narrative about how globalized neoliberalism has impacted national policies starts in the early 1980s (Abu-Laban & Gabriel, 2002). At the federal level, Brian Mulroney’s Progressive Conservatives, under pressure from globalized capital, began to dismantle Canada’s postwar equality agenda through the establishment of free trade agreements (*Free Trade Agreement* in 1988 and *North American Free Trade Agreement* in 1994). Mulroney’s regime also made efforts to decentralize national standards with their failed attempts to achieve greater autonomy for the provinces (the 1987 Meech Lake Accord and the 1992 Charlottetown Accord) (Brodie, 2002). Describing Canada’s strong support for neoliberalism into the 1990s, Jerome Klassen (2014) illustrates the following:

To advance this [neoliberal] agenda, Canadian governments of all stripes tried to reorganize both the national economy and the state apparatus in like with “free market” imperatives. They also pursued new forms of continental integration, and played a key role in international trade and financial institutions that oversee and regulate the world economy. In the process, the Canadian market became more entwined with global circuits of capital, and Canadian firms engaged in a new wave or international investment. Although Canadian foreign policy during this period was largely dominated by economic concerns, it also included military mission in Iraq, Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. Beyond these limited campaigns, however, few resources were dedicated to the military, and little thought was given to security and defence strategies. Instead, economic concerns were the primary interest of Canadian governments in both internal and external policy formation (p. 4).

This drastically changed after 11 September 2001 and triggered a major shift in Canada’s foreign policy. Under the Liberal government, Canada entered the war in Afghanistan and implemented a variety of national security measures including new anti-terrorist laws.
and immigration laws. In the year that followed, Canada abandoned United Nations peacekeeping missions and increased defense spending to levels not seen since the Second World War (Cowen, 2008; Klassen, 2014). While Canada publically denounced the War on Iraq in 2003 and was not involved openly, it did provide ample forms of military assistance, and agreed to lead the mission by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Kabul, Afghanistan, thereby freeing up American troops to redeploy to the Gulf (Stein and Lang, 2007, in Klassen, 2014, p. 4). Summarizing Canada’s radical shift on a global stage Klassen (2014) writes:

[During this time] Canada built as secret military base in the United Arab Emirates, and expanded naval operations in the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, The Arctic, the Caribbean Sea, the Pacific Rim, and around the Horn of African. In matters of international diplomacy, Canada reneged on the Kyoto Protocol, imposed sanctions on Iran, and changed course on the Israel-Palestine conflict, giving unflinching support to Israel. In Latin America and the Caribbean, Canada established closer ties to right wing governments and on two occasions sent troops to Haiti, one time in support of a coup d’état against an elected president. (p. 5)

Tracing the neoliberal shifts in Canada is central to understanding how neoliberalism via Canadian foreign policy becomes interwoven with the “war on terror”. Under the Harper government a new strategy of armoured neoliberalism is deployed (Klassen, 2014). As Klassen describes, an armoured neoliberalism accomplishes three things: Firstly, it globalizes corporate Canada’s reach; secondly, it secures a position for the Canadian nation state in the geopolitical hierarchy; and finally, it works to discipline any opposition forces, both inside and outside the nation state in the new world order. How an armoured neoliberalism operates within the racial state is of central importance to this research.
project, particularly with respect to how neoliberal policy is dictated and carried out. What becomes evident is that racial markers are largely hidden and masked within discourses of security which further places the racialized soldier subject within a more intense set of contradictions.

**Neoliberalism as Ideology**

A second framework within which neoliberalism is commonly understood is neoliberalism as ideology and/or accumulation by dispossession grounded in the work of David Harvey (2003). For Harvey, neoliberalism is fundamentally about a class project that was central to capital accumulation particularly after the 1970s. Understanding how neoliberal logic profoundly impacts both macro and micro levels of the war on terror becomes central to understanding how soldiering bodies negotiate the war on terror. A neoliberal logic is defined as one in which “the logic of social welfare and autonomous economic developments should be dismantled in favour of free market policy oriented towards the liberalization of trade and deep cuts to social programs and tax cuts to private and corporate interests” (McCready, 2010, p. 30). While its characteristics are central to what David Harvey terms “the new imperialism”, he goes on to demonstrate that capitalist accumulation necessitates the evisceration of the welfare state and hence the strengthening and consolidation of the “warfare” or “security” state (Harvey, 2005). When an intensification of state security protocols takes precedence over social programs, a reallocation of state spending becomes evident, resulting in the privatization of prisons, militaries and related policing and surveillance, and hence an ironic construction of a state bureaucracy that is reminiscent of the very critique of “big
government” that neoliberal ideology espouses (McCready, 2012). While the ideology of accumulation of dispossession is largely about redistribution and restoring class power, Harvey’s notion of neoliberalism and its impact are largely absent of any race analysis. How accumulation by dispossession largely operates in the racial state is also largely a racial project that requires examining how race and class within the racial state are constitutive of one another.

**Neoliberalism as Governmentality**

Foucault’s investigation into the formation of the state and the constitution of the subject are linked through studies of governmentality. Through his exploration, he “endeavors to show how the modern sovereign state and the modern autonomous individual co-determine each other's emergence” (Lemke, 2002, p. 51). Studies in governmentality are marked by Foucault’s discussions about the emergence of a modern power in the seventeenth century, in which sovereign rule was transformed into technologies through various institutions (legal, medical, education) that rule and govern how populations may live their lives (Foucault, 1984; Foucault, 1997). Power did not solely reside in a sovereign who determined who could live or die, but was transformed as a “power over life” as a whole (Foucault, 1984, p. 261). Governmentality analyzes the knowledge that makes objects possible to govern and in that sense, extends the exercise of power beyond the state to all areas of social life. According to Barnett (2010):

The concept of “governmentality” ... is a term that combines “government” and “rationality,” suggesting a form of political analysis that focuses on the forms of knowledge that make objects visible and available for governing. In Foucault’s terms, governmentality refers to a distinctive modality of exercising power, one which is not
reducible to “the state.” Governmentality is understood to work “at a distance” by seeking to shape “the conduct of conduct”. This in turn implies that governmentality refers to a wide range of options of application. (p. 12)

Governmentality focuses on both the productive and disciplinary aspects of power which can be traced through everyday micro-practices at local levels of engagement. The productive and disciplinary aspects of power link technologies of the self with technologies of domination and reveal how subjects are formed in and through them (Foucault, 1991a). Therefore, the social becomes the site of economics, and is then linked to particular forms of governing that take place to manage the exchange. In this sense, economics is not considered the centre of analysis as seen in the ideological or policy approach mentioned above. Rather, the centre of analysis are the strategies of power that operate within the social (between and within subjects) to produce knowledge that then forms what is come to be known as economics and particular forms of governance (Russell, 2015).

Neoliberalism as governmentality refers to Foucauldian approaches that regard neoliberalism as a mentality of government (Foucault, 2008; Barry, Osborne and Rose, 1996). In this vein, neoliberalism is understood as more than a set of free market principles; amidst other dynamics, neoliberalism extends to the organization of subjectivity (Brown, 2005). Under neoliberalism, individual subjects are construed as entrepreneurs of themselves and their lives (Brown, 2003; 2005; Gordon, 1987). Neoliberal subjects are entrepreneurial subjects who calculate about themselves and work on themselves in order to better themselves (DuGay, 1996). How neoliberalism impacts
subjectivity is central to this project. How racialized soldiers understand themselves as entrepreneurial and moral subjects that are productive of good citizenry within the military industrial complex is key to understanding how white supremacy and neoliberalism operate at the level of the subject.

**Characteristics of the Neoliberal Racial State**

In the racial state, neoliberalism becomes visible when deconstructing and naming its strategies and characteristics. Identifying how colourblindness operates becomes central to how subjects participate in the racial state itself. One of the tactics used is to suggest that everyone regardless of social location is equal and treated the same. Goldberg describes this strategy as “the national fantasy of homogeneity” where histories around colonial, racial and gendered violence are deliberately forgotten or seen to have no bearing on the current understanding and imaginings of the nation state formation (p. 140). Quite effective then, is the racial state’s desire to avoid centering race or racial inequalities grounded in historical relations of domination. The result then of this denial of history is a dehistoricization and hence, notions around race are naturalized. As Goldberg asserts, “colourblindness enables as acceptance, as a principle of historical justice, the perpetuation of the inequities already established”, devoid of context and historical nuances around the nation state formation in multicultural societies (p. 212).

A second strategy identified by Goldberg by which racial states sustain this notion of colourblindness is through the conflation of race and class. Liberal states (like Canada) are also capitalist in formation. As Goldberg observes (2002), one of the dominant ideas
through which the racial state and the capitalist state blend together is through tolerance of class-based inequality grounded in the myth of meritocracy (p. 244). Recasting racial differences as class differences once again fails to address the particularities around race and class structure inequalities differently and with varying effects in racial states. Furthermore, the hegemony of liberal capitalist ideology allows racial hierarchies to persist, disguising them as class hierarchies (Goldberg, 2002). Following Stuart Hall (1980), I prefer to think about race as the “modality in which class is ‘lived’, the medium through which class relations are experienced, and the form in which it is appropriated and ‘fought through’” (p. 341). Stuart Hall is instructive here because much of the debate on the left centers on economic inequality to the detriment of systemic racism. Following Alcoff, “only when we come to be very clear about how race is lived, in its multiple manifestations, only when we come to appreciate its often hidden epistemic effects and its power over collective imaginations of public space, can we entertain even the remote possibility of its eventual transformations” (Alcoff, 2002, p. 267).

A final strategy by which colourblindness or racelessness is enacted by the racial state is through the privatization of race, thereby relegating racism into the socially-produced private realm. Borrowing from Foucault, Goldberg (2002) argues that the public-private discursive split is a produced distinction that functions as a modern technology of racial domination. A racial state then positions its citizen-subjects as free, self-determining subjects and in doing so, renders race and racism “behind the wall of

private preference and expression, of privatized choice” (p. 334). As such, racism becomes unspeakable in public and very much speakable in private and consequently creates a very complex situation for the state with respect to addressing and eradicating racism institutionally. Presumably, if race and racism are relegated to the private sphere, the state can and has absolved itself from any responsibility institutionally. The modern racial state then is rendered largely immune from state intervention and serves to protect the private sphere from state incursion.

The contemporary racial state under neoliberal organization (racial neoliberalism) intensified these notions of privatization. Returning then to Goldberg’s analysis of colourblindness as a tactic of neoliberalism describing how racelessness operates within the private sphere demonstrates how race is constitutive of neoliberalism. Rather than an analysis of race and neoliberalism, an analytical shift to a *raced neoliberalism* or *racial neoliberalism* is central to how race and racism are central and embedded in neoliberal logic (Roberts & Mahtani, 2010). Roberts and Mahtani (2010) go on to emphasize their point in the following:

Neoliberalization is understood as a socioeconomic process that has racial implications, but little is said about the ways that neoliberalism modifies the way race is experienced or understood in society. We suggest that this theorization is incomplete. We recommend a move from analyses of *race and neoliberalism* towards analyses that *race neoliberalism*. This kind of analysis more clearly delineates how race and racism are inextricably embedded in the neoliberal project. (p. 250, emphasis in original)

While many scholarly discussions on neoliberalism largely disavow race and racism, Roberts and Mahtani centre race within the production of neoliberal discourses
and practices and offer an examination of how neoliberalism modifies the manner in which race is experienced. Understanding how race and neoliberalism are “organizing principle[s] of society” (Roberts & Mahtani, 2010, p. 254) is key to an analysis of how race and racism are lived and experienced in the contemporary moment, particularly since there appears to be a shift towards individualizing systemic issues to avoid burden. By shifting our analysis to examining the colonial underpinnings of neoliberalism, only then can we begin to see how racialized violence can be understood as an inevitable consequence of how society is organized (Giroux, 2008; Roberts & Mahtani, 2010). As such, the focus on the ways in which neoliberalism constructs racism or colludes with its erasure is central to the every day lived experience of racialized bodies. Expanding further on how race operates in our neoliberal moment Davis (2007) explains:

Under neoliberal racism the relevance of the raced subject, racial identity and racism is subsumed under the auspices of meritocracy. For in a neoliberal society, individuals are supposedly freed from identity and operate under the limiting assumptions that hard work will be rewarded if the game is played according to the rules. Consequently, any impediments to success are attributed to personal flaws. This attribution affirms notions of neutrality and silences claims of racializing and racism. (p. 350)

As Davis explains, race and racism are avoided through discourses of neutrality, individuality and hard work. Echoing similar sentiments, Moldonado-Torres explains that “neoliberalism allows racism to continue apparently undetected by making individual merit and preference the unique sources of authentic social arrangements, beyond group recognition and the intervention of the state” (p. 82). Effectively, a neoliberal condition then distances the state’s role with respect to the intervention of social injustices against
historically discriminated groups and instead protects private choice and secures borders and interests of the nation (p. 332-324). Consequently, race and racism are further “buried alive” to borrow from Goldberg, because it becomes a moral imperative for racialized bodies to appropriate these discourses in order to belong and acquire citizenry. If they do not pull themselves up by the proverbial boots straps, they are denying their moral imperative to individual success and belonging. Under these conditions, institutional racism is a relic of the past. The above technologies of erasure do not only mean the absence of race, but its privatization – where the privatization of race and racial violence is an integral apparatus of the state in which race is kept socially alive, but its expression and very existence have been displaced from formal governance (Goldberg, 2012, p. 106). These technologies are significant because they also signal potential discourses that hail racialized subject into being (Goldberg, 2009).22

To summarize some of the latter points then, Goldberg (2009) convincingly argues how race is an indispensable component of neoliberalism and modern globalization. Going beyond the general analysis, he makes the links between neoliberalism and race and examines the threat of race as it appears in different geopolitical contexts marked by neoliberal shifts resulting in the production of death, violence and systematic dehumanization. While he argues that race by and large has been relegated to the private sphere, it is very palpable in the contemporary moment in the very management of life.

22 While this research draws on a race-cognizant poststructuralism where the notion of discourse is central, poststructuralist thought builds on the work of Louis Althusser. In this specific instance, I draw on Althusser’s notions of interpellation where he illustrates that subjects are called into being. For Althusser, the process of recognition by the individual as the one addressed by the call to recognition interpellates the individual as a subject within ideology. The individual is “hailed”, and responds with an identification through which they are a subject in a double sense. The individual becomes both the agent of the ideology and subjected to it. Althusser, L. (1989). 'Ideology and ideological state apparatuses' in Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays. London: New Left Books pp. 170-186.
and death, nationally and globally. Goldberg notes that the effort to bury race is evident, but to “bury it alive” is characteristic of the contemporary shift. This shift in the understanding of race under neoliberalism is paradoxically characterized as a “racial death” in the theoretical sense. Illustrating this notion of a racial death, Goldberg (2009) demonstrates that those reluctant states or populations not willing to support or which resist neoliberal restructuring in the form of structural adjustment, debt creation and economic and social regulations are subjected to more direct forces or militarized or policed imposition (p. 334). In more extreme cases, or what are sometimes characterized as “rogue” or “uncooperative” groups, individuals, populations or states, are often subjected to what Mbembe (2003) refers to as “necropolitical discipline” through the threat of imprisonment or death literally and/or figuratively in the form of social annihilation.

2.4 Neoliberalism meets Militarization

A central aspect of the concept of neoliberalism addressed above is the idea of risk and understanding that the logic of risk means increased security for nation states often signaling increased funding for state militaries and the security apparatus. The neoliberal logic of our time purports what Ismael Hossein-zadeh coins “redistributive militarism” which is described as a “combination of drastic increases in military spending coupled with equally drastic tax cuts for the wealthy. As this combination creates large budget deficits it then forces cuts on non-military spending to fill gaps thus created”
In a similar fashion, David Harvey illustrates the intimate connection between militarism and neoliberalism in his work, *The New Imperialism*, and in doing so highlights the importance of the consolidation of oil when he states,

There is, however, an even grander perspective from which to understand the oil question. It can be captured in the following proposition: Whoever controls the Middle East, controls the global oil spigot and whoever controls the global spigot can control the global economy, at least for the near future. We should not, therefore, think solely of Iraq, but consider the geopolitical condition and significance of the Middle East as a whole in relation to global capitalism. (p. 19)

In Harvey’s claim, he links the control of oil in the Middle East to the control of global capitalism. For Harvey then, “capitalist imperialism” is defined as “a contradictory fusion of ‘the politics of state and empire’ and ‘the molecular processes of capital accumulation in space and time’”. In the former, he emphasizes the political, diplomatic, and military strategies relied upon and used by the state to achieve its goals. With the latter, he refers to tracing the ways in which “economic power flows across and through continuous space, towards or away from territorial entities through the daily practices of production, trade, commerce, capital flows, money transfers, labour migration, technology transfer, currency speculation, flows of information and cultural impulses” (p. 26-27). Therefore, Harvey’s notion of capitalist imperialism is composed of two major components. First, imperialism is in large part a political project where power is contingent on the command of territory that has the capacity to mobilize its human

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resources and secondly, it is also a political-economic process where command over the use of capital is top priority. Neoliberal logic has also profoundly reconfigured and complicated notions of combat and soldiering. With the emergence and ubiquitous presence of private military companies outnumbering public soldiers, particularly in Iraq, Europe and parts of Africa, this reveals a troubling dimension to traditional military warfare (Brooks, 2000; Eichler, 2014, 2015; Seahill, 2007; Singer, 2003, Spearin, 2001). Private Military Companies (PMCs) and their impact on modern warfare have been well-documented and further complicate modern day soldiering in a variety of ways. While Cowen & Siciliano (2011) point out that that entanglement of private military and national military is not new, it is worth noting that this particular industry has increased significantly since the end of the Cold War to become a multi-billion dollar industry with 130,000 mercenaries in Iraq alone. Further complicating the status of combatants today is the fact that they routinely take their own lives as they take others in increasingly regular suicide bombings, thereby denying the body at risk that traditionally defines combat, the one guaranteeing its life and the other its death (Asad, 2007; Isin and Finn, 2007). This surge in private militaries in the name of security is significant and profoundly racialized as I will demonstrate below. The importance of private space for the propagation of white supremacy makes war machines in the form of public and private militaries (both state-


run and through private contracting) important sites for understanding racialized subject formation in the global racial order in the contemporary moment. In this regard, it is not unprecedented that public militaries (and their officials) are engaged in protecting the privacy and secrecy of their operations and decisions in an attempt to keep state racism invisible (Giroux, 2007).

What neoliberalism in conjunction with militarization reveals is the rise of neoliberalized militaries structured along racial lines. However, it also becomes evident that neoliberalism is also complicit in producing gross inequalities that militarism is crucial to defend. This blatant neoliberal restructuring with devastating and destabilizing effects has produced a rise in resistance (Cockburn, 2006; Enloe, 2000). Often, this resistance is met with a militarization that “accompanies the advance of privatization, the erosion of the commons and an increasing gulf between the rich and the poor” (McCready, 2010, p. 30). Historian Michael Gayner (1989) explains that militarization is “the contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence” (cited in Sherry, 1995). In a similar fashion, Cynthia Enloe states that militarization is a “step-by-step process by which a person or a thing gradually comes to be controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas (Enloe, 2000, p. 3). However, Catherine Lutz, in her explanation of militarization, alludes to the tenets of neoliberalism that are inextricably linked to militarization arguing that “it is simultaneously discursive involving a shift in general and societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force, the large organization of standing armies and their leaders, and higher taxes and tributes used to pay for them” (Lutz, 2002, p. 40). Contemporary notions of militarization then,
constitutive of neoliberal logic, seep into and saturate the social, technological, and economic realms in turn giving structure and instruction to civic life. As such, the permanence of the war economy in the name of national security becomes “increasingly entangled in the ‘hearts and minds’ of citizens, the intimate spaces of discrete communities, lived relations and identities” (Berland & Fitzpatrick, 2010, p. 14). To further understand the current intersection of the modern public and the military, Paul Virilio speaks to what he has termed “pure war” to describe not simply the drama and spectacle of war on the battle front, but rather the active preparation of war during peacetime. Virilio (2008) argues that pure war is that “which isn’t acted out with infinite repetition, but infinite preparation” (p. 29). That is to say, even during moments of “peace”, the notion of war still exits by virtue of its preparation and preparedness. Examining the notion of logistics’, “the procedure following which a nation’s potential is transferred to its armed forces” demonstrates how this is central to the construction of “pure war” often resulting in the conflation of civilian and military institutions” (p.32). Consequently, under the conditions of pure war, it becomes increasingly difficult to decipher where the military and logic of war has and has not infiltrated. Cynthia Enloe’s (2000, 1993, 1989) observations on the logic of militarism from a feminist analytic are also significant here. A major theme explored in her work Maneuvres emphasizes this process of militarization, which she defines as, "the step-by-step process by which something becomes controlled by, dependent on, or derives its value from the military as an institution or militaristic criteria" (Enloe, 2000, p. 281, emphasis in original). She sees this process as pervasive across institutions in male-dominated societies. Her emphasis on militarization as a process helps to map out the societal shifts that emerge in both subtle
and not so subtle ways. Enloe (2000) states that, “thinking about militarization allows us to chart the silences. It enables us to see what is not challenged or, at the very least, what is not made problematic” (p. 32). As such, militarization has many guises and is largely about decisions. Enloe makes this apparent in her analysis of public discourse, government legislation, and the everyday infiltration in popular culture. Perhaps Enloe’s most significant contribution to the contemporary operation of militarism is the manner in which she illustrates the masculinities and femininities that anchor and sustain the military apparatus. While women are increasingly serving and dying in uniform, Enloe explores the complicated militarized experiences of women as prostitutes, as rape victims, as mothers, as wives, as nurses, and as feminist activists, and uncovers the "maneuvers" that military officials and their civilian supporters have made in order to ensure that each of these groups of women feels special and separate. As Cowen and Gilbert (2008) note, “this is tied to the civilianization of ‘collateral damage’; casualties of war [figuratively and literally] are today most concentrated among civilians rather than official combatants” (p.10). As such, Enloe’s work helps to trace how American and Canadian society have become increasingly faced with a re-emergent militarism and in doing so, illuminates the highly gendered aspects that facilitate this process.

2.5 Racialized Military Citizenship

The increasing dependence on private military and security companies (PMSCs) in contemporary military conflict marks a historic shift in the state’s organization of military violence (Eichler, 2014; 2015). As Krebs (2004) argues, “the mass army is today
on the run, and privatized security forces are making a comeback but who serves remains a question of importance” (p.124). These shifts point to a neoliberal remaking of militarization reconfiguring notions of soldiering, citizenship and modern day warfare which has profound implications for how gender, race and nation are organized on the traditional battlefield. Elizabeth Lee (2012), states “the battle ground over the rights to citizenship and belonging span global landscapes” (p. 129). Recently, several scholars have engaged with the struggles of citizenship, specifically, militarized citizenship where some of the most significant battles have been waged (Basham, 2013; Lee, 2012; Ware, 2012). Moving outside of Canada, I turn to examples of racialized military citizenship in both the United Kingdom and the United States to think through the implications of Ware’s concept of “militarized multiculture”. Earlier, I drew on Ware’s concept to explain how various projects globally attempting to “diversify the uniform” and encounters with racial difference speak to major shifts in attitudes and the shape of military work. The following challenges the assumption that soldiers are naturally nationalistic actors and speaks to the shifts in modern day soldiering and interrogates how military labour is organized.

Several scholars have described the ways in which migrant communities experience political exclusion and inclusion in different racialized and militarized contexts (Eichler, 2013; Brigden & Vogt, 2014; Ware, 2012; Basham, 2013). In the past, particularly in the U.S., conscription played a central role in the relationship between citizenship, military service and masculinity (Eichler, 2013). Moving away from conscription to an all-volunteer force was not without its own complexities, but the anti-war movement and draft evasion played significant roles in its termination in 1973.
Cowen (2006) has argued that the termination of the draft was an outcome of the advent of the early neoliberal project. Supporters of an end to the draft desired to limit the state’s role in the life of its citizens and championed individual freedom. As Cowen (2006) argues, one of the first important victories for neoliberal advocates occurred in the military arena. Following the end of conscription, this paved the way for an all-volunteer force and the increased outsourcing of military work to the private sector. With this shift, the link between citizenship and soldiering became increasingly tenuous. As Eichler (2013) states, “the link between citizenship and soldiering was not simply eroding but was being reconstituted in the context of the privatization of the military security and the global inequalities of citizenship” (p.11). This becomes evident through the U.S. military’s recruitment of foreign recruits with the promise of US citizenship in exchange for military service.

Examining the tenuous nature of militarized citizenship, Hector Amaya (2007) notes that the first coalition soldiers to die in Iraq in 2003 were non-citizen Latinos who were given posthumous citizenship. He argues that this process of posthumous citizenship is fundamentally an illiberal practice. Amaya’s conception of liberalism here refers to a style of governance that emphasizes human dignity and personal freedom (p. 3). Based on this notion, “dignity can only result from personal choice, including the consent to be governed” (p.3). Therefore, Amaya puts forth that the state naturalized the late soldiers without their consent goes against common understandings of naturalization.

26 Marine Lance Cpl. José Gutiérrez (killed March 21, 2003 and reported as the first US Army soldier killed) was a native of Guatemala; Marine Lance Cpl. Jesús Suárez del Solar (March 27, 2003) and Cpl. José Angel Garibay (March 28, 2003) were from Mexico; and Army Pfc. Diego Rincón (March 29, 2003) was from Colombia.
grounded in “imperialistic practices of the 19th and early 20th century when the US Government naturalized Mexicans and Puerto Ricans without their consent” (p. 4). Giving these soldiers posthumous citizenship (i.e., non-consensual naturalization) contradicts the notion that naturalization is a contract that legitimizes the relationship between governor and subject. To further his argument, postulating that posthumous citizenship is an illiberal act, he states that the politicians and the media apparatus that deploy ideas of military honour and patriotism fail to acknowledge that the U.S. is organized to attract mostly the poor and non-white populations. As such, presenting itself as a “volunteer” force and as a liberal institution implies a particular uniformity in the distribution of civic responsibility. In other words, the protection of United States and the discursive construction of heroism are predicated on volunteerism. As Amaya demonstrates, this is not the case especially when the structure of the Armed Forces in the U.S. is fundamentally shaped by race and class. Volunteerism then, is for very specific bodies.

Building on Amaya’s research, Elizabeth Lee’s (2012) study engages with the lives of Filipino migrants who enlist in the U.S. military as a collective pathway to American citizenship for themselves and their families. Filipino nationals comprise the highest percentage of foreign-born military recruits, a trend enabled by the fact that U.S. citizenship is not required to serve in the armed forces and promoted by the colonial history of the U.S. in the Philippines (Lee, 2012). Filipinos are the only foreign-born nationals permitted to enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces without having to immigrate to the United States. As such, they are the exception to the permanent residency requirement necessary to join the U.S. military. Citizenship is, however, granted posthumously to any
“alien” or “non-citizen national” whose death occurs on active duty, providing a legal “death dividend” for surviving relatives (p.2). Lee argues that Filipino soldiers are a central figure in the war economy. Comprising 25% of foreign-born U.S. military personnel, they also comprise one-third of all Private Military Contractors (PMC) presently serving and providing services in Iraq. The type of militarized labour performed by PMCs racially constructs Filipino soldiers as docile and effeminate subjects relegating them to the domestic sphere of military labour. The type of labour Filipino soldier migrants engage with on the battlefront closely mirrors the type of labour they take up as migrants on the home front.

While the figure of the Filipino soldier anchors Lee’s work, the bulk of her research focuses on the citizenship provided to surviving family upon the death of a serving family member. In all the cases that she reviews, the families have refused citizenship in protest of the violence that citizenship in this case encompasses and embodies. Where Lee’s work departs from Amaya’s is in her examination of the refusal of citizenship from the vantage point of racialized subjects who have none. Her study on these “limit cases” is significant not because they are exceptional cases, but because they magnify how boundary cases can and do expose the violence of the state. In her recent work, Mohawk scholar Audra Simpson (2014) rejects the Canadian politics of reconciliation and instead posits a politics of refusal. Instead, she gestures toward a future where indigenous peoples are not forced to struggle against demands that they be Canadian (or American) citizens, give up land, and be absorbed into the logic of property. Rather she suggests that they are not forced to stop being politically indigenous. Similarly, Dene political philosopher Glen Coulthard (2013) also endorses a politics of
refusal with respect to citizenship on the grounds that “a massive transformation in the political economy of contemporary settler-colonialism [and] any efforts to rebuild our nations will remain parasitic on capitalism, and thus on the perpetual exploitation of our lands and labor,” which fundamentally conflicts with indigenous values of reciprocity with land (King & Pasternack, 2015). These important insights on the notion of refusal are a significant phenomenon in citizenship studies and offer an important perspective on the limits and violence of citizenship, but also engage with the implications and possibilities of refusal.

Returning to the context of Filipino soldiers above, the link between soldiers and citizenship also becomes questionable when migrant and local workers, resulting from no other options, labour for US defense contractors and their subcontractors in Iraq and Afghanistan. Under these circumstances, Isabelle Barker (2009) examines how the United States Department of Defense has reconfigured the provision of vital logistics and support services to the armed forces. Specifically, she examines the outsourcing of third-country nationals (TCNs) involved in the organization of social reproductive labour in the theatre of war (p. 214). In her examination of TCNs, she explores the underlying gendered and racial dimensions of the division of labour at U.S. military bases primarily performed by men from poor Asian countries. She goes on to demonstrate that this form of reproductive labour which is often coded as effeminate, performed by non-white, migrant men from the South and Southeast Asian countries works to reinforce the aggressive masculinity present in American soldiering (p. 216). In the name of operational effectiveness, outsourcing these tasks is seen as beneficial because these tasks (i.e., base construction and maintenance, delivery of fuel, transportation of cargo, food
service, laundry and field shower, latrine and solid waste removal, to name a few) tend to effeminize members of the military thereby weakening their effectiveness on the battlefield (p. 227). As a result, this militarized division of labour works to reinforce “the neoliberal model of a leaner and more effective and efficient armed forces” (p. 216).

Taking the analysis of racialized military citizenship outside the United States, Vron Ware’s (2012) research study examines the recruitment of migrant soldiers from the British Commonwealth from 1998-2013. In her work she examines why the British military and government needed to recruit non-British citizens from outside the United Kingdom. Driven by the need to increase the number of ethnic minorities in the armed forces and address the acute shortage of military personnel, a decision to draw on the British Commonwealth was made. Dropping its five-year residency requirement and broadening the pool of applicants to people in over fifty countries, by 2010, 7,895 soldiers from the Commonwealth countries, Ireland, and Nepal were part of the British Army.

At the heart of the matter is an underlying contradiction (a similar contradiction at operates at the core of this thesis as well) entailed in working for a national military institution without either the protection of or the rewards of citizenship (p. 228). Given this salient contradiction, Ware also focuses on self-organizing undertaken by Commonwealth soldiers and their families to answer back to the inadequacies of the Ministry of Defense and Home Office support systems. As Ware argues, “the British Army owed a great deal to the expertise of migrants themselves, particularly those who felt responsible for the wellbeing of their compatriots” (p.227). In response to the Army’s inability to fully support racial and cultural minorities and migrants through the Army
Welfare Services (AWS), the Army Families Federation (AFF), a voluntary organization, tackled the complexities of housing, impending and frequent moves, divorce, deployment, and dependents’ education, providing soldiers and their families with important sources of information and problem-solving techniques. Tracing these moments on behalf of the commonwealth soldiers demonstrates how resistance operates in global military apparatus. In 2010, for example, the AFF administered a survey on problems emerging from familial separation for Commonwealth troops in Afghanistan, and based on their findings recommended better access to mental health services before, during, and after deployment. Whether it is Latino and/or Filipino soldiers serving the United States military, migrant or Commonwealth soldiers filling a recruitment gap in the United Kingdom, or countless other soldiers of colour working as TCNs for the private military and security apparatus, what is clear is that race is the defining feature that constructs bodies of colour as the preferred bodies of choice for contracted and state military labour, particularly in the U.S. and British Armed Forces. According to Eichler (2013), “while there are significant differences in how the public and private spheres operate, recruiters for PMSCs and their subcontractors target socially and spatially marginalized people” across the globe (p.11). With the rise in privatization of military security, what we are currently witnessing is a “global scaling of recruitment, that geographically extends the patterns or recruitment found nationally” (p.11). While Friedman and other neoliberals of the time argued that conscription was a form of slavery, the result of these neoliberal shifts in military labour is tantamount to the trafficking and exploitation of thousands of men and women in search of better economic conditions and opportunities. Military citizenship and how it operates across the global
landscape has been central to this contemporary development.

   Citizenship, the formal and legal rights to political inclusion and membership within a particular national territory, has awarded (certain) individuals the freedom of mobility (to travel freely outside the boundaries of the nation-state), the freedom to vote in political elections, and the freedoms to access a multitude of resources. Citizenship, however, has also formed the basis to deny protections and securities from certain (and almost always) racialized groups (Lee, 2012). What the previous scholarly work on racialized military citizenship reveals is how well-intentioned projects such as citizenship paradoxically redraw the very effects of power and domination that they seek to challenge and eliminate (Brown 1995: ix, in Lee, 2012).

2.6 The making of a “racial state” in Canada

   If we theorize Canada as a racial state (as I do above) and a state of whiteness, that is a state that reproduces, manages and sustains relative privileges of whites, then it stands to reason that most of the dominant, social, cultural, economic, legal and political institutions that make up “Canada” are sites of whiteness, and that includes the Canadian military. This means that the Canadian military is a legitimate site for institutional racism and culture of normative whiteness. However, Edward Said’s work demonstrates that imperialist and neocolonial projects require a whole host of characters (Said, 1994). It is within such a context that the role of the racialized soldier becomes curious and complex and an important site of analysis.
To narrate the Canadian military as a neocolonial/neoimperial enterprise requires an understanding of the racist nature of the Canadian nation state. Many Indigenous scholars (Monture-Angus, 1995, 1999, 2002; Chrisjohn. 1997; Churchill, 1997; Alfred, 2001; Lawrence, 2002; Smith, 2005; Coulthard, 2007) have long argued that settler states are currently colonial rather than merely the product of a colonial past (Razack 2000, 2002, 2011; Hook, 2005; Thobani, 2007; Wolfe, 2006; Barker 2009). As such, Canada has been narrated as a white settler society that continues to be racially structured (multiculturalism notwithstanding). The colonial context from which the Canadian nation operates is central to understanding the place of Aboriginal and racialized bodies in this country. Several scholars have described Canada as a white settler society, one established by Europeans on non-European soil (Jiwani, 2006; Razack, 2002; Smith, 1999; Thobani, 2007). According to Razack (2002), “its origins lie in the dispossession and near extermination of Indigenous populations by the conquering Europeans. As it evolves, a white settler society continues to be structured by a racial hierarchy” (p. 1). Such a mythology is characterized by the presence of white Europeans as the primary settlers and developers of the land and as such, leaves Aboriginal peoples to be mostly dead or assimilated (p.2). This violent history of dispossession thus positions white Europeans as the original inhabitants and the ones most entitled to the core tenants of citizenship. In Canada, European conquest and colonization are still denied, a denial that is sustained by the myth that North America was peacefully settled. Canada continues to be haunted by this history as is evidenced by the current plight among Aboriginal peoples, in addition to marking a constant struggle for racialized communities to belong to the nation.
The making of the racial state in Canada is also predicated on two central myths that of multiculturalism and peacekeeping. Multiculturalism in Canada has a complex history. In 1963, the liberal Pearson government established the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, which was mandated to inquire into and report upon the existing state of bilingualism and biculturalism in Canada and to recommend what steps should be taken to develop the Canadian Confederation on the basis of an equal partnership between the two founding races, taking into account the contribution made by the other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada and the measures that should be taken to safeguard that contribution (Royal Commission, 1963).

As McCready (2012) explains, the 1960s and 1970s marked an intense period of social struggle, nation building, economic development and social change in Canada, most notably in the Quiet Revolution that transformed Québec society, but also in terms of civil rights, land rights, anti-racist organizing and anti-imperialist campaigning. McCready (2012) states, “Trudeau’s vision of a “just society” based on cultural pluralism accommodated the linguistically and culturally distinct heritage of Francophones and of Québec through many sweeping reforms, while at the same time defanging Québec nationalism by rendering it one of many culturally distinct groups” (p. 29). In 1969, the Commission’s final report on multiculturalism (rather than the recommended French-and-Anglo bi-culturalism) became an area of government policy, later enshrined in the Constitution, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) and culminating with The Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988).

Official state Multiculturalism was not without criticism. Highlighting these criticisms, McCready states, “[Some of the critics included] Quebec sovereignists who
saw its potential to erode Quebec’s status as an autonomous nation, to conservatives worried about the integrity of the dominant, British Canadian nationalism, to those “other ethnic groups” and those on the left concerned that official multiculturalism does not affect the cultural hegemony of the dominant groups and leaves structures of racism and racial privilege firmly intact” (p. 29-30). In contrast, it has been argued that the vision of Multiculturalism in 1988 encouraged more inclusivity and diversity than when it was simply a language struggle in 1968. If progress has been made, the legacy of state multiculturalism cannot be separated from other government initiatives to mitigate systemic and structural racism such as employment and pay equity, the development of hate crimes legislation, and the establishment of the Human Rights Commissions (now under attack) (see Day, 2000 p. 117-207; Mackey, p. 50-70 in McCready, 2012, p. 30).

Several scholars have rightfully claimed that multiculturalism is not sufficient to end racism or solve Canada’s “ethnic” problems. (Banerjee, 2000; Day, 2000; Razack, 1998; Thobani, 2007; Walcott, 1997). They further argue that modern day multicultural discourse reduces culture to heritage. Furthermore, in times of war, Gilroy (2006) states, “multiculturalism seals communities up in a version of their past bound to fixed forms of hierarchy, that colonial arrangement guarantees nothing by way of commitment to a larger plural identity” (43). This is no less relevant in the Canadian context. Furthermore, as a policy, multiculturalism is inherently racist because it is not inclusive of Aboriginal peoples. As Bourgeois (2009) states,

There are some important problematics attached to discussing the issues of multiculturalism in relationship to Canada’s First Nations. Firstly, Aboriginal peoples are most often addressed separately from official multicultural policy…Furthermore, such policy often explicitly stipulates that First Nation
peoples are ad distinct group requiring special consideration outside of multicultural policy (Garcea 6). As such, Canadian policy makers have long legislated First Nations peoples through policies separate from formal multicultural policy. (p. 40)

This exclusion of Aboriginal peoples outside the framework of official Multiculturalism demonstrates that the construction of Multicultural policy is itself part of the colonial project (Bourgeois, 2009). Canada’s racism and its multiculturalism fundamentally rely on the production of racial difference and exclusion thereby assisting in the constitution of the racial state in Canada.

Canada’s construction as a multicultural and progressive nation continues to serve and facilitate the erasure of violence against Aboriginal peoples. As we are encouraged to celebrate Canada’s diversity, we are also taught to forge an erasure of colonial tactics of rule and the ways in which whiteness operates through the teachings of history, (racist) immigration policies, and public structures of power. Urban spaces like Toronto and Vancouver are notable for their make up of diverse subjects, but the ways in which this diversity gets taken up necessitates a localized amnesia of Aboriginal history. It becomes necessary then to complicate what is at stake in narratives of progress and diversity in a racial state. As we constitute our multicultural place and “celebrate diversity”, not only does racist legislation (such as immigration policies) become difficult to uncover, so too do colonial histories of land theft and the ongoing colonization of the land spaces in which we “celebrate” (Lawrence and Dua, 2006).

Like multiculturalism, the Canadian myth of soldiers as nonviolent peacekeepers continues to dominate the Canadian national imaginary despite Canadians’ understanding of our role in combat missions over the last fifteen years. Critical anti-racist feminist
scholars (such as Sandra Whitworth, Sherene Razack and Cynthia Enloe) have long criticized the degree to which the discourse of peacekeeping serves to mask the militaristic nature of peacekeeping engagements, reinforce militarized masculinity, and more importantly, promote an unrealistic idea of national innocence, benevolence and moral authority. In Chapter Six, I explore in detail the strength of this myth and argue that it is precisely this history of this so-called noble, benevolent enterprise that justifies its more imperial engagements known as peacemaking in the post 9/11 moment.

More recently, the racial state alongside a re-emergent Canadian militarism gives way to particular blatant evictions under the federal government in the name of security. For example, in *Casting Out: The Eviction of Muslims from Western Law and Politics (2008)*, Sherene Razack demonstrates the complex ways in which Muslims in the West are slowly being driven to become today’s exterminables. To illustrate this point she writes, “Globally, while Muslim men have been the target of an intense policing, Muslim women have been singled out as needing protection from their violent and hyper-patriarchal men. The wearing of the hijab in public schools has now been prohibited in France and there are calls to extend the ban to all public spaces” (p.4). What Razack warns us about during these moments of racialized terror is that “the nation state becomes increasingly organized as a fortress, with rigid boundaries and borders that mark who belongs and who does not” (p. 6). Similarly, Thobani (2007) concurs with Razack expressing that,

Casting the nation as primarily western in nature, these measures enable the citizenship rights of (those who look like) Muslims to be suspended by the Canadian state and even stripped away by the American state. The deployment of
the discourse of terrorism in the media, constituting Muslims as the global enemy, is pivotal to the success of this restructuring of nationality and citizenship. (p. 221)

This restructuring of citizenship, explains Thobani, is just one incarnation of how the national subject has been conceptualized in Canada at particular junctures and how specific practices have “exalted” certain subjects over others. Examining how the process of racialization contributes to sustaining the politics of nation formation and national subjectivity, Thobani’s concept of “exaltation” is useful here. Exaltation is the process of delineating the specific human characteristics said to distinguish the nations and its national subjects from others. While Thobani carefully engages with Foucault’s theorization of subject formation within modernity, she argues that the notion of sovereignty in relation to subject formation must be reworked in an analysis of colonial relations. Central to her work then, is how the violence of colonialism transforms into legal structures and is constitutive of western forms of sovereignty. In this way, the Canadian nation was conceived through racial violence, marked by the continual suppression of Indigenous sovereignty which has been a key component of Canadian sovereignty. Throughout Thobani’s analysis, the racial dimension of this national subject comes through clearly when she states, “The sovereign institutionalized the subjugation of Aboriginal Peoples, and the nation’s subjects, exalted in law, where the beneficiaries of this process as members of a superior race, albeit to differing degrees based on class, gender, ethnicity, and other social relations” (p. 61). The technique of exaltation makes it possible for the quintessential Canadian (as caring, tolerant, benevolent, peace loving, law abiding) to exist alongside the systematic disenfranchisement and colonization of
Aboriginal people, its racist immigration policies, and more recently the targeting of “Others” in the name of national security and anxieties over accommodation.

2.7 The Racialized Soldier Subject in Canada

Several scholars have considered race and the military (Ito, 1984; Roy, 1978; Sheffield, 2004; Walker, 1989), but do not include an intensive exploration of the subjectivities of soldiers of colour and what their lived experience reveals about the racial basis to citizenship. The notion that soldiers are “made” rather than born is not a new claim. Writing in 1977, Michel Foucault stated that, “[b] y the late eighteenth century, the soldier has become something that can be made; out of formless clay; an inapt body; the machine required can be constructed” (p. 56). Since then, several scholars have unpacked in detail the ways in which militarized masculine subjects are constituted through particular discursive and performative practices (Arkin & Debrofsky, 2003; Ehrenreich, 1997; Enloe, 2004; Higate, 2003; Hockey, 2003; Karner, 1998; Woodward & Winter, 2007). What much of this writing reflects and describes are the practices soldiers often enact and experience in becoming a soldier (i.e., basic training, hazing rituals, mock combat, etc.) and hence illustrate their transformative effects. For example, the idea that basic training is a “rite of passage”, a period of “identity reformation”, and the forging of a “new self-identity”, marked by a shift from civilian identity to soldier identity, from boy into man. As such, the belief that emerges from several of those writing on militarized masculinities is that something occurs during these training processes of violence that profoundly changes the recruit and makes him a soldier (Belkin, 2011;
The Canadian Forces (CF) is comprised of approximately 62,000 Regular Forces members and 25,000 Reserve Force members including 4,000 Canadian Rangers (Canadian Forces, 2010). Since November 2002, the CF has been governed by legislation under the *Employment Equity Act*, which requires that the CF “achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability” (Treasury Board of Canada, 1995, c. 44, Art 2). As such, the Act necessitates that the CF address employment inequities experienced by a number of “designated groups” including members of “visible minorities” defined as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” (Treasury Board of Canada, 1995, c. 44, Art 2). Despite employment equity legislation, ramped up recruitment drives, and targeted advertising campaigns that have tried to break down the homogenous tradition to attract more women, Aboriginals and racialized bodies, their representation in the CF relative to the general Canadian population remains quite low. A 2011 report indicated that Aboriginals represented a marginal 2.1% of the regular and primary reserves, visible minorities just 4.6%, and women 14.8%. These figures demonstrate a significant under representation of minority bodies in comparison to the CF’s five-year recruitment goals of 3.4%, 11.8% and 25.1%, respectively (Canadian Forces Equity Report, 2011).
Table 1.0: Canadian Forces Employment Equity Representation Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular Forces &amp; Primary Reserves</th>
<th>Regular Force and Reserve Force (Includes Primary Reserves, Canadian Rangers, &amp; COATS)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aboriginal Peoples</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible Minorities</td>
<td>4.1%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Persons with Disabilities</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
</tr>
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Given the statistics above revealing an underrepresentation of soldiers of colour, I was aware from the outset that the subjects of this study, soldiers of colour are a very small minority. There is a lack of visibility among soldiers of colour in the public sphere. One strategy for challenging this invisibility is to begin with the notion of subjectivity. Many scholars have considered race and the military, but they do not include an intensive exploration of the subjectivities of soldiers of colour and what their lived experience reveals about the racial basis to citizenship (Burk, 1995; Burk & Espinoza, 2012; Cowen, 2008; Enloe, 2004; Knouse, 1991; Lundquist, 2008; Nalty, 1986; Schaffer, 2013).

In Sherene Razack’s (2004) chapter entitled, “Outwhiting the White Guys”, she carefully examines the violent actions of two Aboriginal soldiers during the controversial Canadian scandal known as the Somalia affair. Throughout her work she asks two important questions: (1) How does race operate in the understanding of the murder of the Somali teenage boy Shidane Arone? and (2) What kind of explanation can account for the horrible racist violence that occurred on the part of the two Aboriginal soldiers, Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown? Razack carefully argues that in everyday racial formation and
imperial imaginaries of racially dominant Canadian men, the racial state invites them to participate as colonialist actors in African space. Consequently, as Butler (2006) explains, “the national mythology of (colourblind, multicultural) whiteness-as-civility is cracked open to reveal the stark truth that whiteness – a racist identity – can only produce violence and incivility” (p. 103). For Razack then, hegemonic Canadian masculinity is a white supremacist masculinity – a notion that is often denied and/or ignored in the contemporary moment. Similarly, recalling Sunera Thobani’s work on exaltation, it is important to note that it also relies on a process that valorizes and stabilizes white masculinity (formed through the oppression of racial minorities and women). Both Razack and Thobani view this connection as critical to understanding the manner in which colonial nation states are constructed and maintained. However, what is central to Razack’s work is that this mode of racist masculinity is integral to belonging to the nation particularly for racialized bodies:

The terms and conditions of membership in a white nation include that men of colour must forget the racial violence that is done to them. But passing as ordinary men requires more than an act of forgetting. Joining the nation also requires that men actively perform a hegemonic masculinity in the service of the nation. This masculine ideal includes engaging in acts of racial domination. The ideal man is one in who is superior to both women and racial minorities. For racialized minority men, joining the nation requires both forgetting racial violence and engaging in racial violence (p. 90).

This research has taken the issue of forgetting in order to belong seriously and explores the complex negotiations racialized bodies have with respect to national belonging in the context of the Canadian military. While Razack’s work is vital to understanding how bodies of colour are called into participate in the project of empire, we do not have a first
hand understanding of how both Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown actively (and passively) negotiated their aboriginality within the racial state, nor how the Canadian military may have offered them a position of dominance and/or further entrenched their subordination. By speaking with racialized soldiers we gain a deeper understanding of the deep desires, denials, bargains, performances required to belong and in doing so, come to terms with how an institution like the Canadian military encourages and facilitates these negotiations. Following Razack’s logic of forgetting in order to belong, what must racialized bodies forget specifically? What must they remember? How does this forgetting collude with the denial and existence of racism? Complicating this notion of forgetting, Daniel Kim considers the refusal of twenty-one American GIs to return to the United States after the cessation of hostilities in the Korean War. At that time, these soldiers were labeled “turncoats” and traitors by American journalists and politicians. One of the soldiers, Clarence Adams wrote a memoir reflecting on his experience and his inability to forget. In his work, *An American Dream: The Life of an African American Soldier and POW Who Spent Twelve years in Communist China* (2007), Adams asserts that the psyches of black men who fought in Korea were turned into subjects and objects of racial violence long before they entered the military – that their bodies were essentially premilitarized. What do we make of the premilitarized body that needs to forget in order to belong? What does it mean that Clayton Matchee and Kyle Brown were premilitarized? It is these complex negotiations I explore in this thesis.

Expanding on the topic of race and military more broadly, sociologists, particularly in the American context, have argued that the military is model for good race relations (Burk & Espinoza, 2012; Nalty, 1986) in the sense that the American military is
comprised of almost 40% racial minorities. Perhaps, purely on the issue of representation, this might be deemed successful integration and representation; however, I think it is important to interrogate why it has been a good model of race relations considering that scholars have also deemed the military as a site of the deserving poor in an era of racial neoliberalism (Cowen, 2002, 2005; Ehrenreich, 1997). 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 (Burke & Espinoza, 2012; Baldwin, 2006; Friedman, 2006; Gifford, 2005, Maclean, 2010), particularly in the American context, very little work has brought together various bodies of work centering on the lived experience of racialized soldiers and how they negotiate national belonging within the Canadian multicultural context. 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 lived out on a daily basis. How wars and armed conflict produce, naturalize and maintain race, gender and ethnic hierarchies are also instrumental to understanding the racial underpinnings of citizenship. The lived experience of racialized soldiers within a multicultural framework is a key component to the contemporary

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making of the racial state and articulations of citizenship. Focusing on the soldier, Deborah Cowen argues, historically in Canada, modern forms of citizenship have their origins in times of war with the image of the warring worker citizen. The (masculine) soldier, she goes on to explain, “has become the model social citizen whose service has long been associated with the virility and strength of the nation” (p. 7). The expansion for social services among soldiers has been underway for several years in the areas of healthcare, pensions, family policies, recreation facilities, and housing making the military a site for workfare (Cowen, 2008). Therefore, the soldier plays a central role in the puzzle of social citizenship. However, while soldiers are provided elaborate improvements in provisions within militaries, Cowen points out that civilian social welfare has been subject to harsh neoliberal policy in terms of targeting, privatization and minimal social rights.

Defending Canada’s mission in Afghanistan during a press conference at the Halifax armory, Prime Minister Stephen Harper stated: “If a country wants to be taken seriously by the rest of the world, it needs to have the capacity to act. It's just that simple. Otherwise, you forfeit your right to be a player. You're the one chattering on the sideline that everyone smiles at, but no one listens to”.

28 His words are reflective of a shift in the role of the Canadian Forces internationally and the desire to shed Canada’s middle power image on the world stage. On a separate occasion addressing a group of military personnel, Prime Minister Harper (2006) explained, “Soldiering is the highest calling of citizenship not because you are ready to die for your country, though every soldier is

prepared to do that. No, it is the highest calling of citizenship because you are ready to live for your country”. Given Canada’s more aggressive agenda and need to shed its middle power image through the reconfiguration of the Canadian military from its quintessential peacekeeping identity, what might we see? While there are ample studies and literature that discuss the challenges and various strategies to recruiting racial minorities in the military, more often than not, race is taken up as something that needs to be fulfilled in order to capture a diverse workforce (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). Often taken from the perspective of trying to fulfill employment equity standards, these studies do not engage with the material and symbolic effects of race and what that means for citizenship and national belonging. Speaking to the recruitment and specific targeting of bodies for service, Cowen (2008) explains that the challenges of recruitment are complicated by our racial neoliberal moment:

The challenges of military recruitment in the contemporary context are managed in a variety of ways other than through expanding entitlements, but these too have tremendous implications for the social in citizenship. States are relying on entirely different people to do their dirty work than they have before. On the one hand they increasingly employ private military companies to do high skilled ‘security’ work, while on the other hand, they intensify their recruitment of non-citizens into military service. If social citizenship has long been tied to national service, the loosening of those linkages is taking complex forms today. The rupture between

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29 From the vantage point of diversity various studies and research have been conducted with respect to increasing diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces: 1) Department of National Defence, Employment Equity Plan: Building Teamwork in a Diverse Canadian Forces - Schedules - Representation by Distinct Environmental Uniform (Ottawa: DMGIEE, Department of National Defence, 30 September 2003), Schedule - Rep by DEU - Primary Reserves. 2) Delta Partners, Canadian Forces Recruiting Improvement Study, 32. 3) Ewins,"Canadian Forces Applicant Survey...", 4) J.W. Berry, "Canadian Forces Diversity Project: Reserve Baseline Survey" (Kingston: Cross Cultural/Multicultural Associates Inc. 1997), 1. The survey included criteria including multicultural ideology, tolerance and equity attitudes.
citizenship and soldiering suggests epochal changes in familiar social and spatial political forms. (p.206)

What is key here and important to take stock of is the rupture between citizenship and soldiering alluded to by Cowen. It is in this space of rupture where we find racialized soldiers. Where we begin to see the figure of the racialized soldier emerging in the Canadian context is through the examination of active targeted recruitment. Below Cowen (2008) further illustrates this notion of targeted racialized recruitment:

For the US armed forces Latinos are "by far the most promising ethnic group for recruitment, because their numbers are growing rapidly in the US and they include a plentiful supply of low-income men of military age with few other job or educational prospects," Andrew Gumbel reports (quoted in Berkowitz 2003). Canadian military recruitment prioritizes the recruitment of aboriginal people, who offer the irresistible combination of high birth rates, high unemployment rates, and citizenship status to recruiters. At the same time, the military explicitly instructs recruiters not to discuss its own significant violence against aboriginal peoples. The Canadian military has also developed recruitment materials and strategies that target South Asians, Afro-Caribbean Canadians, and lesbians. Meanwhile, the British armed forces have initiated “dedicated minority-ethnic recruiting teams” (Hobsons, 2006).

What becomes evident from Cowen’s analysis is that the figure of the racialized soldier emerges globally in the wake of racial neoliberalism. Specifically, in the North American context these trends become also entangled with issues of securitization. In Cowen and Siciliano’s work on surplus masculinities and security, the boundaries between criminalization, incarceration and militarization are collapsed through the introduction of “moral waivers” to enlist ex-convicts in the armed forces in order to address the severity of recruitment challenges in the United States (p. 1). Given the recruitment challenges,
various amendments in the areas of age, physical and mental fitness, aptitude score and educational attainment, citizenship and now criminal history are considered (Cowen and Siciliano, 2011, p.7). During active recruitment in Canada at the height of the war in Afghanistan, both age and physical fitness requirements were amended. What Cowen and Siciliano rightfully point out is that targeting with respect to military recruitment is also complimented with police targeting to “give rise to a mode of securitized social reproduction” (p. 18). Cowen and Siciliano (2011) explain this connection in the following:

Far too many young people today are extended a choice between prison or military futures’ targeting practice shapes how and for whom that ‘choice’ unfolds. On the one hand we see an aggressive criminalization of poor young men, particularly men of colour, through targeted policing initiatives. Targeted policing works to criminalize the poor people by criminalizing poor neighbourhoods and propels our bulging rates of incarceration to take on a social specificity. On the other hand, the military targets the same surplus populations for recruitment with promises of employment and social security in exchange for service. Even more importantly, the military offers a means of surplus populations to become deserving citizens and avoid a life of criminalization and incarceration. The US military moral waivers liberate surplus masculine subjects from one institution of securitization, propelling them right into another. Indeed, they provide one of the most direct links between processes of criminalization and militarization. (p. 18)

While moral waivers are non-existent in the Canadian context, these blurred boundaries between the police and military should give us pause. Furthermore, management of surplus masculinities is not unfounded in various cities across the nation. In 2008, the securitization of the Caribana parade was fraught with this tension and clash of securitized forces. Cowen and Siciliano’s work is significant because we are able to see
where the racialized soldier features in the military industrial complex, but equally important is the trajectory in which the racialized soldier comes into plain view.

With the implementation of *Canada’s Defense First Strategy (2006)*, the Canadian military has reinvented its remasculinized image. As Allison McCready (2012) states, “the more Canada supports American imperialism through shared military and economic projects, the more it is able to craft for itself a ‘harder,’ more ‘masculine’ national identity and impose its own will on unfortunate global ‘others’” (p.7). This particular version of masculinity compliments an image put forth in their targeted recruitment and harkens a return to the naturalist discourses that resurfaced with respect to race and warfare and related to the racialization of modern armies. In Gavin Schaffer’s (2012) volume entitled *Racializing the Soldier*, he and others analyze the elaborate processes whereby designated races were ascribed with a range of traits encompassing their propensity and attitude towards war and soldiering. He argues that in the imperial world, these ascriptions were clear to see. Although veiled under the guise of security and labour needs, the deliberate targeting of racialized bodies also coincides with a previous racial logic centering on which bodies are most useful in times of war grounded in biological and naturalist of assumptions around race.

In my next chapter, *Methodological Considerations: A Race Cognizant Poststructuralism*, I engage with the central questions that emerge from this literature review and outline the theoretical and methodological tools I use to anchor my research. The questions I posed that emerge from this review will be elaborated in greater detail. I articulate how particular theoretical constructs, such as discourse and subjectivity, are understood and employed in my examination of the conditions of existence for racialized
soldiers. Additionally, I identify my access to selected information that complements the interview data. Finally, I explore the methodological challenges I encounter and techniques I adopt in developing and undertaking my research.
CHAPTER THREE

Methodological Considerations:
Deploying a “Race-Cognizant” Poststructuralism

When I came back from Afghanistan hearing the words 'thank you' from people who didn’t know what I did or saw was an empty gesture. More than anything, I wanted my community to listen to the stories of veterans like myself -- to participate in that moral struggle and gain a deeper awareness of the meaning of war.
   - Brock McIntosh, Afghanistan veteran, US Military

No one wants to hear about death, injury and suffering when you get back. I have had a very hard time with this. Canadians should have an understanding of what our bodies are doing in their name. The gap between civilians and soldiers is big and needs to close.
   - Harvey, Retired Canadian Soldier

I think the reason why people want to talk to you is not because you’re non-white; I think it’s because you’re a civilian. Maybe it’s both, I don’t know, but it’s easier to talk to someone on the outside. But then again, I’m not so sure had you been white, that I would have been so forthcoming.
   - Vanessa, Canadian Soldier, Regular Force

3.1 Introduction

One of the central objectives of this research project was to map out the conditions of existence for racialized soldiers in the Canadian military and to make sense of their everyday lives. More specifically, I ask: How might we understand the racial underpinnings of citizenship, but more importantly how are these conditions lived? How do racialized soldiers negotiate national belonging while serving in the military? As I have mapped out in chapter two, the contemporary moment is one in which Canada has secured for itself a place on the global stage through participation in wars in Afghanistan,

31 Interview with Harvey a retired Canadian soldier conducted on March 14th, 2014.
32 Interview with Vanessa, a regular force Canadian soldier conducted on March 10, 2014.
Iraq, Libya and Syria, including various security, stabilization and training roles across the globe. These activities stand in stark contrast to the historical peacekeeping role that preoccupies and perhaps dominates most Canadians imaginations. Furthermore, these recent campaigns have brought racialized Canadian soldiers into an encounter with racialized populations which places the racialized soldier in a complex, yet contradictory position with respect to citizenship and national belonging.

To explore the experiences of racialized soldiers, I engage in a qualitative, interdisciplinary study based on semi-structured interviews with 25 soldiers. Inspired by the testimony of the Winter Soldiers – a group of American and Canadian soldiers who formed much of the dissent we have heard among those serving on the front lines during the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, I sought to understand how racialized soldiers experienced themselves in an encounter in which race may be said to overdetermine the contours of Canadian engagement. We do not hear much about military encounters as racial encounters. As discussed in chapter two, soldiers, especially currently serving soldiers in the Canadian and American militaries, are often bound by implicit and explicit codes of conduct thereby limiting their own claims to democracy. Borrowing from Nickolas Rose (1999, p.64), Cowen states, that “‘soldiers are employees of society’ and do not necessarily fit the laws of capitalist economy or democratic policy” (2008, p.

33 For a current list of current Canadian Forces operations, see: Website: http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/operations.page

34 The recent incarnations of Winter Soldiers were eyewitness accounts and indictments of the atrocities committed by US troops during the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War. This event was modeled after the historic 1971 Winter Soldier hearings held during the Vietnam War. For further accounts and testimony, see: Glantz, A. & Iraq Veterans Against the War. (2008). Winter Soldier Iraq and Afghanistan: Eyewitness Accounts of the Occupation. Chicago, IL, Haymarket Books.
Understanding that soldiers often forgo certain principles of democracy, this runs the risk of complicating how soldiers are able to express themselves and has implications for how qualitative methodology is deployed with state military and security institutions.

Race is not often examined in studies of soldiering. While there is a growing body of work that takes into account the specificity of soldiers’ lives, the nuanced testimony and lived experience of soldiers of colour are rare and occupy a limited space in the scholarly and mainstream literature on soldiering, citizenship and militarism (Basham, 2013; Eichler, 2014; Lee, 2012; Ware, 2012). Further, the majority of empirical research on war and the armed forces does not concern itself with the feelings, thoughts, emotions and experiences of those trained in violence (Basham, 2013). In light of this absence, the present study recognized the fact that soldiers, more specifically racialized soldiers, have a fragmented identity that is rather nuanced, heterogeneous and shifting. Despite the

35 While the military has become the arbiter of citizenship particularly in the American context, and an important symbol of belonging and nationalism historically and in the present moment, many of the rights that are associated with political belonging within Western liberal democracies do not apply to the soldier. For those that see the “responsibility of the modern citizen as participatory, deliberative and active”, these tenants of citizenship are not so apparent for the soldier (Cowen, 2008, p.17). On the contrary, the promise of citizenship appears to be somewhat of an illusion. As Cowen (2008) illustrates, this compromise she states, “the soldier must suspend political voice (as least in his or her capacity as a soldier), and he or she must suspect expectations of security, safety and freedom of movement. This is indicative of the extent to which the regulations that govern life of the soldier are incompatible with what we think of as citizenship. The doctrine of ‘unlimited liability,’ unique to military work, requires that soldiers be willing to sacrifice their own lives for the nation and stands in ‘dead’ opposition to any concept of individual rights. The soldier is furthermore constituted as residing outside the space of democracy. The soldier follows strict orders from above, or is no longer retained in his or her capacity as a soldier” (p. 17). What is evident in Cowen’s work is the extent to which modern citizenship is denied to the soldier, despite being presented as a site of quintessential belonging. This has particular relevance in my research journey as soldiers continued to participate in this study and continued to illustrate this tension.

36 Over the course of my research, I have observed that there is a chasm, particularly in urban centers between what Canadians understanding about soldiers and military life and the actual lived experiences of Canadian soldiers. I don’t want to suggest here that men and women in the Canadian Forces are passive dupes. Rather, what this research suggests is that people who work for the Canadian military come to it with a variety of viewpoints and opinions that often reflect the general Canadian population. That said, there is a tangible frustration among those serving towards political pundits and academics that do not know anything about the intimacy about military life and the day-to-day nuances of such a subculture.
stereotypical portrayal of soldiers lives in popular culture (Gibson, 1994), and the understanding of a particular kind of homogeneity arguably required for optimal military function, encountering soldiers in the flesh complicated and often times contradicted these claims (Basham, 2013; Whitworth, 2004). Using a poststructural stance means that I am interested in challenging the ideas of fixed meaning, unified subjectivity, and centered theories of power (Weedon, 1999). Moreover, I am interested in understanding the ways in which differences, particularly embedded in modern binaries such a normal/pathological, man/woman, white/Other, are constructed and maintained within discursive strategies. The use of the term “construction” reflects the poststructuralist notion that reality is made and not found, that people construct “reality” through language and cultural practices (Davies, 1994; Weedon, 1997; Wright, 2000).

Broadly understood, feminist poststructuralism is underpinned by the understanding that language and discourse constitute subjectivity. The present methodology relies on a Foucauldian discourse analysis to trace the constitution of knowledge, power and racialized subject formation that emerges from the interviews. Meaning is actively constituted through language and therefore is neither fixed nor essential. Following Foucault (1973), discourses are “regimes of truth” and as such, they specify what can be said or done at particular times and places, they sustain specific relations of power, and they construct particular practices. Foucault’s linking of power to knowledge production is key here, because it questions how power is exercised in the construction of knowledge about the nation and citizenship, how certain types of knowledge and practices are legitimized, and how people are positioned inside or outside
dominant discourses of nationhood and belonging. Conceptualizing a race-cognizant postructuralism, Paula Joan Butler (2004) explains that:

[A] post-structural ‘race-cognizant’ analysis of the discourses that authorize imperialist practices can denaturalize and thus de-legitimize, or render suspect, hegemonic discourses whose power and effectiveness resides in their claims to be natural, neutral and ahistorical. Focusing critical attention on normative representations, narratives, mythologies and social imaginaries that are taken for granted in the everyday culture of “racial states” makes it possible to see those discourses as invested in, and advancing, projects (both national and global) or racial privileging and exclusions”. (p. 55)

A race cognizant poststructuralism then takes into account how a racial state like Canada produces and reproduces particular racialized discourses that make racial privileging and exclusions possible. Furthermore, it also reveals what discourses racialized soldiers have access to and therefore appropriate, accommodate or resist. At this point, I illustrate some key concepts that underpin a race cognizant poststructuralism: subjectivity, power, knowledge and discourse.

3.2 Understanding Subjectivity

A fundamental mechanism by which the global racial-imperialist order is established and sustained is through subject formation. According to Louis Althusser (1970) through the process of interpellation, a subject is “hailed” as a subject to carry out particular roles. This notion of self-making is essential to conceptualizing how macro

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37 I would like to acknowledge that parts of this section on Subjectivity, Discourse, Power and Knowledge are inspired by parts of my theoretical method from my master’s research entitled: George T. (2004). Fusion, Confusion or Illusion: Discursive Constructions of Health, Fitness and Physical Activity among second generation South Asian Canadian women. Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Ottawa.
projects get carried out. For Althusser, interpellation occurred within the parameters of social institutions’ dominant ideologies. Drawing on Althusser and others, feminist poststructuralism shifts the focus from a humanist understanding of identity (where the individual is conceptualized as a rational, cohesive, fixed and unitary actor separate from the social world), to a focus on subjectivity and on how one can participate in creating one’s sense of self. Poststructuralism presents a more complex account of how identities are shaped. Feminist poststructuralists, in particular, bring attention to how the individual actively participates in, negotiates and resists the different “ways to be” that are presented as discursive practices (Weedon, 1997). This theory suggests that individuals do not passively accept their “identifications”, for example, as soldiers, but rather that they draw on “cultural/discursive resources through which the world can be seen and felt and understood in particular ways” (Davies, 1994, p. 19). With these ideas in mind, I sought to understand how racialized soldiers were “hailed” and/or interpellated into particular discourses from which the soldier subject is constituted.

According to Weedon (1997), the terms “subject” and “subjectivity” are essential to poststructuralist theory as they point to the social construction of individual identity. In poststructuralist theory, the subject is produced in language and remains in the constant process of being produced and reproduced. Subjectivity then, is unstable and contradictory. As Weedon (1997) states:

The individual is both a site for a range of possible forms of subjectivity and, at any particular moment of thought or speech, a subject, subjected to the regime of a particular discourse and enabled to act accordingly. (p. 34)
She goes on to define subjectivity as “the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her way of understanding her relation to the world” (p. 32). A poststructuralist conceptualization of subjectivity is quite different from the Western liberal discourse of the self-determined individual. This notion of subjectivity rather begs the understanding that individuals are not free to be whatever they want to be and that their choices are dependent on the different discourses available at a certain time and space. Similarly to Weedon’s notion of subjectivity, Bronwyn Davies (1994) provides the following regarding the fundamental nature of subjectivity:

An individual’s subjectivity is made possible through the discourses she or he has access to. Once we have understood the constitutive force of discourse, however, then the detailed ways in which any one person experiences becomes a person can be examined, not just to see what the specificity of that person is, but to see the common threads through which being a person, or being male, or being female—white or black is accomplished. Examining any individual’s subjectivity is thus a way of gaining access to the constitutive effects of the discursive practices through which we are all constituted as subjects and through which the world we live in is made real. (p. 3)

According to Davies (1994), subjectivity is something at which we work, something we negotiate and accomplish through the various discursive systems available. She argues that for example, being male or female is accomplished through various dominant discourses of femininity and masculinity that aid in the production of what is known as “maleness” and “femaleness,” particularly meanings that are relevant to specific social and cultural contexts. Therefore, it could be argued that the notion of being a racialized soldier in Canada is constantly negotiated through various discourses of nationhood, multiculturalism, belonging, racial stereotypes, masculinity and heteronormativity, for
example. The changing and shifting of identity is possible when one accepts that
subjectivity and identity are constructed through discourses and can be reconstituted with
the emergence of new discourses or with the acquisition of new subject positions.
Weedon (1997) explains that, “A poststructuralist position on subjectivity and
consciousness relativizes the individual’s sense of herself by making it an effect of
discourse which is open to continuous redefinition and which is constantly slipping” (p. 102).

Although, poststructuralism rejects the idea of the fixed, unitary subject stemming
from the humanist discourse, poststructuralists do acknowledge that individuals play a
vital role in defining their subjectivity because they have the capacity to act. What makes
subjectivity open to change, in addition to making it fluid, dynamic and fragmented, is
one’s agency. As Weedon (1997) explains,

Although the subject in postructuralism is socially constructed in discursive
practices, [he] or she nonetheless exists as a thinking, feeling subject and social
agent, capable of resistance and innovations produced out of the clash between
contradictory subject positions and practices. [He] or she is also a subject able to
reflect upon the discursive relations which constitute [his] or her and the society
in which she lives, and able to choose from the options available. (p. 121)
The idea of choice is important here. Individuals make choices not because they pertain
to their “true nature” but because they ascribe to discourses available to them at a specific
time and within a cultural context. This is not to be confused with an inner self that is
determined by the individual or an existential notion of control agency involves making
choices. Barker and Galasinski (2001) explain:
Agency is the socially constructed capacity to act; nobody is free in the sense of the undetermined (in which event one could not “be” at all). Nevertheless, agency is a culturally intelligible way of understanding ourselves as we clearly have the existential experience of facing and making choices. We do act even though, those choices and acts are determined by biological and cultural forces, particularly language. (p. 46)

While people still have alternatives from which to choose, these alternatives may be limited. Some choices may be restricted by virtue of one’s race, gender, class, sexuality or ability. Drawing on Razack’s (1998) important work and central to this dissertation is how an interlocking system of oppression and opportunity structure discursive practice, rendering particular subject positions differently accessible across diverse social locations. Interestingly, the choice to join the military is more readily available for some than it is for others. How this “choice” to join the military readily becomes an option is in large part impacted by the discourses available. Throughout this particular research, some of the dominant discourses around hegemonic masculinity, success, meritocracy, civic duty, whiteness and security framed these soldiers’ decision to join the military. Yet, agency allows for change and action. As long as new language and discourses surface to offer new subject positions, the possibility for re-inventing ourselves is endless (Barker & Galasinski, 2001). That is to say, if young racialized men and women had more options at their disposal both in terms of the material and symbolic, to belong and participate as good, productive citizens without the option of giving up their lives, then perhaps joining the military would not be a viable option. Alternatively, if racialized subjects had more discursive options within the military itself from which racialized difference was not seen as a threat to homogeneity, operational effectiveness and the larger social order, then
perhaps soldiers of colour would not be positioned within such intense contradictions around citizenship and national belonging. As such, the flexibility of language and discourse reformulations benefits not only individual subjectivity, but also social change. The creation of other, alternative discourses is available within the realm of possibility.\footnote{While I argue for a race cognizant poststructuralism in this thesis, it is important to note that poststructuralism is not without critique. It has been criticized for paying insufficient attention to the corporeal or embodied aspect of subjectivity (Sykes, 2009). Since the early 2000s, new areas of critical theorizing of the body and subjectivities have emerged. This area has been described as ‘postmodern body studies’ which seeks to redress this disembodied trend in poststructural research (p. 8). This becomes key to war work, as it has been argued that “war is fundamentally embodied” (Wool, 2015). With thousands dead, injured and suffering loss and/or disability, there is validity to these claims. As such, one of the biggest criticisms levied against poststructuralism is the idea that not everything can be conceived of in terms of discourse. The notion of poststructural critique begins to become unstable when we try to understand the notion of embodiment.}

In summary, poststructuralism rejects the idea of a unified, self-determined subject put forth by the Western liberal discourse. Rather, poststructuralism acknowledges that people have the potential to think, act and resist through the exercise of agency. Subjectivities are socially constructed and constituted within discourses and are open to change. Because they are fluid, contradictory and constantly shifting in nature, the possibility of re-articulating oneself is infinite. Therefore, experience is the result of interpretation and it does not have meaning in and of itself. Rather, people give meaning to their lives and their experience by taking up a particular subject position within a discourse.

3.3 Discourse, Power and Knowledge

The concept of discourse was developed by Michel Foucault (1976, 1979) to understand the specific ways in which knowledge is organized. Throughout this dissertation, I draw on his understandings and interpretation of the concept. Discourses
offer ways of thinking and ways of giving meaning. However, it is important to note that meaning does not pre-exist language, but that meaning is constituted or constructed within language. Language is reflective of certain discourses that offer different versions of events. As such, meanings or definitions are not fixed; rather, they are temporary, open to change and historically and culturally specific. Within feminist poststructuralism, it is understood that language and discourse constitute subjectivity and experience and that the latter do not have meaning in themselves outside of discourse. Furthermore, Weedon’s (1997) feminist poststructuralism is particularly influenced by the Foucauldian idea that language is always located in discourse. Discourse refers to an interrelated “system of statements which cohere around common meanings and values that are a product of social factors, of powers and practices, rather than an individual’s set of ideas” (Gavey, 1989, p. 34). That is to say, discourses can be defined as historically constructed regimes of knowledge. These include the common-sense understandings, assumptions, taken-for-granted ideas, belief systems, and myths that groups of people share and through which they understand each other. Discourses convey formal and informal knowledge as well as ideologies that are constantly being reproduced and constituted. As Mama (1995, p. 98) explains, “A discourse is a shared grid of knowledge that one or more people can ‘enter’ and through which explicit and implicit meanings are shared”. In this sense, a discourse is something that produces something else; for example, an utterance, a concept or an effect, rather than something that exists and can be analyzed in isolation. Discourses can be identified because of the systematic nature of the ideas, opinions, concepts, and ways of thinking and behaving that are formed within a particular context. The effects as a result of the thinking and behaving also aid in the identification of discourses (Mills,
1997). For example, there is a specific set of discourses for what it means to be a “good” and “loyal” soldier, which are articulated by individuals to define themselves as such. The discursive construction of what has been termed as the “military ethos” demarcates the boundaries within which we can negotiate what it means to be a “good”, “effective” and “dutiful” soldier within the military context. As a result, it is these discourses that subjects engaged with when coming to understand themselves as soldier citizen subjects.

In terms of discourses having effects, it is important to consider these effects in terms of power and knowledge. It is through discourse that power relations are established and perpetuated. Power, is therefore a key element in discussions of discourse. Discourses position individuals in relation to one another socially, politically and culturally. They exist within and transmit networks of power, with the dominant discourses exercising their hegemony by echoing the institutionalized and formal knowledges, assumptions and ideologies (Mama, 1995). However, alternative discourses also exist in contradiction to the dominant ones; they subvert the dominant symbolic order and serve to empower oppressed groups with alternative cultural practices and ideologies. In this sense, discourses are not only capable of reproducing cultural content, but also power relations— notably relations of oppression, subordination and resistance.

While I do not support a position that knowledge necessarily leads to the desired behaviors, I would support that this knowledge still has an effect. Following Foucault (1972, 1973, 1979b), I suggest that knowledge defines subjects and that discourse refers not only to the meaning of language but also to the real effects of language-use. In other words, discourses specify what can be said or done at particular times and places; they sustain specific relations of power and construct particular practices. For Foucault, power
is not possessed by a dominant class, or the state, nor is it imposed coercively. Instead power is diffuse, ubiquitous and capillary-like, permeating all aspects of social life Foucault’s notion of power is described as “omnipresent; circulating in through a network of individuals” (Rail & Harvey, 1995, pp. 165-166). As Foucault (1980) comments:

But in thinking of the mechanisms of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives. (p. 39)

As Foucault explains, power is exercised through ordinary, everyday activities, gaining access to individuals themselves, their bodies, their mannerisms and their every day actions. For Foucault, power is not primarily located in structures, rather institutions act as specific sites where particular techniques of power are brought to bear on individuals in specific ways. The military for example, becomes a disciplinary site which draws on certain regimes of truth (discourses) to justify its existence and characterize what it does. As various authors explain, particular practices soldiers often enact and experience in becoming a soldier such as basic training, hazing rituals, mock combat, and fitness regimes can work to produce ‘normalizing’, ‘regulating’, ‘classifying’, and ‘surveillance’ effects (Wellend, 2011; Enloe, 1999; 2004).

Therefore, Foucault’s linking of power with the production of knowledge is essential here. Foucault’s work on the complex pattern of power and knowledge relationships reveals how the individual is produced in discourse. Power then, makes individual subjects, particularly free subjects. According to Foucault (1982, p. 221), “Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this I
mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments may be realized.” Through this, Foucault demonstrates how disciplinary power can only function with people who have choices.

Following Foucault (1972, 1973, 1979b), I contend that power is exercised rather than held and that power can be productive as well as repressive. This generates questions about how power is exercised in the construction of knowledge about war, militaries and soldiering in addition to what kinds of knowledge and practices are legitimized, about racialized men and women in combat and how they are constituted and positioned.

Highlighting how Foucault’s conception of power is exercised, Healy (2005) states,

Foucault invites us to shift our analysis from a focus on who possesses power to the consideration of how power is exercised from specific social locations and by specific people. Recognizing that power is exercised rather than possessed also allows us to acknowledge and expand possibilities for relatively powerless groups to exercise power. (p. 203)

Understanding how power is exercised in the lives of racialized soldiers is central to this research study. Furthermore, critical race scholars (Goldberg, 1993, 2008; Hook, 2001; Razack, 2008; Thobani, 2010) anchor my analysis by providing a framework to explore how domination operates through racialized discourses. I have chosen a “race-cognizant” feminist poststructuralist stance for this research because I believe that in conjunction with a critical race theory and postcolonialism, it is best to address sites of gendered, classed and racialized politics. It does so by recognizing the importance of language as a tool with which to construct the world. In addition, a race cognizant poststructuralism takes into account the subjective experience by delving into how one
acquires such experience and, in doing so, acknowledges the variety and multiplicity of discourses and subject positions available within the racial state. With that, it also examines issues of power and how they are embedded in discourses and subject positions. Finally, a race cognizant poststructuralism recognizes how and where resistance can occur in addition to legitimizing the importance of agency and how it is exercised.

3.4 Methodology

This study is based on one-on-one semi-structured interviews with soldiers who identified as racialized in the Canadian military situated in the regions of Toronto, Ottawa and Halifax. Throughout this study, I sought to understand how soldiers’ racial positioning shapes their experience of the military, their relationship to military life, citizenship, and organized violence more broadly. This process entailed posing questions to explore the values placed on military service as a profession, what it means to be a soldier in the post 9/11 moment, their experiences with training (specifically with The Standard for Harassment and Racism Prevention Program and cross cultural training pre-deployment), and their encounters with racism. Their experiences of being a racialized subject in a predominantly white space (Chapter Four) and how they themselves constitute “diversity” (Chapter Five) are central to this dissertation. Moreover, I asked questions about their nuanced encounters with racism with fellow soldiers, superiors, civilians, and during their deployment overseas to trace the complex expressions of whiteness operating in the Canadian military and in the post 9/11 moment. My interview guide was divided into several sections (Appendix A). First, I asked general questions, about soldiers’ rank, position and general interest in the Canadian military. I then posed questions related to
recruitment and joining the military. I was interested in what brought them from civilian to military life, or alternatively from civilian to the reserve force and then their subsequent move to the regular force, if relevant. I asked about their transition, what it entailed and many offered details for their reasons for joining and the heavy bureaucracy with respect to acquiring admission into the military proper. I then moved on to posing questions about their experiences within the military itself centering on job satisfaction, their relationships with their peers, experiences with basic training and other required training within the military. Within that framework I was able to pose questions with respect to the construction of masculinity and femininity, the archetypes of femininity that were put forth, what it meant to be a “good” soldier and general questions about the military ethos, and what it meant to serve and sacrifice their lives for specific state causes. I then moved to questions with respect to the process of racialization and how race and racism were taken up in the military. If earlier on in the interview a participant offered me an indication of where race presented itself, I often probed along those lines. I asked about diversity and how they understood multiculturalism in the military, about how race operates within the military and for the most part, participants were forthcoming with their thoughts and analysis. My interviews ended with a discussion about their experiences with deployment and their thoughts about how they were perceived in their respective operations and missions. Those that returned home from deployment spoke to me about Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD) and the challenges of service and military life during times of war.
The Sample

Currently, the Canadian Forces is comprised of approximately 63,000 Regular Forces members and 25,000 Reserve Force members, including 4,000 Canadian Rangers (Canadian Forces Equity Report, 2011). Since November 2002, the Canadian Forces has been governed by legislation under the Employment Equity Act, which requires that the CF “achieve equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability” (Treasure Board of Canada, 1995, c. 44, Art 2). As such, the Act necessitates that the CF address employment inequities experienced by a number of “designated groups” including members of “visible minorities” defined as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour” (Treasure Board of Canada, ’995, c. 44, Art 2). Despite employment equity legislation, ramped up recruitment drives, and targeted advertising campaigns that have tried to break down the homogenous tradition to attract more women, Aboriginals and racialized bodies, their representation relative to the general Canadian population remains quite low. The Canadian Forces Equity Report (2011) report indicated that Aboriginals represented a marginal 2.1% of the regular and primary reserves, visible minorities just 4.6% and women 14.8%. These figures demonstrate a significant under representation of minority bodies in comparison to the CF’s five-year recruitment goals of 3.4%, 11.8% and 25.1% respectively. While this project does not explicitly focus on how to make the Canadian Forces more appealing to minority bodies in the military, these figures are instructive from both an Employee
Equity perspective and the Canadian military’s historical strategies around recruitment.\(^{39}\) Furthermore, this research project goes one step further and explores the experiences and social processes of those who have made the decision to join the Canadian military.

Given the statistics revealing an underrepresentation of soldiers of colour, I was aware from the beginning that the subjects of this study, soldiers of colour, are a very small minority. I interviewed 25 men and women from the Canadian Forces who identified as racialized.\(^{40}\) For the purposes of this project and in my Request to Participate in Research (Appendix B), “racialized” was defined as anyone who identified as a person of colour who identified as Black, South Asian, East Asian, African Canadian, Middle Eastern, Indo-Canadian, non-white and/or mix race, or Aboriginal. As discussed in Chapter Two, a racialized subject is one that has “racial significance” (Goldberg, 2004). I refer to the social construction of race and gender and the historical, economic, political, and cultural processes through which modernist categories of race are (re)produced. The concept of racialization emphasizes that all designated racial categories are performed and historically produced. Racialization reveals the processes wherein, for example, black subjects become racialized subjects and other bodies become racially unmarked as white. Furthermore, while the Canadian forces are divided into the Navy, Army and Air force, this particular study drew on men and women who identify from racialized communities participating in the Canadian Army and Navy. It is well known that the military culture differs between the three areas (Army, Air Force, and


Navy) and as such, I have chosen to focus primarily on the Army and a few members of
the Canadian Navy, and included those currently serving, those in the reserve force, and
retired soldiers. While I did not actively solicit active duty soldiers, there were six
currently serving, active duty soldiers that requested to participate and share their
experiences within the Canadian military. As such, I have not excluded them from the
participating in this research.\textsuperscript{41} The following breakdown illustrates the demographics of
the participants interviewed for this study:

- 14 men of colour
- 11 women of colour
- 2 identified as LGBTQ
- 6 identified as black
- 4 identified as East Asian
- 2 identified as South Asian
- 2 identified as West Indian
- 4 identified as Latino
- 7 identified as mixed race
- 7 identified as currently serving in the Regular Force, also known as the “Reg
  Force,”; they consist of full-time service members in the CF. Regular Force

\textsuperscript{41} This project from the outset intended to interview retired and reserve soldiers as I was cautioned that
there were potential difficulties with respect to speaking with soldiers who are currently serving or who
have returned from deployment; partly due to access and more recently, due to reasons of national security
(Monaghan, 2014). While the University of Toronto Ethics Board acknowledges that formal permission
from the Canadian Forces was not required, I as a researcher was extra cautious with respect to whom I was
soliciting for this research. However, shortly after I began this project, I was approached by active duty
soldiers who expressed interest in this research study and I did not exclude them from participating. They
were briefed about informed consent and had the freedom to withdraw at anytime. Out of the 25 men and
women interviewed for this research, 6 deployed to either Iraq or Afghanistan and were completely aware
of their participation and the risks involved in sharing their experiences with me.
members are ready to respond and deploy at a moment’s notice to threats, natural disasters or crises at home and abroad.

- 9 identified as currently serving in the Reserve Force. These members serve part time in the Canadian Forces and their main role is to support the Regular Force at home and abroad. Reservists typically serve one or more evenings a week and/or during weekends at locations close to home. Reserve soldiers have the option of deploying on a volunteer basis depending on the vacancies available to them.

- 9 identified as Retired soldiers from the CF

Access to racialized soldiers is not an easy or straightforward feat. As I alluded to earlier in this thesis, my interest in the military industrial complex and the lives of soldiers is the result of the culmination of a series of experiences with respect to the impacts of Canadian and American militarism and my involvement with the Canadian military proper. About fifteen years ago, I held a summer contract with the Defence and Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine (currently, the Defence Research and Development Canada - DRDC) located at the Canadian Forces Base in Toronto (formerly, CFB Downsview) working with children of military families in my capacity as “youth councilor, sport and recreation specialist”.

The Canadian Forces continue to maintain a significant presence in the Toronto area with Regular and Reserve Force units, including Land Force Central Area Headquarters, which is responsible for army activities across Ontario. Toronto is also the home to units which support operations, research, recruiting, education and youth programs. DRDC Toronto is currently a major research centre for the Canadian Forces. The relationships I have previously established with
members of the Canadian Forces at large are mainly through my work experience with
the *Defence and Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine* working with children whose
parents were in the military and provided me with access to this often times complex,
heavily bureaucratic and securitized research field. As I continue to be in contact with
many of these people, now retired or in the reserve force, I am often aware of many of the
events that are being planned and have been invited to participate on various occasions.
Through the “snowball sampling method” the contacts I have made introduced me to
other members in the group whom I invited to participate in the conversations.42 It is
through this method that I was introduced to key members in each of these branches who
introduced me to other key members and whom I invited to participate in the second
stage of data collection.

Participants were quite diverse in terms of age, ranging from 23 to 67 years of age
and primarily located in urban centres. These participants were primarily contacted in the
Ottawa and Toronto region because of my familiarity and accessibility to these areas
which also meant that the majority of my participants were urban dwellers. Two other
interviews were conducted with retired members of the CF located in Halifax, Nova
Scotia. I aimed to interview soldiers currently in the reserve force and/or those who were
retired from the CF because I had been warned about the fraught nature of research with
currently serving soldiers during times of war, specifically pertaining to issues of national

42 In snowball sampling the researcher collects data on the few members of the target population they can
locate and then asks those individuals to provide the information needed to locate other members of that
Canada Limited). This method is appropriate for this research as it establishes a certain degree of trust
between myself and the participants with whom I do not have a pre-established relationship – a trust on the
part of the participants that this is a collaborative work between myself and them in which, together, we
will co-construct understandings of national belonging, citizenship, racialized subjectivity and their
experiences within the Canadian Forces.
security While racialized soldiers only comprise about 4.6% of the Canadian forces, there is greater diversity in both Ottawa and Toronto. A notable exclusion in this data set is Aboriginal and Muslim soldiers. While my call for participants specifically invited Aboriginal soldiers to participate, none responded, possibly due to the geographical locations of the study. No one in the sample identified as Muslim. The absence of Aboriginal and Muslim soldiers reveal an important limitation with respect to theorizing military and state violence in the contemporary moment, and will be examined in future work.  

Recruitment Procedures

Data was collected between November 2013 and June 2014. Appropriate contacts with the military community, primarily in Ottawa, Toronto and Halifax were made with the use of a presentation text that took the form of a short oral presentation either in person or via email recruitment from friends and family with connections in the Canadian military (see Appendix B). The text was used to highlight the purpose and goals of this study in an attempt to gauge interest in the subject matter. Men and women who demonstrated an interest in participating in the study received a recruitment form asking demographic questions (i.e., age, nationality, and country of origin, present status in the military) and leaving a space for the potential participant to write down his or her phone

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43 Since the inception of this project, I have come to realize the importance of Aboriginal soldiers to this project. While I stress the importance of them in the national conversation about soldiering and warfare in Canada, I have also come to realize that this is also a separate project because of their relationship to the land, colonial violence and the Canadian military historically. My next project will aim to examine the relationship between Aboriginal soldiers and settler colonialism in order to further understand the connection and relationship of violence at home and abroad.
number or email address (see Appendix C). Potential participants were contacted by phone and/or email and asked to participate in an in-depth conversation lasting between 1.5-2 hours at a time and at a location of their convenience.

Participation in this study was strictly on a voluntary basis. To ensure this, prior to the commencement of each conversation, the participant was required to sign two copies of a consent form complying with the requirements of the University of Toronto Ethics Committee and explaining in detail the basis for participation in the study (see Appendix D). One copy was for the participant and the other copy was kept for me and will be destroyed up completion of the study.

All conversations were recorded with the use of a digital audio recorder, transcribed and organized with the assistance of the QRS NUD*IST software program. This software program was chosen because it allows for transcribed data to be organized and coded in systematic fashion. After the conversations were recorded and transcribed, the participants were asked to take part (at their discretion) in an informal meeting to re-read the conversation transcript and further assess what was discussed. I also provided the opportunity for all participants to read over a copy of their transcript and to send me in writing any comments or concerns they had with the interview. A total of six participants accepted to sit with me and re-read their transcripts. At this time, some had questions about the research process and others further clarification and elaboration to their statements. I also used this opportunity for clarification on certain discussion points. When adjustments or clarifications were needed, I made note of these modifications on the transcript itself. Furthermore, if there were certain elements of the conversation that
the participant did not want to be disclosed, this meeting provided the opportunity for the participant to both voice his or her concerns and validate their conversation transcript.

**Transcription**

A growing number of voices emerging from the literature on transcription calls for more reflexive stance vis-à-vis the representative and interpretive nature of transcription (Kvale, 1996; Polland, 2002). As a text, the transcript is frequently seen as unproblematic and given privileged status that often goes unquestioned. It is for this reason, that a reflexive stance coupled with several other strategies, were devised in order to further develop transcription quality.

Although transcribing is a lengthy process, transcribing all the data myself allowed for me to become immersed in the data and get a "sense of the whole" (Patton, 2002). However, there is a discrepancy between the written record (i.e., the transcript) and the digital tape recording of the research conversation upon which it is based. Therefore, this idea of being able to recapture the interview as a whole is misleading because there are many aspects of interpersonal interaction and nonverbal communication that are not captured by the recording. Therefore, the audio recording itself is strictly not a verbatim record of the interview. Some of those “unknowns” that may not be captured when transcribing include body language, facial expressions, eye gazes, nods, smiles or frowns and grimaces, the physical setting, the ways the participants are dressed and other factors affecting the tone of the interview (Polland, 2002). Furthermore, when aspects of an emotional context are expressed with an oral component, such as intonation, pauses, sighs and laughter, these are not always accurately conveyed in the written transcript.
These all play a vital role in communication because they ultimately affect the meanings and knowledge being produced. In this particular study, as much as possible, these mannerisms, changes of tone, modes of dress were noted in a notebook over the course of the conversation. Throughout the interview process, I kept an ongoing journal containing some of my thoughts and reflections that took place during the interview to further provide context to the transcript itself. This often proved useful to recapture the context and the mood of the interview.

It is also important to note that the transcript as a text is open to various alternative readings and interpretations with every new reading. The interview itself is a co-construction between the researcher and the participant, but once the interview has been transcribed and recorded as a text, with every fresh reading there is another co-production of knowledge between what has been conveyed by the interview itself and the new reading. Therefore, the socially constructed nature of the research interview as a “coauthored conversation-in-context” must be acknowledged, instead of portrayed as a piece of data about the interviewee, captured at a certain moment in time (Polland, 2002, p. 635).

Acknowledging that the interview itself is a co-construction and recognizing that there are vital details often overlooked in the transcription, this study attempted to use a detailed notation system to help alleviate some of the ambiguities in interpretation. For example, the inclusion of significant laughter, sighs, and pauses were indicated on the transcripts. Furthermore, pauses and interjections such as “yes-umm” and “uh-huh” were indicated as such. Capitals indicated loud sounds and field notes were employed to record any notable actions that may not have been captured on the recording device. As
much as possible, a standardized syntax was used for reliable encoding of the transcript (Polland, 2002). By enhancing the quality of transcription in this study, the analysis was improved in its rigorousness, thoroughness and consistency.

Working with soldiers in state militaries can be a stressful and a sensitive issue and therefore protecting their confidentiality and privacy was of utmost importance to me. It was necessary that I maintain their anonymity. Thus, the actual names of these men and women will not be used in any academic publication of the data. Individuals were provided with the option to maintain personal anonymity and for those who chose to do so, pseudonyms are used in the presentation of the data and in any academic publication of the data going forward. In some cases, some soldiers (mostly retired soldiers) did not require their anonymity be protected and encouraged me to use their first names. To maintain the participants’ confidentiality, all participants were provided with the opportunity to review the conversation transcripts as well as the observational notes of the meetings and interviews attended. At their request, any information which compromised their anonymity, privacy or their position within the Canadian Forces was removed or altered.

3.5 The Narratives: Concurrent Data Collection and Analysis

This study aimed for an iterative interplay between data collection and analysis throughout the period of data collection. Thus the analysis was continuous and ongoing. As Miles and Huberman explain, qualitative research procedures incorporate both inductive and deductive analysis: “When a theme, or pattern is identified inductively, the researcher then moves into verification mode, trying to confirm or qualify the finding”
(p. 431). This particular qualitative analysis led to the interpretation of analytical categories or themes which described the particulars and nuances of the data. After each interview, it was transcribed, reviewed, read several times, and compared with the notes and reflections I made during the interview process. Any modifications or clarifications that were made by the participant upon the re-reading of the transcript were made at this point, after which the transcript was transferred to the QRS NUD*IST software program. With the aid of this qualitative data software problem, I began the process of describing, thematically classifying and interpreting the data. Throughout this process, I looked for themes emerging from the narratives and later grouped them into categories reflecting similar ideas. Furthermore, my analysis comprised the identification of “sources” of institutional and cultural discourses on imperialism, neoliberalism, masculinity and whiteness and nationhood, that the participants drew from to use and construct their social worlds. Throughout this thesis, I use the term “narrative,” or “account” interchangeably to capture the lived experience of racialized soldiers. In choosing to study these experiences, I understand that soldiers (and people general) organize their lives through known storylines and/or discourses. As Scott puts forth, instead of using experience as the “origins of our explanation,” we instead should conceptualize experience as “that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced”. Alternatively then, “it is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are continued through experience” (Scott, 1992, p. 25 in Sztainbok, 2009, p. 42). Discourse is therefore central to the study of experience because “[s]ubjects are constituted discursively, experience is a linguistic event (it doesn’t happen outside established meanings), but neither is it confined to a fixed order of meaning” (Scott, 1992, p. 34).
The identification of themes enabled me to identify the dominant discourses that weaved through the soldiers’ narratives. Goldberg (1993) defines dominant discourses as “those that in the social relations of power at any given moment come to assume authority and confer status – reflect the material relations that render them dominant. They articulate these relations, conceptualize them, give them form, express their otherwise unarticulated and inarticulate values” (p. 194). Goldberg’s understanding of dominant discourse alongside Foucault, Weedon and Davies’ notion of discourse and its relationship to power, knowledge and subjectivity inform how I read and analyzed the interview data. I mapped out and located themes that identified what it means to be a soldier in the contemporary moment with a critical eye towards how race, whiteness and racism shape and constitute this experience. Furthermore, by mining the data to map common themes and constructs used, I attempted a critical discourse analysis bolstered by historicizing the data. The manner in which I have “read” the soldiers’ narratives is to locate various dominant discourses circulating and underpinning their negotiations to belonging (i.e. respectability, civility, freedom, nationhood, whiteness) in historical, political and social contexts in order to draw attention to the interlocking systems of power informing them. In doing so, I am able to tease out what racialized subject positions are made possible.

Also central to how I read the data, Bronwyn Davies (2000) offers a way of understanding narratives so that they are not taken as foundational, but are understood as connected to systems of knowledge production. Davies suggests that we come to understand ourselves through narratives or storylines that draw upon available discourses. Building upon Foucault’s (1972; 1977; 1980b; 1982) conception that discourse constructs knowledge, for Davies (2000, p. 57), “stories are the means by which events are
interpreted, made tellable, or even liveable. All stories are understood as fictions, such fictions providing the substance of lived reality” (p. 57). A subject is positioned through and positions him/herself through available storylines. For example, one available storyline for a female soldier is that she is incapable of combat and engaging on the frontlines of warfare. For Davies, such a storyline has the power to shape a notion of the self, particularly if a woman feels interpellated by that particular narrative. However, following Razack (2004), she cautions us that narratives are not the same as personal stories. Rather, building on the work of Tal (1996), Razack contends that narratives are “codified” stories and goes on to argue that the process of deconstructing narratives necessitates “separating the experiences of individuals from the way their stories are assembled for our consumption” (Razack, 2004, p. 18 in Badwall, 2013, pp.37-38). Therefore, tracing particular signifiers within the narratives requires dismantling the productive function of the story. To illustrate an example, this thesis centers on the narratives of national belonging, lived experience and citizenship which may signify other notions such as whiteness and violence, but as Badwall (2013) suggests, these notions are often concealed when practices such as civic duty, helping and loyalty are depicted as natural and key practices or experiences (p.38). This distinction of narratives as codified scripts is central here. As Badwall states, “Stories about racism are discursively codified to allow certain stories about racism to be told and not others. These stories are also productive in the Foucauldian senses since they produce particular kinds of subjects” (p. 38). Therefore, the concepts of storylines and narratives are useful to this research design in order to grapple with how notions of stories and experience are produced through language practices that in turn have a bearing on knowledge production.
and how subjects are ultimately constituted.

A discourse analysis with a critical focus on race allows for ways in which text and talk produce hegemonic racial ideas that further entrench and enable the structural reproduction of the racial social order. Building on this idea, and the concept of discourse in general, Goldberg’s (1993) conceptualization of “racialized discourse” is useful here. Often deployed to characterize the race logic and specific racisms, racialized discourses refer to “racialized expressions that arise in analyzing and explaining the historical formations and logics of race thinking and reference, as well as racisms” (p. 41). Based on Goldberg’s understanding of racialized discourse, he continues by stating “both race and racism are objects of discourse which dually create the conceptual terrain of race thinking and expression” (Goldberg as cited in Badwall, 2013, p. 41). These conceptualizations and analysis lead me to an understanding of the different discourses at play, the subject positions these discourses offer, the power or powerlessness embedded in these positions, as well as the subject positions these racialized men and women take up in various discourses.

Drawing on Goldberg’s conceptualization of racialized discourse is central to this thesis and provides an important lens from which I was able to analyze the data. That said, I want to also point out that while racialized discourses are central to the methodology of this thesis, an interlocking analysis of power, committed to examining how different forms of oppression “help to secure one another” (Razack, 1998, p. 13) is also vital. For Razack (1998), an interlocking analysis explores how subject-formation and practices of domination never operate outside of one another, but rather constitute one another. Within this research, race, gender, class and sexuality are held in
constellation with one another throughout my analysis. Military involvement, warfare, soldiering and violence are key features of Canadian colonial and imperial projects. How gender, class and sexuality feature in the making of the nation historically is not separate from our understanding of its colonial and imperial desires in the present (Basham, 2012; Enloe, 2004; Razack, 2008; Ware, 2013). Therefore, how racialized discourse operates cannot be disconnected from issues of gender, class and sexuality and will be addressed accordingly in this thesis. Goldberg’s (1993) methodology coupled with post-structural feminists’ conceptualizations of power, knowledge and subjectivity and an interlocking analysis of power (Razack, 1998), effectively work together to structure my engagement, reading and interpretation of the interviews with racialized soldiers.

3.6 Other Sources of Data: Access to Information Act

Conducting research with and on the military apparatus is not an easy feat and presents a number of roadblocks especially in times of war. Since Canada’s involvement in Iraq, Afghanistan, Haiti, and now Syria, and the emergence of mechanisms and practices of heightened security, Canadian authorities have been especially closed to discussing and disclosing information on national security practices and Canada’s military involvement. In order to critically engage with the most powerful institutions and actors in a domestic context, a number of scholars have developed tools to access, as Marx (1984) stated, “dirty and hidden data” in security and policing institutions (Marx, as cited in Monaghan, 2014, p.490). At a number of levels throughout this project I was met with resistance and sensitivity regarding the nature of this project. Although not surprising, I had to pay close attention to the people with who I was in contact and where
I was conducting the interviews. Furthermore, as will be discussed in further depth in this thesis, the relationship of race and racism to the Canadian Forces historically has been fraught and is not without scandal.

This project also relies on research sources obtained through the *Access to Information Act* (ATIA). Although researchers make frequent use of the ATIA, this process is not without criticism and has become “reliably unreliable” (Monaghan and Hameed, 2012). Critics of this process often encounter long delays, unreasonable requests and redactions, and bureaucratic issues such as chronic underfunding of ATI branches and lack of staff to accommodate the request. Unfortunately, requests focusing on security, policing and I would include the military apparatus are at particular risk for encountering delays and redactions.

To compliment the interviews in this research study, I conducted other relevant research analysis by requesting “all” public documents pertaining to “race and racism in the Canadian military,” and more specifically, “all documentation, presentations and training materials centering on race or racism in the Canadian military” through the *Access to Information Act*. Initially, I requested information from one federal department: the Department of National Defence. It took months of back and forth correspondence for them to respond to my requests and when they did, the information was often vague and uninformative. I was reminded of Alison Mountz’s (2011) research on refugees and asylum seekers and the challenges and obstacles she encountered with Canadian government officials and agencies when conducting her ethnographic field-research. Similarly, as Lee’s (2012) work on posthumous citizenship in the United States
demonstrates, she also encountered bureaucratic difficulties, but goes on to illustrate that “[these] projects are situated within a network of scholarship being done on exposing the difficulties of accessing information from the very state agencies responsible for granting “public” information” (p.13). In light of the challenges listed above, I employed a strategy known as the “mosaic effect” which “borrows from juridical terminology to describe an effort to collect information from multiple sources and re-assemble that information that reveals the sum” (Hameed and Monaghan, 2012 in Monaghan, 2014, p. 490). My research requests were then made to various departments: Department of National Defense, Veterans Affairs Canada, Citizenship and Immigration, and the Canadian Forces Grievance Board. While it took approximately six months to acquire information, I finally received a package which included briefing notes, internal reports, Power Point slides, and email correspondence and memos (which were heavily redacted—the full knowledge of which has not been disclosed) that generated a modest data set that upon examination, details organization practices and logics that further inform this research.

3.7 My Role: Reflections on the Research Process

My subject position as a researcher has certainly shaped this research. As Blair (1998) argues: “No matter what our good intentions, we cannot guarantee neutrality in our interpretations and analyses. This is because our histories and memories are shot through with gendered, classed, racialized, and other excluding‘ understandings which give us our particular perspectives on the world”. (p. 13) A feminist race cognizant poststructuralism alongside and interlocking analysis of power calls upon researchers to
interrogate how their own subjectivity contributes to the formation and shaping of any research project (Lather 1991, Reinhartz, 1992; Weedon, 1997). Given this emphasis on reflexivity, I consider the historical, social, and material conditions that make possible my own role in this project (Frankenberg, 2004). As such, I am driven to ask the difficult question: What kind of person am I to be able to ask questions about how racialized subjectivity shapes the lived experience of military life?

Personally, I am not formally involved with the Canadian Forces, nor have I ever served in any capacity as a full time or reserve soldier. In military parlance, I am a civilian. I do, however, as I previously discussed, have some connection to retired members of the Canadian military. While I was hardly involved with aspects of traditional military life (i.e. training, deployments), I have had secondary exposure to military culture and life through the children and youth I spent time with over the years at the Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC). I have spent much time at DRDC – Toronto walking the halls, having lunch in the cafeteria and participating in casual conversation with many soldiers. My home is also located in the riding of Downsview, a postwar suburban subdivision and home to a decommissioned Canadian Forces military base. As I pass by DRDC on a daily basis, I cannot help but take in the full-sized combat tank and scaled down Air Force fighter jet that can be seen as historical and geographical reminder of the area. At the height of Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan, a massive recruitment poster featuring a soldier of colour would read “Join Us Today” along the side of one of the buildings on the base. During this time, I would also come to see a similar massive poster hanging over the banister, this time featuring a woman of colour in Downsview subway station on my way to the University of Toronto.
All these threads would dominate my thinking as I began to engage more seriously with how a re-emergent militarism began to surface in Canada and abroad post 9/11. Cynthia Enloe (2004) is important here as she has demonstrated in a variety of contexts how militarization specifically operates both in her own context of the United States and globally. She observes that American culture became more militarized since the attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. Her description of militarization is as follows:

Militarization . . . [is] happening at the individual level, when a woman who has a son is persuaded that the best way she can be a good mother is to allow the military recruiter to recruit her son so her son will get off the couch. When she is persuaded to let him go, even if reluctantly, she’s being militarized. She’s not as militarized as somebody who is a Special Forces soldier, but she’s being militarized all the same. Somebody who gets excited because a jet bomber flies over the football stadium to open the football season and is glad that he or she is in the stadium to see it, is being militarized. So militarization is not just about the question ‘do you think the military is the most important part of the state?’ (although obviously that matters). It’s not just ‘do you think that the use of collective violence is the most effective way to solve social problems?’ Which is also a part of militarization. But it’s also about ordinary, daily culture, certainly in the United States. (Interview with Cynthia Enloe, 2015)

In keeping with Enloe’s understanding of militarization, I began to observe and trace some of these shifts and movements in the Canadian context. As I began my interviews, a number of soldiers asked me “Why are you interested in us? You’re a civilian; you’re in a completely different world, why do you want to interview us? How did you come to this topic of study?” In a homogenous environment like the military, it is not every day that someone is interested in listening to the singular opinions of
soldiers. As one reserve soldier, Patrick said to me: “I find it interesting that you are here, no one usually wants to hear what we have to say”. Here, I am reminded of Paula Caplan’s (2011) research on soldiers in the American military and who argues that the dominant message often sent to soldiers is that most of us don’t want to listen – or that we don’t feel qualified to do so. She argues that this results in the “truth” about war to be kept silent. As a result, most of us remain ignorant about the details and realities of war and continue to support our governments to go to war without much protest. This chasm between soldier and civilian is particularly wide in Canada and a reality that almost all of the soldiers in this study agree with. Caplan proposes an alternative: That we begin to actively engage with veterans and soldiers in our communities and listen to their stories and narratives, one-on-one in order to further engage with violence done in our name.

Caplan’s work resonates with me because while I was concerned with minimizing the power relationship as a researcher between me and the participants, many of them thanked me at the end of the interviews for taking some time to speak with them and hear their opinions, thoughts, feelings, frustrations and desires. This was especially true of the cases of soldiers who had been deployed more than once.

An added layer of complexity to this study is not only am I a civilian, but a woman of colour. At times, I was positioned by my informants as an insider due to the ways they perceived me as a woman of color (Collins, 1991; Minh-ha, 1990). Given my

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44 Interview with Patrick, conducted March 9th, 2014.

45 Caplan is an American psychologist and has critiqued the way in which soldiers have been labeled upon returning from combat. Often labeled as “damaged”, “sick” she believes these discursive moves further alienate soldiers from their communities. The idea of the damaged soldier is so powerful that civilians often believe that they are not qualified to speak to soldiers, the assumption being that soldiers require professional assistance, thereby contributing to the distance between soldier and civilian. She argues that a society we must also take accountability for the ways in which we engage with soldiers upon their return. Caplan, P.J. (2011). When Johnny and Janie Come Marching Home: How all of us can help veterans. USA: MIT University Press.
status as researcher however, I was also positioned as an outsider at times and met with healthy skepticism. Some of the complexities I encountered with respect to talking about race and racism and eliciting race were quite difficult to resolve. For instance, how do I elicit knowledge and experience about race and racism in an institution that values uniformity and homogeneity? Often asking directly about race and racism was the least effective way to learn about the circulation of whiteness and experiences around race. Was I naïve to think that because I presented myself as a racialized (South Asian) civilian that racialized soldiers would be more at ease and find it easier to speak with me? Initially, I thought that my subject position would work to my advantage and I am still open to that idea. However, as Islam (2000) states, “We are not automatically considered insiders in our respective ethnic communities and both insider and outsider status hold specific meaning and consequences” (p. 42). In retrospect, I do believe that my position enabled me to access information and an understanding that perhaps a woman who identified as “white” would not have been able to capture. Or perhaps as Devault (1990) has suggested, language in itself is limiting and could have possible influences on how ideas are being expressed. For the most part, racialized soldiers were forthcoming when it came to expressing their views on race and racism. However, where they differed and where I encountered some resistance was in their analysis of how race and racism operate in the Canadian military (if at all, in some cases) and the links to their lives as soldiers and larger questions of citizenship and belonging. Some articulated very clearly how they saw themselves vis-à-vis the Canadian military apparatus and how their subject position impacted their mobility, their sense of belonging, their opportunities and relationship to state violence. In some instances, it was difficult to get a sense of how the soldier
constructed and understood their own racialized identity; that is, they were accommodating dominant discourses of whiteness and belonging and believed in their decisions and purpose with the Canadian military.

Qualitative research is fraught with tensions. Luttrell (2005) argues because researchers cannot eliminate the tensions in their work, instead they must take responsibility for them. Specifically, she makes a case for what she calls “good enough” methods, which require researchers to “think about their research decisions in terms of what is lost and what is gained, rather than what might be ideal” (Luttrell, 2005, p. 244 in Cairns, 2013). This chapter has examined the various research decisions and preoccupations that give shape to this project, in addition to demonstrating how the qualitative data that follows will be read analyzed. Attending to what I have called the race-cognizant poststructuralism facilitates an analysis of discourse, power, knowledge and subjectivity in conjunction with an interlocking analysis of power is central to this research study. In the following chapter I demonstrate how racialized soldiers are literally constituted as diversity in modern, neoliberal institutions. Through the Canadian Forces recruitment campaigns coupled with the narratives of racialized soldiers, I explore how the Canadian Forces takes up this notion diversity in the form of policies and procedures that act as tools of white governance, but more importantly work to relegate soldiers of colour to the periphery and in doing so further entrench institutional whiteness.
CHAPTER IV

Join Us:
Military Recruitment, Institutional Diversity and National Belonging in the Canadian Forces

*Neoliberalism loves diversity*

-Interview with Paul Gilroy

*Here’s what I think: diversity is how we talk about race when we can’t talk about race and racism.*

-Ellen Berry, “Diversity is for White People”

*This is not about political correctness, this is about operational effectiveness. The face of Canada is changing, so the recruiting base is going to be changing. In 20 years, if we don’t start making efforts to inform Indo-Canadians and other distinct groups about us, we won’t have anybody left in the military.*

-Mullick, as cited in Cowen, 2003

4.1 Introduction

At various points in Canadian military history, the Canadian Forces has experienced difficulties in recruitment. The Canadian military experienced a recruitment crisis that was full blown by the 1990s. Its traditional white male base had eroded and fewer Canadian men signed up for the military resulting in an aggressive recruitment drive to recruit specifically women and Aboriginal people. This drive would become especially intense after 9/11 and under a conservative Canadian government anxious to expand Canada’s military role on the global stage. As Cowen (2008) demonstrates in her work entitled, *Military Workfare: The soldier and social citizenship in Canada* these campaigns, spurred on by the call for employment equity by the Royal Commission on
Employment Equity, led the military to seek to diversify. Diversity, however, as Ellen Berry notes above, is a good way not to talk about race and racism. In this chapter, in part one I discuss how diversity comes to be an objective for the Canadian military. Seeking to recruit more women, Aboriginal soldiers, and racialized soldiers, recruitment ads during the War on Terror featured all three groups. The drive to diversify would bring tensions, notably when the military were deployed to quell Indigenous protest at Oka, and when an Inquiry into the Force’s conduct in Somalia revealed racism and abuse of Somali prisoners. In part two, I discuss how recruitment ads sought to attract targeted groups, displaying only surface attention to diversity. In Part three, I discuss how racialized people responded to recruitment drives. Racialized soldiers who answered the military’s call often did so because of the promise of financial and career opportunities. In the interviews, they also expressed the hope that being in the military would provide some sort of belonging. Yet, soldiers also felt that the CF were duplicitous and that their experiences of racism began soon after recruitment. What this chapter endeavours to do is to frame the Canadian Forces recruitment goals and their appeal to diversity as ultimately a project of inclusion into a white national project. What is revealed in this research is that while the CF may present itself as diverse and appealing to the multicultural mosaic, the reality for racialized soldiers in quite different.

Part One:

4.2 Historical Overview of Diversity and Recruitment of Racialized Groups in the Canadian Forces

In what follows, I frame the history of diversity and recruitment of minority groups notably, Francophones, Aboriginal Peoples, women and racialized groups into the
military as a project of inclusion into a white nation. The Canadian military at different moments in time has responded by actively recruiting based on its needs at particular moments in Canadian history. The Canadian military’s relationship to diversity and connection to recruitment is not separate from the historical and political struggles that were going on in Canada for justice, and the expansion of citizenship rights in the 1960s and 1970s. In fact much of the political legislation of the period, as Cowen writes, “aimed to bring the federal government and public institutions in line with the values of multiculturalism, bilingualism and gender equity – values that were a core part of the Canadian ‘rights’ revolution” (Cowen, 2008, p. 160). However, as Cowen explains, attention to Francophones in the military emerged as the first priority. French Canadians served in the military in large numbers and did not need to be recruited. However, they were often restricted to the lower ranks and subjected to persistent and institutionalized racism (p. 162). Growing separatist sentiment in Quebec prompted the federal government to implement a number of measures aimed at Francophones. Importantly, these measures concerned language issues only and did not include an attention to racism. In 1963, the Pearson government struck the Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism and with the release of its final report enforced bilingualism became a central and an important component of the CF. As a result, as Cowen (2008) shows, Francophones did not become an employment equity group targeted for recruitment. Instead, language conditions improved. Presently, bilingual Francophones comprise a sizeable proportion of the CF (approximately 4% are unilingual Francophone, whereas bilingual soldiers are approximately 43% of all members of the CF). Notwithstanding their sizeable presence and the fact that the military is considered one of the best bilingual
workplaces, tensions between Anglophones and Francophones persist, suggesting that the military remains fundamentally white and Anglo-Saxon in culture (Cowen, 2008; Parizeau and Bernier, 1986).

In the 1980s, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the implementation of Employment Equity laws further pushed the military to diversify. With respect to racialized groups, specialized programs to recruit Aboriginal soldiers into the Canadian Forces were long standing and have a complex history (Cowen, 2008, p. 178). For example, the Oka crisis of 1991, an Indigenous revolt, marked a low point in Canadian military history and its relationship with Aboriginal peoples. Canada deployed almost 14,000 military personnel at the height of the crisis, to put down this revolt. (Cowen, 2008; Coulthard, 2014). The late 1980s witnessed several such indigenous uprisings across Canada. Throughout this turbulent period, the Canadian military continued to recruit Aboriginal peoples into the CF, but did so cautiously and with minimal reference to the “Oka Crisis” and other indigenous uprisings (Edwards, 2002). While the Oka crisis remains a contentious issue for Aboriginal communities, the Canadian Forces nonetheless invests heavily in its recruitment campaigns targeting Aboriginal communities.46

46 According to Scoppio (2010) several programs are in place to enhance the participation of Aboriginal members in the CF, including:
1. The CF Aboriginal Entry Program (CFAEP) a special remunerated three-weeks recruiting program that can lead to full-time Regular Force training and employment opportunities to qualified Aboriginal peoples;
2. The Bold Eagle which is an Army recruiting program and includes a six-week Army Reserve Basic Military Qualification (BMQ) course;
3. Raven, an Aboriginal recruiting program of the Navy Reserve which focuses on Youth Development;
4. A new Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year (ALOY) at the Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) started in 2008, with the aim to provide a one-year no obligation trial for select Aboriginal youth to undergo academic, military and athletic development at the College with appropriate cultural supports (Scoppio, 2010, p. 8)
Targeted recruitment among non-Indigenous racialized groups did not occur until the 1980s. Cowen demonstrates that the Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit (CFPARU) was trying to grapple with the notion of ethnicity and how that would impact targeted recruitment. As Cowen explains “Ethnicity was furthermore conceptualized as something of an obstacle to recruitment. It was constantly conflated with immigration status in CFPARU reports, as though they were interchangeable concepts, well into the 1990s” (p. 170). A lack of engagement with racism in the ranks persisted even though there was a growing interest in recruiting racialized citizens. In fact, “the CFPARU initially attributed the low participation rates of people of colour in the military to the failings of their own cultures rather than the systemic racism or hegemonic whiteness of the military” (2008, p. 170). Cowen also explains that racialized groups were perceived as difficult to recruit because, in the words of the military, of a “built in resistance to any move that will take the youth away from the cultural group to which they belong” (CFPARU, 1975a, cited in Cowen, 2008, p. 170).

The 1990s marked a difficult time for the Canadian Forces in that they joined the U.S.-led coalition in the first Gulf War but were faced with budget cuts and subject to the Force Reduction Plan. Budgets cuts and the Somalia Affair when an inquiry was conducted into prisoner abuse by Canadian peacekeepers in Somalia further impeded the recruitment of racialized soldiers. As explored in Chapter II, the inquiry exposed racist hazing and white supremacist subcultures within the military and a massive cover up of abuses across the ranks. As a result, committees were struck and diversity task forces were created to improve the Canadian military’s internal diversity and to devise sensitivity protocols. While initially the CF was more immediately concerned with
improving the public image of the military and increasing recruitment from targeted segments of Canadian society than they were with improving military culture, several outcomes of this event produced an increased awareness of the depths of structural racism in the CF. These changes had a direct impact on Aboriginal people, members of visible minority groups, women and people with disabilities. Given its new status under the act, the CF were required to diversify (p. 188). However, as Cowen explains, “Ironically, though these initiatives were a failure in achieving any significant diversification of the military workforce, or even in raising recruitment rates, through this work the military became one of the most important sources for diversity discourse in Canada” (p. 161).

**Diversity and its Discontents**

What is diversity? What does the language of diversity suggest or imply in contemporary institutional life? Diversity has come to mean both too much and too little in the contemporary moment. According to Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel (2002), “diversity” refers to a number of points of difference among people that are not limited to gender, age, place of birth, ethnicity, culture, education, physical ability, social class, religion, sexual orientation, language, citizenship status, personal style and attributes (2002, p.13). In their work entitled, *Selling Diversity: Immigration, multiculturalism, employment equity and globalization* they demonstrate that a discourse of diversity emphasizes the business value of racial/ethnic minorities in the global marketplace and is significant in three distinct policy areas, those of, immigration, multiculturalism and employment equity. Analyzing the period 1993-2001, they argue:
That despite the different rationales that informed the historical evolution of immigration, multiculturalism and employment equity policies, today each policy is affected by new rationales that put stress on the language of business. Thus an emphasis on markets, efficiency, competitiveness, and individualism has been central to recent rearticulations of the three policy areas. This we suggest is a direct response by Canadian policy-makers to the perceived exigencies of globalization – namely, capturing global markets and enhancing Canada’s competitiveness. This interpretation of, and strategy of response to, globalization has resulted in selling of diversity, whereby the skills, talents and ethnic backgrounds of men and women are commodified, marketed and billed as trade-enhancing. In this context, certain notions of “diversity” – those which pertain to competitiveness are viewed favourably, both at home in Canada and globally. As a result a commitment to enhance justice and respect in a diverse society, while not abandoned entirely, has been muted. (p. 12)

What is relevant in Abu-Laban and Gabriel’s argument to the discussion of diversity in the CF is that they draw our attention to how diversity discourse is framed by a desire to exploit markets outside of North America, and in doing so use the ethnic backgrounds of men and women as commodities and to promote good business.

The arguments of Abu-Laban and Gabriel resonate with those of several feminists of colour who have offered strong critiques of the language of diversity (Carby, 1999; Bannerji, 2000; Mohanty, 2003; Puar, 2004; Alexander, 2005; Razack, 1998). Both Mohanty and Alexander offer substantial critiques within educational institutions. For Mohanty, diversity is a discourse of “benign variation,” which “bypasses power as well as history to suggest harmonious empty pluralism” (p. 193). Building on Mohanty’s claims, Alexander suggests that diversity as a practice functions by “manufacturing cohesion” and creating the impression of “more diversity” than “actually exists” (p. 135
in Ahmed, 2012, p. 14). Puar (2004) maintains that diversity has come to “overwhelmingly mean the inclusion of people who look different” (p.1). Inclusion is then understood to mean that institutions do not have a problem with racism and that they are in fact postracial. Thus, as Sara Ahmed has argued diversity and its attending mechanisms have instead become “about changing perceptions of whiteness rather than changing whiteness in organization” (emphasis in original, Ahmed, 2012, p. 34).

As I suggest below, racialized soldiers are deemed good for business and the CF’s image/brand. However, as racialized soldiers’ narratives reveal, diversity initiatives do not address racism and racialized soldiers who join the military often feel that the military is duplicitous in recruitment, often failing to deliver on promises and engaging in a surface celebration of difference.

**Part Two:**

**4.3 Join Us Today: Appealing to racialized recruits post 9/11**

Prospective soldiers today can easily navigate the CF webpage and watch a featured video on diversity within the institution entitled, “Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces”. It features a video of the day-to-day activities in the CF across the three branches of service with a diverse array of men and women from various racial backgrounds. The supplemental narration in the background of the video in a noticeably feminine voice reads the following script:

*Equal opportunity is fundamental to the Canadian Armed Forces. When you put on the uniform of the Royal Canadian Navy, the Canadian Army or the Royal Canadian Air Force, you are seen as a soldier first, regardless of your background,*
and valued for your work and your character above all else. Canada’s military has a long tradition of diversity and the face of our military has continued to evolve with Canada’s increasing multiculturalism. The Forces welcome applicants from all genders, religions, ethnicities and sexual orientations. Today, people of all backgrounds work collaboratively. Forces’ members have the right to be treated fairly, respectfully and with dignity in a workplace free of harassment. Operating in an environment where uniform and rank are seen first, the Forces respect individual diversity. To help ensure that ranks reflect Canada’s cultural make-up, the Canadian Armed Forces practices Employment Equity, which means striving for appropriate representation of designated groups at all areas and levels of the institution, including women, Aboriginal peoples and members of visible minorities. Whoever you are, when you put on the uniform of the Canadian Armed Forces you will be treated with equal respect. By joining the Forces, you join a long tradition of honourable service that is recognized around the world. You will also enjoy the unique opportunities for education, training, travel and personal excellence that are part of every soldier’s life. Thanks to diversity in uniform, the Forces have a strong and unified team that is able to respond to situations quickly and effectively in Canada and around the world. JOIN US. (Canadian Forces website, 2015)

The War on Terror shaped recruitment drives in important ways. Alison McCready’s analysis of some of the recruitment campaigns that were ubiquitous across the country is useful here. According to McCready (2012) “cultural texts produced under the War on Terror form one important lens through which to study the shift in military values currently underway in Canada, and to discuss the cultural production of that shift” (p. 154). McCready shows that a militarized multiculturalism accompanies the shift. She demonstrates that one of the first priorities of the Harper government was to introduce media communications campaign targeting American diplomats, business leaders and policy makers (p. 154). Describing one of his first initiatives, the “Boots on the Ground Campaign” she states:

This campaign, which was not publicized and received little notice at home, was intended to increase Canada’s profile with Americans as an ally of the United States. Several prominent public locations and subway stations became host to huge ads depicting Canadian soldiers in Afghanistan, bearing the slogan “Canada has
boots on the ground”. The Conservatives were eager to distance themselves from previous Liberal administrations that had refused to sign up Canada for the war in Iraq, and to signal that Canada was now open for military business (Cameron). The captions read “Boots on the Ground / U.S.-Canada Relations: Security is Our Business. (p. 158)

The Harper government was a strong supporter of Canada’s participation in the Iraq war and a harsh critic of Canada’s lack of involvement in that mission. While many scholars and critics observed that Canada officially refrained from active combat in Iraq, its role in Afghanistan contributed to the global war on terror by freeing up American resources for Iraq (Klassen, 2014; Cowen, 2008). Canada’s decision to not be involved in Iraq in essence freed up troops to be deployed to Afghanistan. As McCready states, “This is to say, while vociferous public opposition must be credited for ensuring this policy decision, that Canada “stayed out of Iraq” is arguably more a semantic victory than a moral one” (p.156). The “Boots on the Ground” public relations campaign, which was introduced on March 19th, 2006, was timed to co-ordinate with the change of command in Afghanistan that saw Canada take on an expanded role, to inform American policy makers about Canada’s efforts. Following this “boots on the ground” messaging, Harper took his passion for free trade and militarized neoliberal partnership with the United States on the road, to lobby the American business elite for defense contracts. Harper’s efforts, sympathy and support for the US during the 9/11 attacks, help to understand the connection between militarism and neoliberalism. Moreover, this relationship also helps to contextualize the Canadian Forces recruiting ads featured during the height of Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan. As McCready states,

Introduced in 2006 and intended to bolster recruitment for the war, these advertisements were central in promoting the Canadian Forces as a diverse and
competitive employer. At an estimated $3 million in production costs alone, the initial phase included television commercials, bus and bus-shelter ads, washroom stalls and posters on university campuses and in working class neighbourhoods in major cities across Canada. The ads were part of an aggressive recruitment strategy budgeted at $15.5 million dollars implemented to meet Conservative promises to increase the forces by 13,000 soldiers and boost the reserves by 10,000 more (p. 148).

Between “Boots on the Ground” and these “New Canadian Forces” ads, the public image of the Canadian military was being reconfigured. With the aim of implementing these images across the country, they were first tested in Halifax in September 2006, an “economically depressed” area and home to Canada’s largest naval base where the military was eager to see the biggest increase in enrollment, despite the fact that Atlantic Canadians were already over-represented in the Canadian Armed Forces (Cowen, 2007; McCready, 2012). The ads ran on television and in movie theatres across the country.

This strategy was intended to complement plans to bolster recruitment efforts by targeting specific populations by opening a recruitment centre aimed at Chinese-Canadians in Richmond, B.C., in addition to the one in Surrey, B.C. that targets the Indo-Canadian community. As Cowen reveals, “The Canadian Muslim Congress criticized the campaign for war mongering, while NDP critic Dawn Black critiqued the ‘Rambo Ads,’ which were unrecognizable in relation to established CF imagery and identity” (p. 249). This re-emergent militarism and subsequent recruitment was witnessed and felt on the ground during the height of Canada’s involvement in Afghanistan. Operation Connection was launched on February 6th, 2006 by the Canadian Forces in an attempt to “connect with Canadians” through a broad range of coordinated, community based activities. Its
purpose was to “revitalize the Canadian Forces” recruiting culture by engaging the entire chain of command in an aggressive and comprehensive recruitment strategy” (Canadian Forces News Letter, 2006). In addition to attracting potential recruits, *Operation Connection* also involved demonstrating that the Canadian Forces were also important members of the community and were encouraged to demonstrate themselves as such. As previously discussed, the Canadian Armed Forces presence in the day-to-day lives of Canadians was increasingly present during the war in Afghanistan. Their appearances included: Canadian Intra-university Athletic Union (CIAU) football games, parachuting and escorting cheerleaders at Grey Cup events and the Canadian National Exhibition. Elsewhere I also speak about the significance of the Canadian forces presence at the LGBTQ Pride Parade in June 2008 in Toronto (George, 2008). The nature of the event sparked a variety of reactions among Canadians as evidenced by various weblog responses (CBC, June 2008). Elsewhere, I have also focused on recruitment at Caribana, a major Caribbean festival in Toronto, at the same time bringing attention to the issues that the city of Toronto has been grappling with regarding gun violence, carding and the criminalization of racialized black youth. Caribana 2008 marks a moment of racialized surveillance and convergence among the state security forces, those being the Toronto Police force and the Canadian military. That said, these events are significant in and of themselves, as they illustrate the Canadian Armed forces aggressive recruitment of queer and racialized bodies under *Operation Connection*.

Military statistics compiled over the years show that while regular and reserve forces were not always able to meet their enrolment targets for a given year, it was never because of a shortage of interested applicants. As the death toll in Afghanistan mounted
and the political rhetoric surrounding the mission grew more heated, the number of Canadian Forces applicants rose steadily, sometimes reaching levels twice those at the beginning of the mission. As I will demonstrate further on in this chapter, several of the soldiers I interviewed felt compelled to join the Canadian military first, immediately after the events of September 11, 2001 and then again at the height of the mission. As McCready highlights, “In 2009-10, the Canadian Forces received 25,738 applications, up dramatically from the 2001-02 fiscal year, when applications numbered 13,504 -- a figure that included existing soldiers seeking transfers to other units. With the mission winding down, the Forces received 18,881 applications in 2010-11” (p. 152). Many postulate that extensive media coverage of military life in Afghanistan was a key factor in the surge of applications. Infantry positions, which have historically been difficult to fill, got the biggest boost, but as some of the racialized soldiers reveal, while recruiters stressed infantry, recruits themselves were not all keen to join the military in this capacity.

Recruitment campaigns targeted groups differently. For instance, following recruitment trends in the US and the United Kingdom, in further efforts to bolster recruitment and reconfigure Canada’s military image there was discussion by the then Chief of Defence Staff, General Rick Hillier of easing citizenship requirements and fast-tracking citizenship for those willing to serve (McCready, 2012, p. 153). As well, throughout, the CF maintained an emphasis on recruiting women. One of the documents retrieved during my research through Access to Information Act revealed that the Department of National Defense requested proposals from specialized private marketing companies that would assist in this rebranding with a new recruitment campaign. With respect to meeting the diversity requirements, this request for proposals indicated that
Moving forward, the focus of advertising messaging will shift with the evolving focus of Canada's military. Ongoing recruitment continues to be the priority and the emphasis will change to accurately reflect the reality of life in the CAF. As Fight portrays the CAF with a combat focus, and Priority Occupations promotes specific careers, future campaigns will showcase the CAF's lifestyle with an emphasis on the recruitment of women. (p. 20)

This document further stated that “This primary target audience, Canadians 18-34 years of age, is segmented by life stage with tailored messaging to address their unique motivations and barriers” (p. 21) For example, the marketing campaign aimed at Aboriginal Peoples was intended to emphasize education, leadership training, career opportunities and an inclusive workplace. With respect to targeting women the message was tailored to emphasize job satisfaction, education opportunities and sense of purpose. Finally, with respect to targeting visible minorities the message emphasized “good salary and benefits, interesting, exciting and challenging work, opportunity to distinguish oneself and education and leadership training” (p. 21).

Recruitment ads paid scrupulous attention to diversity. However, what I would like to emphasize here is that while the CF has mobilized a significant number of resources to depict the military family as racially diverse, what this research suggests is that the lived reality is very different. In many ways, I liken these recruitment advertisements with a focus on diversity to family photos depicting a staged photo of the ideal family, behind which we can imagine are family secrets. The ads visually mirror the family photo with soldiers arranged as a part of a shared environment. Through the images featured in the CF recruitment ads, we are invited to think of the composition of

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the military family and hence the national family as quintessentially diverse. Importantly, what racialized soldiers’ narratives reveal is a very different experience from the ideal depicted in the ads. In Image 1.0 a panel of four different women is featured each providing a short personal anecdote of their experience in the CF. All women featured on the banner are in different branches of the CF and while not entirely clear what their occupational role is, the varying forms of military labour offers them a place in the CF. What is interesting in the banners below are the accompanying texts and what the personal anecdotes suggest with respect to gender and the CF. The first woman featured is an Aboriginal woman and she is quoted in both official languages saying “I love the fact that I get to be a role model”. The Forces in turns ensures a diversity of women that they are “needed”, “role models”, “heard” and “make a difference”.

**Image 1.0: Canadian Forces Recruitment Banner – Women and Ethnic Diversity in the Forces**
Central to these print advertisements are their depictions of military personnel as an operationally effective cultural mosaic, working together to fight chaos/fear/distress with the Canadian Forces. As McCready states, “As with the legacy of peacekeeping, the ads mobilize the myth of multiculturalism only to imply that it [racism] is over. The diversity of faces in uniform at once congratulates Canada on its ability to overcome prejudice and suggests that the work is now complete, justifying the nation’s duty to spread its values of tolerance, pluralism and individual opportunity overseas” (2012, p. 166). As with all the recruitment images featured below, racialized people are featured quite centrally. Image 3.0 features three members of the forces representing each branch of the Canadian military; the Army, the Navy and the Air Force. Featured in the centre of the image in army fatigues is a man who appears to be Asian decent. On his right side, is a European (white) man appearing to represent the Air Force and to the far left is a woman depicted as a member of the navy. While her head is predominantly covered by her navy head gear, this image of the woman is also striking because it also appears upon first glance that the woman is wearing a hijab. This recruitment poster is an important commentary on how diversity is being conceived and marketed to potential recruits despite the controversial wars of our time. While it gives the impression that diversity is literally, front and center, there is also feeling of sameness that operates through this image, with very little room permitted for difference. While the Asian male’s phenotypical features signify racial difference, all three members featured possess the same skin complexion, which is powerfully symbolic thereby conveying that diversity and difference are welcome, within limits, but not at the expense of your unit. Image 4.0 and 5.0 respectively depict racialized members of the CF as though they were always an integral
part of the forces and that there is no questioning their rightful place. This is shown by how they are featured so centrally in the image and seemingly represent an essential part of the shift with respect to the text that reads “Fight Fear. Fight Distress. Fight Chaos.” McCready (2012) reminds us:

[W]hile the soldiers represented in the new CF recruiting ads may be racially or ethnically diverse, all are united in the common project of Canadian militarism. Projected here as a basis for unity, militarism offers one powerfully compelling model of fraternity. Indeed, as a pedagogical force, the new Canadian militarism “exalts” the figure of the soldier into model citizens through discourses of heroic service and sacrifice. This is the key objective of the new Canadian militarism: to leverage older legitimating myths into a national imaginary delineable along appropriately disciplined military themes. (p. 168)
Image 2.0: Canadian Forces Print Recruitment Advertisement – Diversity in the Forces
Image 3.0: Canadian Forces Print Recruitment Advertisement – Fight Fear Campaign (2008)
Recruits and Diversity Discourse

For some of the soldiers in this study, recruitment ads conveyed that the military was diverse. Others felt that the efforts were merely tokenistic. Below, Blaze reflects on how the CF has tackled diversity and its impact on the institution:

_Blaze:_ Now that I’m retired, I see things around recruitment a little differently. On the one hand, I understand why the military works its way into ethnic communities and events. They really are trying to fulfill its numbers, which is maybe not the best way of going about it. But on the other hand when that’s your focus, it’s not about them and what they bring. So yeah, you could say, the military has an ethnic soldier now and it might look good, but what’s the point if the military isn’t changed by this?

Blaze raises an important point with respect to diversity and diversity initiatives. While he understands the need for the CF to raise its profile and recruit racialized soldiers, he also understands that if numbers remain the sole focus, then little attention is paid to conditions in the military for racialized soldiers. Many of the soldiers I spoke with expressed the view that the military is very good at symbolism, celebrating diversity in
terms of certain days or months but not attending to real change. For example, Black History month is observed, as is International Women’s Day, and the Day for the Elimination of Racism, to name a few. These days are often replete with posters, speeches, displays, photo opportunities and events, but some of the soldiers I spoke with understood the tokenistic feature of these practices. Maya comments, for instance,

**Maya:** They’ll have the posters up. I personally just ignore because I don’t care but they have posters up. I’m pretty sure I saw one for Asian Awareness Month. I laughed my ass off. I was like, ‘Wow, we got one of those? Why am I not on the poster?’ There’s a Black History one, of course, there’s the Women’s one and the International Day we just had. So yes, they are big on it, for sure. I just ignore most of them because I don’t have time for that. The military is open to that but you also got to wonder why only on those specific days or months.

**Part Three**

4.4 Why Join? Participant Recruitment Narratives

Several soldiers spoke to me about how and why they entered the CF. Their reasons for joining are not always straightforward. Some of them approached recruiting centers on their own and others’ curiosity was piqued at events where the military was present. In some cases, racialized soldiers were motivated to joining after 9/11, others needed employment and had very few options, if any available to them. What is also perhaps most striking is their desire to belong to something and be an active, participating member of Canadian society. In some cases the military does afford a semblance of purpose and belonging, in other soldiers narratives this notion of belonging is heavily critiqued. Below, Speedy, a soldier in the Regular Force shares that he was always curious about a career in the military. One day he approached a Canadian Forces
recruiting centre and described the process. When I asked him what he would suggest to future recruiters he expresses the following:

**Speedy:** I’d say offer them more of what potential recruits tell you what they want. Don’t offer them infantry right away. And kind of like tell the truth, because of lot of them don’t tell the truth, you know. They tell you other things from what the army really is, right. They tell you okay you’re going to be doing this, this and this and in fact you’re doing something different. So right away you’re like that’s not what the recruiting centre said. Sometimes they tell you you’re going to go into this trade but it’s a totally different trade, so right away they lie to you right there. Like for me they told me I was going to receive a $10,000 incentive. I never received anything like that! So I think telling the truth is a big part. And kind of like listen to the person and what they want before you offer something, that’s the biggest thing to me. Because a lot of people they’re just pushing you, you know, cause right away they see somebody there and they want to grab them no matter what. I don’t want to say everybody can join the military. It’s challenging, at the beginning you have to go through some tests, right, and you have to do physical activities. So, yeah, for some people it might be challenging. It’s not easy. But they can tell them that, and sometimes they don’t. They see somebody who’s clearly not active, not doing any physical activities and they want to grab them.

Considering the recruitment of minorities as duplicitous, recruiting minorities even when they are likely to find the experience difficult, Speedy, a Communications Technician offers some important insight and suggestions to future recruiters in the Canadian Forces. His experience is described as one of one characterized by broken promises and rather than understanding and hearing his needs, the CF was interested in filling their ranks and specific positions, especially infantry. This is not altogether surprising given that Speedy joined at the height of Canada’s involvement in the mission in Afghanistan. He acknowledges that the military is not for everyone, so wants the military to be more upfront and truthful with respect to what the military entails in terms of training, incentives, expectations and job opportunities. While Speedy does feel deceived that did
not deter him from joining the Forces because the financial incentives were important to him at the time. He states,

**Speedy:** I don’t want to say that the monetary incentive is what drove me to go into military but that was one part because I was broke at that point. I didn’t have any money. So I said okay that’ll really help. But they also told me that I could get, I could make a career out of the military, I could learn a lot of things, I could do a lot of things like not just being a technician but also you could do other stuff. You can learn, you can become a supervisor so quickly and you can move up in the ranks quickly enough. And then they told me exercise wise, because I like to exercise, you will always be active, you will always be doing exercise and you will always maintain your, you know, physical fitness. So I think that’s what drove me to it, you know, knowing that I could get far ahead in life and I could make a career of it.

Speedy shares that aside from the monetary incentive, what also compelled him to join the CF was the assurance that he would move up the ranks relatively quickly and with ease. However, we are aware that racialized soldiers are very rarely reflected in the upper ranks of the military and are often not reflected in the leadership. While this may not be Speedy’s case in the future, it is worth contrasting to what he was told during recruitment. Below Joe, an Engineer, in the Reserve Force describes a similar experience to Speedy’s in that recruiters were also eagerly trying to fill infantry units:

**Joe:** When I went in to inquire about joining they kept telling me about all the exciting jobs they had in infantry and I didn’t want to be in infantry, I wanted to inquire more about the engineer jobs so I could have some transferable skills. But I noticed they were really pushing hard to try and fill those positions.

**Tammy:** How did that make you feel, the military pushing the infantry as an occupation?

**Joe:** Well, it’s one thing if I was interested, but it really seemed like they wanted to fill in certain areas. While it seems to come across like you could choose anything,
that’s not always the case. I really had to say, what I was interested in and what I wanted to focus on.

Several racialized soldiers felt that their experience in infantry included a great deal of racism. Joe decided to join the Canadian military in 2008 where the push for infantry soldiers was greatest during the Afghan mission. Below, Ruben and Kyle express that their reasons for joining the military was due to having few options available to them outside of the military despite their education and experience.

**Ruben:** Came out with degrees, with keys to the city, but we couldn’t get employment, there was a few of us...and the common denominator, is racism. So I didn’t join the military as my first choice, I joined the military because I had a young family and I wanted to eat, but the military didn’t factor didn’t get contrived in my mind to make a better life. That said, once in there, I applied myself and I did exceedingly well. The only thing I couldn’t anticipate was the level of racism encountered by my and my colleagues. It was just overwhelming.

Ruben is a retired African Nova Scotian who began in the army and then served in the Canadian Air Force. He attained the rank of Sergeant after 7 years of service and served in Israel and Germany. In 1991, he was faced with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and had to be released because the CF found that he was “unfit” to perform military duties. Ruben emphasized early on for me that he would like to say that he acquired his condition in battle, but instead he openly attributes his PTSD to the blatant and systemic racism he faced during his time in the Forces. In his narrative above, Ruben indicates that the military wasn’t his first choice for employment, but out of necessity and due to the lack of options, he joined to provide for his family. Once in the military, he excelled, but as he reveals this became difficult given the racism he faced. Ruben’s narrative offers an interesting contrast to the current recruitment campaigns we have witnessed over the past
years during the War on Terror. While these recruitment posters feature racialized soldiers as a central feature to the Forces, Ruben’s narrative offers a much different reality through his experiences of racism both inside and outside of the Canadian Forces. Ruben’s experience in the Canadian military was complex in that he was a very successful soldier – excelling in most areas, but his experiences were constantly marked by the racism he faced at all levels. Eventually, Ruben was granted stress leave and inevitably sought the assistance he required to become whole again. In 1995 he was released from the Canadian Forces but continues to do advocacy work for those suffer racial injustice in the Canadian military. Below Kyle is similar to Ruben in that he expresses that he joined the military because of their lack of other options and employment opportunities.

**Kyle:** I am an aerospace engineering officer. Currently I am not qualified in my trade because I just finished basic so I’m what’s called OJT, on the job training in which I help out however I can until I can do my actual job after I finish my training.

**Tammy:** So you fall in the reserve force or the regular force?

**Kyle:** I am the regular force yes. I joined September 24th and basic started September 27th and then that ended December 6th. So I’m pretty new at this military thing.

**Tammy:** So what prompted you to join the military, what attracted you to it?

**Kyle:** I guess I’ve always been interested since I was a kid. When I was in Taiwan I joined I guess what’s the equivalent called Scouts and when I came here I wanted to do something similar, just being outdoors and adventure something like that. Originally I was going to find a Scout place but a friend -- a friend of the family or someone we met through church said they are in the army cadets so I joined that and that was from 2000 to 2006 and it was a great experience. I originally intended to get into the military sooner but I figured
maybe I’ll follow my education path before that to see where that leads me and what happened is I couldn’t find a job so I joined the military.

Tammy: What was your path before?

Kyle: I guess back in university I wasn’t exactly sure what I wanted and after like the first or second year I figured I wanted to do something mechanically related but as my program engineering science there wasn’t really -- the most mechanical related program what I find is aerospace engineering so I took that as my third year. After that I tried to find a job and couldn’t find a job and went back to school for a Masters. After the masters couldn’t find a job, well might as well apply to the military in the meantime. I actually did apply to the military during my master’s degree and just the process took a long while because my father is in Taiwan so you have security clearance, if you have a close relative that’s away from the country security clearance will take a long time to go through and also because of my medical. My medical was bad, my vision and my hearing problem mostly. So that put it off until recently, in 2013 then I was given an offer. Well initially, sorry, I rejected an offer from them because I put down electrical mechanical engineering and then there was space engineering and I was offered electrical mechanical but my study was in aerospace so I figured I’ll wait for aerospace so I rejected that offer and I guess a year or like half a year later they offered me aerospace engineering and still couldn’t find a job and just accepted the military. I guess I’ll have to say that when I was in cadets, I could see myself being in the military and so I was fine in the military, I was fine to go that path but now I’m a little bit jaded because I couldn’t find a job in the industry so this is the only path that was left to me. So because of the lack of choice I guess I have a different opinion now that I’m employed in the military.

Kyle reveals that even with a technical Masters degree, he was unable to find work. Often the assumption for racialized soldiers joining the military is that there is a lack of options in the Canadian labour force and that they approach the military as an opportunity for employment and skill development. However, in Kyle’s circumstance he had difficulties within the labour market even though he had a high level of education. A combination of the lack of employment opportunities coupled with his passion for the outdoors and a sense of adventure made the military a viable option for him. An important point worth noting in Kyle’s narrative is how he had to wait for security clearance after 9/11. As will
be featured in other narratives, Kyle is not the only racialized soldier who had to go through the measures of increased security after 9/11.

Marcus a Reserve Force soldier has been in the military since 1994, but became full time just after 9/11. In the narrative below he shares that September 11, 2001 was a defining moment for him and marked an important shift for him from the Reserve Force to the Regular Force.

**Marcus:** As a reservist, yeah, there’s times on the weekends you go away. And it’s that one night per week that you show up to your regiment and do your work. So not as intrusive or ... not as much going on at the time I when I first joined to ... but now, of course, I joined as the ... September 11th actually, that’s when I transferred to the regular force.

**Tammy:** Okay, yeah. What prompted you? Was September 11th significant for you?

**Marcus:** Yeah, it was. It was huge. That was the deciding factor, really, the one that tipped the scale. ’Cause I remember sitting in the bank and the markets being shut down and, sort of, catching whatever news that I can during that day of what was going on. And I think I woke up to the second plane flying into the building. And seeing ... I remember seeing it live, so ... ‘cause I was in Edmonton at the time. And, yeah, I was waking up to the whole, you know, “Ladies and gentleman, this is a true story,” kind of thing, over the radio. And they’re saying, “Yeah, a plane has flown into the World Trade Center,” and all that kind of stuff. And just seeing all that stuff happening and thinking that, you know, this is it, this is where I want to go, ... I got to go and hunt these guys down and find them.

Marcus’ sentiment is not altogether surprising in that many in the West felt the need for justice after 9/11. For Cynthia, a Reserve soldier and Blaze, now a retired soldier, in their reflections the military was a place that provided a place to belong, particularly in the face of adversity outside of the military.

**Tammy:** What attracted you to military service in the first place?
**Cynthia:** So I had a lot of friends who did a lot of part-time job in retail and such. But I wanted a profession that or like a career in some sort of job that would help me grow as a young person. So I wanted a challenge. I wanted my job to help me give me skills, knowledge and growth that’ll help me in the future as well as just something out of the ordinary I guess. And so I wanted to join because of the challenge and I wanted personal growth. And, however, I mean, there’s some women that I talk to, they’ve kind of had a very, you know, a very difficult upbringing. And they found that the military was something that they saw that was almost like a refuge. A place for them to go. And a place where they felt like they belonged there. I feel like it’s not just females but males as well. And I think that’s a big part of the reason why someone would join.

Cynthia’s narrative is telling in that we do not typically assume that the military is a site of belonging for women. Below Blaze offers a reflection on what he joined emphasizing this notion of wanting to belong:

**Tammy:** So tell me about what attracted you into the military?

**Blaze:** Well, looking back it was a bunch of factors. I was deciding what I wanted to do with my life and I was never really sure. I had a lot of interests and I wasn’t sold on university at the time. People around kept telling me that I would do well with “structure” in my life and at the time I kind of agreed. But when you’re young you’re never really clear on what you want. Sometimes, maybe. I guess the idea that really sold me was that I could acquire a lot of skills, have some deployments and then leave and really be someone productive in society. I sort of looked at the military as this ticket for future success and then hopefully be taken seriously in mainstream society. I guess I just thought if I could acquire as much as I could skill wise, it would serve me in the long run. But the military is a serious commitment and we don’t give enough thought to war around here, so it’s something to think about. You might not be able to do anything after you leave, retire etc.

Both Cynthia and Blaze describe their need to belong and contribute to greater Canadian society suggesting that there is something amiss in their contribution and existence to national life. In contrast, both Ruben and Alfred are not convinced that the military is a
site of belonging. In fact, they go as far as saying that they would not recommend the Canadian Forces as an occupation because it does not sufficiently protect racialized soldiers, thereby leaving them in a very vulnerable position.

**Tammy:** Do you think joining the military though in some sort of ways help people belong to a nation?

**Alfred:** No. It doesn’t. I don’t see any difference. I mean straight up, I told my cousins -- and I've got about four of them, first cousins here. For that one second when I still had the glory phase, when I said, yeah, the military is a good career. It's a steady income. Yeah, come on. I mean it's not so bad. You can do this and this and this. But four years later after I got jaded, I called each of them personally. Said whatever you do, do not join the military basically. My kids, no, no, not going to happen, well I'll be dead first. It's not going to happen. It doesn’t make you any more Canadian.

One day, I went in my uniform, I was buying gas. And I had a bunch of different experiences. I've had one guy turn around and introduce me to his son. He's like seven. Asking questions like do you guys fire the big guns? He's like did you sail on the ship? And also where did you go? And so he was fascinated by it. And the dad, said “thank you for your service”. You're welcome. You don’t know what to say. You don't know how to respond. It's like I was only on a ship for a few years, never in any immediate life threatening situation. And then I've met the one person that asked me what security company I worked for, where I've met a number of people that ask me that, because of my Navy blacks. I've gotten both. How do I respond to that? It doesn’t make you any more Canadian. You have the Canadians that know. You have the Canadians that don’t. You come from your community. And everyone in your community is saying how is it? And they're very skeptical about it because they think that as soon as you come in you'll go to Afghanistan. And the recruiters recruit what the forces need. So if they want people in the infantry, they push. When they say these are the jobs that are open, infantry is key and so they're going to say, yeah we need people in the infantry. Or we need people in this maritime engineering. And so you go in the Navy and you're recruiting from Halifax. I met this one guy, black guy, absolutely wonderful. He was recruited as a maritime engineer. Was seasick hard-core. And changing trades was damn near impossible because they were below their quotas. So they weren't letting anybody out. And so eventually he wound up on a medical category. I mean we couldn’t even, the minute the ropes were off, this guy started throwing up. And I mean he could
have been white. He could have been black. Could have been green for all I care. Well he was green most of the time. But being in the military doesn’t make you any more Canadian. You’re still looked at with skepticism. I mean depending on what cultural background you’re from, they think you joined the military because you were a troublemaker. I wasn’t. Or they think you joined the military because you can’t find a job.

**Ruben:** I cannot tell someone in good conscience to join the military because of what I have experienced and seen around me. There are no policies and procedures to deal with racism independently. Basically, if you’re suffering you have to try and put up with it, get out it or will drive them out. No effective policy or procedure that if you’re a racist you are not held to account. There are no penalties or consequences and that puts people of colour in a difficult position. So, no I can’t tell someone of colour to join, they just don’t belong there at all.

For both Alfred and Ruben joining the military does not ensure national belonging and they even gone as far as to warn their family and friends not to join the military. In many ways this is due to their racial positioning and what they have either witnessed or experienced in the Canadian military. What their narratives reveal is that in contrast to the recruitment campaigns that feature racialized bodies as people who belong to the Canadian military apparatus, the reality for some is quite different. For both Alfred and Ruben for them their participation as racialized soldiers within the Canadian military does not provide any guarantees with respect to national belonging.

The final two narratives are featured at length. I deliberately extract these detailed narratives to highlight the difficult journeys of these two soldiers into the Canadian Forces. I begin with Mario, a Communications Technician in the Regular Force:

**Tammy:** Can you tell me a little bit more about why and how your process of joining the Canadian military? You explained it in terms of how the system, the education system here just wasn’t engaging you.
**Mario:** When I got to Canada, I could not even pronounce one word correctly. They put me to elementary—well, high school, directly right into high school and all the subjects that I took was all in the general level. They just passed me through. It was 50s and good enough. Even when I went back and I tried to return to high school they said that I was too old. At that time I was 19. And that's when the OAC kind of got phased out. And yeah, they're like sorry; you don't meet the requirement, too old. So they pretty much gave me the boot. During that time, I got sick with cancer. So me going back to school kind of went on the backburner. And the following year I applied to go to college at Centennial—sorry, at Seneca, and I did one semester. And yeah, I was embarrassed. I always try my best to excel on everything that I'm doing: Sports, you name it. I always try, but I didn't have the knowledge or the capacity to understand what I got myself into. I always liked sciences, but biotech was very challenging and kind of pushed me off to get out of education. I started getting in trouble because I didn't see my life going anywhere else. I was hanging around with the wrong crew, wrong crowd, started hanging in the streets. I lived in the streets for some part of my life. I tried to go into the military multiple times because knowing how what my parents had gone through back home I didn't want to follow that negativity that Latin Americans have. You know, you're a drug dealer and all that. And that's exactly what it was starting to fall back into. And the reason why I was not allowed is I had. One year I was diagnosed with cancer, after chemotherapy and radiation you have and that determines how many years which kind of renders you not capable to be deployed, which for the military is like sorry, you don't meet their requirements. So I kept all those letters where they're saying no sorry, and it was one thing after another.

One day, it was an OPP officer. It was not a DUI charge. They were already following me and I was coming back from one of the nightclubs. I didn't have anything on me. I did earlier, but I was coming back. And they pulled me over and the OPP officer, he said, “we know”. And it was kind of like a wakeup call and the following week I went and talked to my doctor. I said, “Listen, you have to help me. There's two ways I can go. My life can go really, really negative way or you can at least reword things on the letter that I want to put towards the military so they can accept me and I can start doing something with my life”. So he did and I love that doctor 'cause he helped me a lot.

**Tammy:** That was a huge crossroad for you right there.

**Mario:** Yeah, it was a wakeup call. Some of my friends right now are too—well, I'm no longer in contact with them. The only one that I went to visit, he told me he was
pissed off at me 'cause it's like what are you doing here. Like, you got a second chance to do something different. So don't come back. So I also took that as a hint and yeah. Ended up in jail some of them; I don't think they're out now, but anyways. Yeah, it was a turning point.

**Tammy:** So after that doctor wrote that letter, you were able to...

**Mario:** He reworded everything that-- I still needed to do my follow ups, but the way he reworded it I guess the recruiter didn't really-- kind of look at it and it's like okay you're good to go.

**Tammy:** What's the timeframe of that around?

**Mario:** That was in 2003. I was diagnosed with cancer in 1999, so in 2003 is when everything fell right into the path I needed.

The difficulties that poor and racialized immigrants face, complicated by a personal history of illness, prompted Mario to persist in his efforts to join the military. For him, the military was his salvation, a path that enabled him to avoid falling into the life of a drug dealer. His account is instructive in that it shows the structural conditions that make the military an attractive option for racialized soldiers, regardless of the racist conditions they might face. In the final narrative from Cyrus, a Reserve Force soldier with the Horse Guards, we see that the same barriers Mario faced as a new immigrant also made the military attractive to Cyrus.

**Tammy:** How long have you been serving in the military now?

**Cyrus:** I joined in 2007, so seven years.

**Tammy:** So tell me a little bit about your decision to join.

**Cyrus:** My family moved to Canada in 2000, and my family moved from Africa to Canada. At that point I had been out of school for about a year, about two years – a year and a half to two years. So I had to go back to high school. I was
finished high school. I was in preparation to go to college, and I was actually supposed to go to college that year but then my dad has been here since '95. And my dad got everything squared away for us to come to Canada in 2000. So when we got to Canada in 2000 – because I've been out of the school system for almost two years – I had to go back to high school. I went back to high school – myself and my brothers – and someday a tank showed up in front of my school. It was the horse guards doing recruiting.

So I went in, to chat with them. By that time I already started working. I had a part-time job while I was going to school. So I went and talked to them and it sounded really cool, but they said they cannot start the paperwork there. Like if you wanted to start the paperwork you had to come to recruiting centre which wasn’t here. So myself and my brother said, yeah, it was cool. But I couldn’t go that night 'cause I was working. My younger brother wasn’t working at the time, so he went. So anyways he went through the whole information session. He came back, and he said, because he was working at the time, he said, “Yeah, I think I’ll go try it out. I’ll go join and see how it goes.” So he went off in the summer of 2001 and did his basic. And by the time he came back that was my last year in high school there. By the time he came back I decided okay, I’m gonna join too. But I’ll start out my paperwork like once I’m settled in my first year at York. So after settling in I applied to join. But unfortunately 'cause that was shortly after was 9/11 ... well, I didn’t know that at the time but rules around it were changing.

So I went through the whole process and did my medical, did my aptitude test, did my interview. And the last thing I was waiting for at the time was my physical fitness test so that I could sign up. But the physical fitness test never came, so I kept calling saying, “What’s going on with it?” They said, “Oh well wait, wait, wait.” And eventually after pestering the guy so much I was told, “Well, the rules have changed. For you to join now you have to be a Canadian citizen to join”. I’m like, “We just came to Canada. For me to get my Canadian citizenship it’s going to take me two years,” 'cause we were landed immigrants at the time. So the person said, “Well, I don’t make the rules. I only enforce the rules.” I’m like, “Okay, fine.” So I went off and waited until I got my citizenship. The day I got my citizenship – right after the citizenship ceremony – I came down I said, “You said get my Canadian citizenship. So I got it now.” And I was told, “Oh well, because you’ve not lived in Canada for 10 years you have to do a pre-security clearance, which is going to take another 18 months to two years. I’m like, “So why didn’t you do this the whole time I was waiting?” They go, “Well, I don’t make the rules. I only enforce them.” “Okay, fine.”
So I waited another two years making it a total now of four years. And again, by the end of the fourth year, to the day, I called back saying, “Well, what is going on? Am I going to join? Am I not going to join?” But at the time I had graduated from York. So I was told there’s nothing back on my file yet, so I have to wait—that I shouldn’t call. I should wait until I hear back from somebody. So I gave up on it pretty much. I started working full time at the time. And on my way driving to work—I got a call saying, “You still want to join the Army? We’ve got something back on your file. We’ll set up an appointment for an interview. You have to do an interview again and the medical again, but the aptitude test you wouldn’t have to do again.” Well, fine. I came back, did it, and by the time it was all said and done I actually got sworn in—I’m not sure. I think it’s ’06 or ’07—some places I see ’06 dates, some places I see ’07 dates. So yeah, so that was how I ended up joining in ’07.

Tammy: So you’re in the reserve force then. Your journey towards even entering it’s fascinating I mean because of all of the sort of—I don’t know. Some people might say hoops, red tape, that you had to go through. Would you say that’s common?

Cyrus: I’d say mine is a record. I have not spoken to everybody. Mine is a record of five to six years that it took me.

Tammy: Why do you think it took so long? Is it because of the citizenship issues?

Cyrus: I would say part of that, but I’d say I trace it mostly back to 9/11 because everything changed after 9/11. And security was at the top of everybody’s mind. It’s part of life for us to be … we have to put certain rules in place to make sure that we’re all safe.

Tammy: When you joined, tell me a little bit about what appealed to you. I mean there’s a couple things in the group that I’m interested in. You know when you said they came to your high school, what was it that appealed to you and your brother at the time?

Cyrus: Actually, in all honesty there was this guy that used to be a sergeant at the time in my unit. He’s gone. He’s left the reserves now, and he’s gone into the Air Force full-time. He was actually the crew commander, so to speak, of that tank that came to our school. So it’s like we’re new in Canada and to see somebody that looks like us involved in the military, and he’s in charge of guys
that are going around and recruiting people. That was like ... yeah, we want to talk to him. We want to see what this is all about.

**Tammy:** When you say he looked like you, do you mean that he is soldier of colour?

**Cyrus:** He was Jamaican.

**Tammy:** Would you say that made a difference to you, the fact that ...

**Cyrus:** Yeah, definitely because at the time we were still pretty new in Canada. We came to Canada in December of 2000. And he came to our school in the spring. So we came to Canada in December, started school in January, and he showed up like March, April. So it was kind of like, yeah, you can be like that.

**Tammy:** Did you know a lot about the Canadian military before, let’s say, this gentleman came to your high school?

**Cyrus:** No, absolutely not. I knew part of their involvement in the civil war in [names country] way, way back in the day. I knew there were some foreign countries that were dropping relief/aid packages all over the place because of the unrest and stuff going on – not that I knew anybody that had been directly impacted. But I read about it. And after we moved to Canada I found out Canada was one of those countries. So I kind of felt good about it. And now we’re in Canada.

The presence of a recruiter of colour enables Cyrus to transcend the post 9/11 security conditions that made entrance into the military difficult for new immigrants. We can surmise that even when confronted with considerable barriers, in the case of Mario economic conditions, and in the case of Cyrus the heightened security clearance for new immigrants that was required after 9/11, the military remains an attractive option.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter I discussed how the military came to embrace diversity through recruitment drives that sought to appeal to targeted groups in different ways. Responding
to employment equity initiatives and seeking to expand its appeal in light of a dwindling
base of support, the CF set out to appeal to racial minorities, promising career and
financial opportunities but seeking particularly to fill the ranks of its infantry, particularly
in light of Canadian participation in Afghanistan. Racialized soldiers responded,
revealing that they often came from disadvantaged economic positions, and hoped that
the military would provide more financial stability. Some also hoped to secure some
sense of national belonging. Many of the soldiers in this study were critical of the
military, viewing the recruitment as duplicitous, and denouncing its tokenistic aspects.
Several felt that racism began immediately upon entering the military. In the following
chapter, I discuss these experiences of racism in the Canadian Forces, in addition to
making the case that the military is constructed as a space of whiteness grounded in a
colonial history. While the Canadian military has appeared to promote racial progress, its
complex recruitment history of racialized soldiers and subsequent integration of racial
minorities reveal the opposite. I reveal the limitations of this integration in the following
chapter.
CHAPTER V

Military Encounters as Racial Encounters: Racialized Bodies and the Discursive Construction of Whiteness in the Canadian Forces

Being part of the military is a really strange thing. On the one hand 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, that 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, Retired Canadian Soldier

If whiteness gains currency by being unnoticed, then what does it mean to notice whiteness? What does making the invisible marks of privilege more visible actually do?
-Sara Ahmed, A Phenomenology of Whiteness

I told a new guy I was in charge of once, “You know every minority here is going to look at you with rage, white rage. He didn’t get it. I had to explain what I physically meant by white rage - the rage people of colour feel against white people.
-Maya, Canadian soldier

5.1 Introduction

Typically, the Canadian military or western militaries in general have not been narrated as institutions that are organized along racial lines. 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 brought together various bodies of work centering on the lived experience of racialized soldiers and how they negotiate national belonging within the Canadian multicultural context. Literatures 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 lived out on a daily basis. How wars and armed conflict produce, naturalize and maintain race, gender and ethnic hierarchies are also instrumental to understanding the racial underpinnings of citizenship. The lived experience of racialized soldiers within a multicultural framework is a key component to the contemporary making of the racial state and articulations of citizenship.

In chapter two, I theorized Canada as a racial state whereby the Canadian military is implicated in the making of settler colonialism and imperialism. Furthermore, I also demonstrated how soldiers of colour serving in western militaries are living in an imperial moment characterized by a striking paradox - one in which racialized terror is ubiquitous, but simultaneously existing alongside a postracial neoliberalism, where the denial of racial violence is central. In what follows, I draw on the interviews with racialized soldiers, to demonstrate how the Canadian Forces is made white, and in doing so reveal how racialized soldiers grapple with every day encounters in an institution that is not made in their image. Specifically, in what follows I argue that the military encounter is a racial encounter. Frantz Fanon’s notion of the “encounter” is instructive here, as he asks us to carefully consider how the Black man comes to know himself as

Other. The Black man, Fanon writes, experiences himself through a “third person consciousness”, a negation (Fanon, 1952, p. 110). The Black man is not. He cannot experience himself as fully human while perceived as not. Fanon describes this negation below:

And then the occasion arose I had to meet the white man’s eyes. An unfamiliar weight burdened me. A real world challenged me. In the white world the man of colour encounters difficulties in the development of his bodily schema. Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity. It is a third-person consciousness. The body is surrounded by an atmosphere of uncertainty…. (p.110)

In the above passage Fanon describes the encounter as it occurs from the vantage point of the Black male subject. His profound descriptions ask us to reconcile how relations between unequals are powerfully shaped by the histories and contemporary realities of oppression. As Razack (1998) reminds us, “While the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized changes in historically specific ways, it remains a moment when powerful narratives turn oppressed peoples into objects, to be held in contempt, or to be saved from their fates by more civilized beings” (p. 3). Fanon recognizes that the Black individual exists in fundamental alienation, brought about by the fact that they are placed in the category of “other” by European society. This racial alienation becomes very specific and understood. Fanon says, “Consciousness of the body is solely a negating activity.” I understand this to mean negating is not something self-affirming, but invalidating. It is this third-person consciousness that he speaks of that makes us more aware of ourselves and our actions. As a result, we
begin to see ourselves from the point of view of the other and what they think and see. Describing this process Fanon states,

I am overdetermined from the outside. I am not the slave of the “idea” that others have of me but of my appearance. I move slowly in the world, accustomed to aspiring no longer to appear. I proceed by crawling. Already the white looks, the only true looks, are dissecting me. I am fixed. Having prepared their microtome, they sliced away objectively pieces of my reality. I am disclosed. I feel, I see, in those white looks, that is now a new man who enters, but a new type of man, a genus. Why – a Negro! (p. 116)

In this chapter, I am concerned with how racialized soldiers are made through everyday encounters with whiteness, where, as Mahrouse writes of the solidarity encounter in international politics, encounters constitute “the ambivalent site where whiteness is constituted, or where race happens” (Mahrouse, 2007, p. 39). While there are practices and policies that call for strict homogeneity in the Canadian military, racialized soldiers embody the “Other” and come to know themselves as Other through colonial legacies of whiteness and their encounters with white Canadian soldiers. They, too, to return to Fanon, take themselves far from their own presence when having to meet the white man’s eye. How do the Canadian Forces secure themselves as a place of white dominance? And how do soldiers of colour secure a subject position in such a space? What are the techniques and mechanisms by which institutional whiteness is produced? What are the material effects of the encounters with whiteness? What do quotidian encounters with racism look like? To answer these questions, I focus on the experiences of racialized members of the Canadian military to highlight what Victoria Basham (2013) describes as the “co-constitutive links between the everyday and the geopolitical” (p.
This chapter will demonstrate how the Canadian military is constructed and preserved as a space of whiteness and dominance while simultaneously exploring how racialized bodies negotiate this space in a multitude of ways. In doing so, I make visible that the production of whiteness and how it “quilts together various racial practices” in the Canadian military are grounded in colonial history that is ultimately connected to how we wage war in the present (Erickson, 2012, p.20).

This chapter is organized as follows: First, I focus on articulating what constitutes a “white space” and how I understand and make sense of the social production of whiteness. To do this, I draw on work that begins by describing the significance of whiteness studies and its relationship to critical race theory. I then move on to scholarship that examines the relationship between whiteness, space and bodies to argue that whiteness in institutions is secured through its proximity to difference (Ahmed, 2012; Puwar, 2004). I go on to describe the operations of institutional whiteness and consider how it operates through a site like the Canadian Forces. Finally, I showcase the narratives of racialized soldiers to demonstrate how the Canadian military is made white while simultaneously revealing how racialized soldiers are continually negotiating their practices through expectations to be the same as, that is to be white and, simultaneously, to be Other, a negotiation that as Franz Fanon (1967) expressed is inescapable in the white world.

**Seeing Whiteness: Whiteness as a social and discursive production**

While in this chapter, Fanon theoretically provides a way in which to theorize the colonized other, specifically black men, I also introduce several other scholars in relation
to Fanon to illustrate how whiteness is organized and embodied. Theoretical understandings of whiteness as a tool of analysis have been developed and debated in various parts of the globe including the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Europe and the UK. These developments have taken place within various disciplines such as communication and cultural studies (Dyer, 1997; Grimes, 2001), sociology (Knowles, 2004; Puwar, 2004), critical race theory (Ahmed, 2004; Bell, 2000), feminism (hooks, 1992; Frankenberg, 1993; 2005), social geography, history and literary studies (Roediger, 1991; 1994; Ware 1992; 2005). They have profoundly changed conceptualizations of racialization and their intersection with other identities in order to further understand the processes by which we are produced as raced beings. Such approaches develop important critiques of the work that goes into creating and maintaining racialized spaces and privileges. While one of the main purposes of this research is to feature the social production of race and racism in the Canadian Forces, in this chapter I am particularly interested in the social production of whiteness and how the Canadian Forces is “made white”. Often considered the invisible norm in the West, understanding how whiteness operates in the everyday lives of racialized subjects, and its connection to violence, is central to this thesis. 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 (Dyer, 1997; Frankenberg, 1993; Roediger, 1997). 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. Third, whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked
and unnamed” (p. 1). 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 soldiers thereby establishing who can represent and belong in the contemporary moment. As Dyer (1997) suggests, race is “never not a factor, never not in play” (p. 1). To conceptualize the ever present operations of race and its unbounded process of domination rather than as isolated discrete episodes, particularly in military life and global warfare, is to then acknowledge that whiteness is present in the productions of the military industrial complex at home and abroad. The deeper implications of understanding the operations of whiteness particularly alongside the everyday processes of military life are central to grappling with military violence. Dyer (1997) 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” (p. 2). Naming whiteness and linking it to its colonial legacies reveal some of the foundational elements of the racial state 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 of dominance. The silence surrounding whiteness and its
attendant racism create unjust power differentials that are invariably manifested between soldiers of colour and white Canadian soldiers.49

**Constructing Institutional Whiteness**

My understanding of how whiteness operates at the institutional level resonates with Sara Ahmed’s (2007) conceptualization of how institutional whiteness functions. In *A Phenomenology of Whiteness* (2007), 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” (pp. 149). However, I want to stress that the institutionalization of whiteness requires work. Therefore, it is important unpack how whiteness is upheld in the Canadian military apparatus. Ahmed (2007) 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” (p. 52). 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 she states,

> It is important to remember that whiteness 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

49 I am mindful of the criticisms and risks of centering whiteness in that the more we single it out, the more attention we invariably draw to it, once again at the expense of marginalized cultures. While I am mindful of centering whiteness in this chapter, I do think it is vital to name and demonstrate how this state of dominance is produced in the lives of racialized soldiers.
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 (Ahmed, 2007, p. 159).

It is these ‘moments’ that Ahmed alludes to that make up the balance of this chapter. Indeed, 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 her notion of habit worlds, describing “how whiteness holds its place” in the Canadian Forces and with what consequences for racialized soldiers? Ahmed insightfully explores how whiteness holds through habits. She goes on to state:

> Public spaces take shape through the habitual actions of bodies, such that the contours of space could be described as habitual. I turn to the concept of habits to theorize not so much how bodies acquire their shape, but how spaces acquire the shape of the bodies that “inhabit” them. We could think about the ‘habit’ in the inhabit”. We need to examine not only how bodies become white, or fail to do so, but also how spaces can take on the very ‘qualities’ that are given to such bodies. In a way, we can think about the habitual as a form of inheritance. It is not so much that we inherit habits, although we can do so: rather the habitual can be thought of as a bodily spatial form of inheritance (p. 156).

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, 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 to racial structures of power gain authority in their ability to align themselves with white settler identities. Whiteness as orientation supports the ideas that bodies have differing capacities to work pending their familiarity with place (Ahmed, 2007, p. 152).

A related technique for producing institutional whiteness is through a white habitus (Bonilla-Silva, 2006 in Angod, 2015, p. 112). Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s (1996/1989) concept of habitus known as “dispositions” that are “embodied” (p. 2), Eduardo Bonilla-Silva emphasizes the positions in dispositions called a “white habitus”. This is known as “a racialized, uninterrupted socialization process that conditions and creates whites’ racial taste, perceptions, feelings and emotions and their views on racial matters” (p. 104). A white habitus can be acquired by bodies that are white and of colour; it is a socialization process that cultivates an orientation to others, the world, and oneself (Angod, 2015). In what follows, I contend that this “white habitus” is reified through the production of the institutional other. This chapter reveals that a condition of belonging in the Canadian military entails cultivating a white habitus, albeit with a cost to the racialized self.

A final technique that assists in understanding how institutional whiteness operates in the Canadian Forces is what is what Nirmal Puwar (2004) calls the “somatic norm,” that is, the “inside proper” in relation to the outside (p. 1). According the Puar, the somatic norm is always gendered. In her work she demonstrates how in various institutions in the United Kingdom, in particular the political arena, namely Members of
Parliament have traditionally been white and male. Within the Canadian Forces, this white somatic norm establishes a particular order and is vital to operational effectiveness during warfare. Should the somatic norm be altered, this has been communicated to impact how the Canadian Forces operates thereby threatening cohesion and unity. Drawing on scholars to theorize how the production of whiteness takes place in the Canadian military is central to understanding how the military encounter is conceptualized as a racial encounter. Commenting on the benefit of marking whiteness as constitutive of the encounter George Yancy (2012) states,

People of colour, confront whiteness in their everyday lives, not only as an abstract concept but in the form of embodied whites who engage in racist practices that negatively affect their lives…The act of marking whiteness, then, is itself an act of historicizing whiteness, and act of situating whiteness within the context of material forces and raced inter-laden values that reinforce whiteness as a site of privilege and hegemony. Marking whiteness is about exposing the ways in which whites have created a form of “humanism” that obfuscates their hegemonic efforts to treat their experiences as universal and representative”. (p. 7)

What is stake here then, is understanding how an institution predicated on violence, is linked to the production of those marked as human and others who are not. This production of who falls on either side of the colour line domestically has implications for how war is waged in the contemporary moment more globally.

5.2 The Construction of a “white space”: The Canadian Forces

In what follows, I demonstrate how the military is discursively produced as a white space and trace the mechanisms of its preservation in the Canadian military.
Specifically, I trace how the Canadian military is productive of race and organized along racial lines. Drawing on soldiers’ narratives, this section will go on to demonstrate how dominant military practices and discourses are productive of race, evidenced by an operation and circulation of whiteness from which racialized soldiers must navigate. In doing so, I am simultaneously able to trace an institutional racism grounded in a colonial history in the making of the soldier subject.

Of all serving members of the Canadian Forces, 94.6% are white Canadian.

According to Table 2.0 below, 5.4% of currently serving members identify as a “visible minority” and 1.4% of identify as Aboriginal.

### Table 2.0. Characteristics of military personnel and civilian workers, aged 15 to 64

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Regular forces</th>
<th>Reserve forces</th>
<th>Total civilian workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>85.3</td>
<td>87.8</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 to 24</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 39</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>57.7</td>
<td>49.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 54</td>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>31.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some postsecondary</td>
<td>12.7</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postsecondary degree/diploma</td>
<td>52.6</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>88.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Official language</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>51.4</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French only</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>42.2</td>
<td>45.6</td>
<td>73.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visible minority</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Significantly different from total civilian workers at 0.05 or less
**Significantly different from the same column of regular forces at 0.05 or less
***Significantly different from officers at 0.05 or less

less 1 Population 25 or older

While there is an argument to be made with respect to the bodily constitution of the armed forces, there were other ways in which “whiteness” was experienced in the Canadian Forces among racialized soldiers. Several conversations with soldiers generally involved telling me that the Canadian Forces is a fairly welcoming place. Others struggled to find their place. While sharing with me their experiences in the Canadian military, many soldiers articulated that they were warned of racism and that it was “so white” or a “not a very diverse place” but that “might get better over time”. The following underscores how Chester, an Engineer, in the Reserve Force understood the Canadian military to be a “white space”.

**Chester:** I was thinking about joining for a long time. I really enjoyed the idea of being part of something bigger, but a lot of my friends and family warned me that the military is really “white”. (laughs)

**Tammy:** Can you describe to me what you mean by “white” in this context?

**Chester:** Well, you know, 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 CF. According to Chester, a “white space” is constructed by the absence of diverse bodies. He also addresses the idea that to be a

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50 Interview with Ruben “Rocky” Coward, Retired Canadian Soldier.
51 Interview with Blaze, Retired Canadian Soldier.
52 Interview with George, Reserve Force, Canadian Forces.
soldier one must perform a soldier’s identity that is also homogenous with very little room for different ways of being. Racialized soldiers deviating from this homogeneity are quickly reminded that they are not part of the somatic norm and are encouraged to conform to ensure operational effectiveness. The implication then is that operational effectiveness and order are incompatible with racial difference. Furthermore, following Ahmed (2007):

Spaces acquire the ‘skin’ of the bodies that inhabit them. What is important to note here is that it is not just bodies that are oriented. Spaces also take shape by being orientated around some bodies. Spaces also take shape by being oriented around some bodies, more than others. We can also consider ‘institutions’ as orientation devices, which take the shape of ‘what’ resides within them. (p. 157).

In essence what Ahmed is arguing is that when institutions are described as being white, we are demonstrating how institutional spaces are shaped by the presence of some bodies and immune to others. That is, “white bodies gather, and cohere to form the edges of such spaces” (p. 157). In another instance, Shannon, who identifies as mixed race, emphasizes the dominant presence of white bodies in the military and how that limits the seeing difference and other racialized bodies.

**Tammy:** Do you find that you stand out?

**Shannon:** Oh yeah, for sure. I mean, in the military it is dominated by white people so they don’t really see mixed race at all, and they just see somebody who is not white basically. Yeah, you standout, alright.

Building on Ahmed’s point regarding how institutional spaces are shaped by the presence of some bodies and immune to others, Puar (2004) also concedes the following:
Social spaces are not blank and open for any body to occupy. Rather, there is a connection between bodies and space, which is built, repeated and contested over time. While all can, in theory, enter the [institutional spaces] it is certain types of bodies that are tacitly designated as being the ‘natural’ occupants of specific positions. Some bodies are deemed as having the right to belong, while others are marked out as trespassers, who are, in accordance with how both spaces and bodies are imagined (politically, historically and conceptually), circumscribed as being ‘out of place’. Not being the somatic norm, they are seen as *space invaders* [emphasis mine]. The connection between particular spaces with specific types of bodies is no doubt subject to change; this usually, however, is not without consequence as it often breaks with how bodies have been placed and ultimately positioned. (p. 8)

One of the more common expressions of the military as a “white space” or as “really white” was often referred by the lack of racialized bodies in the senior ranks. Several soldiers remarked on the difficulties with moving up in the ranks or had a hard time imagining their careers expanding because they did not seen themselves reflected in the senior membership.

**Alfred:** So that’s how I got jaded, because I don't see myself in the leadership. There were also a couple of other experiences. I mean, whether it was the terms of service, or having to fight tooth and nail for every single promotion that I've gotten, or whether it was various office crap. I realized their system is not going to change. Learn to live and work within the system. And hopefully try to thrive, just do your best and whatever happens, happens. I just stopped caring.

**Tammy:** Do you think that [the lack of people of colour] has an affect on let's say people of lower ranks and what they want to achieve in the military?

**Alfred:** I think it does. No one will admit it... When I want a role model, I look for the qualities that people have. But with other people it does matter. And even within the unit it does matter. I'm sitting here telling you that there are no black people that I can look up to and say I want to be just like him. All the successful black people I know are my friends. And they're outside of the military. And they
make major moves. It's like I can't do that here. And you try. And you just can't get it done. After a while you decide, yeah, it's time to leave.

Alfred reveals a number of important points with respect to his tenure in the Canadian Forces. He 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 with struggle. Six years into his service, by now a full time member of the force, he expresses “something just switched off in me and I stopped caring”. He describes 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. First, Alfred conveys his disappointment with respect to the lack of people of colour in the upper ranks, which seems to have impacted his overall morale in the Canadian Forces. I raise this issue because keeping morale up, particularly on military bases especially in combat missions is of utmost importance. While the Canadian Forces is very attuned to keeping morale up for obvious reasons, including a unit in the Forces entitled, The Canadian Forces Moral and Welfare Services Personal designed to “enhance the morale and welfare of the military community, thus contributing to the operational readiness and effectiveness of the Canadian Forces”. My interview with Alfred demonstrated that he is impacted by not seeing his body reflected in the leadership and this impacts his career mobility and as a result feels limited in terms of the contribution he can make to the organization. While he emphasizes that he looks at qualities and values in a role model, in this instance he is also accommodating the neoliberal discourse pertaining to qualifications that are largely constructed outside of race and entrenched in this idea of colourblindness. He suggests that all his friends of colour are able to succeed
in other institutions outside of the military, but suggests that while you can try to climb
the ranks in the CF, it is very difficult for racialized bodies.

5.3 The Look – The White (male) Gaze

Throughout my research I realized that the encounters that racialized soldiers
were having across military life in the Canadian Forces could not be interpreted as
isolated events, nor could they be divorced from historical influences. What often struck
me was that the experiences racialized soldiers were having were not novel. Below
through Charlotte and Shannon’s narratives, I demonstrate the significance of the
racialized women’s body in two distinct military spaces:

Charlotte: So I remember my first posting, and I remember my first experience
walking onto a garage floor. I was all pumped because I had a female Captain.
But I remember walking down the garage floor and it was like this big huge
hangar. And it’s like this empty space in the middle so that you can drive the
trucks out of the bays. I was Transport, so on each side there was trucks lined up
with mechanics working on them and doing servicing and stuff. And when I first
walked into the building – and her office was at the very back so I had to walk
across the hangar floor and I felt like all work stopped. And I don’t know whether
or not that was the case but that was just the feeling that I got. I felt like all of a
sudden all these sets of eyes were on me and I felt so closely examined for the first
time in my life. And I don’t know if it was being a woman or being of colour or
both or what? Like the uniform is, you know the combats are like olive grey and
you can’t be, you don’t look attractive in combats. No one does. Like, they’re a
uniform for a reason. They’re supposed to erase all that, right? But women being
something like 12% in the military, obviously I felt like fresh meat walking down
the hangar. I felt objectified. I felt like a streetwalker. And I’m not being dramatic.
I really felt like I had 50 pairs of eyes or however many people were working on
the floor at that time, I felt icky and definitely not comfortable in my own skin.

Charlotte, a retired Captain indicates how she is theorizing the gaze upon her body within
an all male dominated, white space. In this particular instance she feels despite the
function of the uniform described as attempting to eliminate or reduce all difference, she remained starkly noticeable. Reflecting on this notion of the gaze or “the look” Fanon states, “the movements, the attitudes, the glances of the other fixed me there” (p. 112).

Describing the objectifying nature of the gaze he goes on to say, “Sealed into that crushing objecthood, the look imprisoned me” (p. 113). While Charlotte is unsure whether it was her gender or race or a combination that made her the object of the white male gaze, she is made to feel objectified in that moment. Despite having a female Captain that she is excited to work with and report to (a rarity in the CF), it doesn’t minimize how she is able to exist on a corporeal level in this particular space. However, in the narrative below we see that the entrance of the black female figure is received quite differently. As Puwar (2004) states, “this [black] presence is still capable of inducing a state of ontological anxiety, for it disturbs a particular ‘look’” (p.39). Shannon goes on to explain how her body was seen during a run one morning while residing on a military base:

**Shannon:** There was a time I remember when I was full-time and I was jogging through the PMQs which is the married quarters, and this little, I don’t know, maybe he was like 10 years old, but this white kid said to his friends, who were all white as well, says, “Oh,” and it was so matter of fact or shocked, he goes, “Look, there goes a mommy niggy.” I was like…it was just a surprise, you know what I mean? These kids are just used to a homogeneous society because that’s largely what the Canadian Forces is.

**Tammy:** Did you respond to that little kid at all?

**Shannon:** No because I was shocked and I really don’t like talking to other people’s children. I just kept running but I remember looking at him strange. I saw he was a product of his parents but you know, it was quick and I’m running, and in that moment he says that to his friends. It was almost like it was the first time that he saw somebody who wasn’t white. Like, for him, it was almost like, to all his
Shannon’s racist encounter is startling, but not all together surprising in the context of the pervasive racism other soldiers’ of colour experience. However, the utterance of “There’s a mommy niggy!” by the youth grabs one’s attention as if there is something to be seen, looked at, noticed and observed. The entire scene is corporeal and felt viscerally by Shannon. In a similar vein, Frantz Fanon (1986) writes about his experiences when a little white “sees” him on the street:

“Look, a Negro!” It was an external stimulus that flicked over me as I passed by. I made a tight smile. “Look, a Negro!” It was true. It amused me. “Look, a Negro!” The circle was drawing a bit tighter. I made no secret of my amusement. “Mama, see the Negro! I’m frightened!” Frightened! Frightened! Now they were beginning to be afraid of me. I made up my mind to laugh myself to tears, but laughter had become impossible. I could no longer laugh, because I already knew that there were legends, stories, history and above all historicity…Then, assailed at various points, the corporeal schema crumbled, its place taken by a racial epidermal schema. (p. 112)

Fanon further demonstrates what this repetitive practice of “the look” does to the black body (Fanon, 1967). He observes that this look happens without verbal communication in various everyday spaces, in addition to institutional spaces. Puwar (2004) elaborates on Frantz Fanon’s notion of the colonial gaze further stating, “Empire was contemplated in such a way that its gaze put into play a corporeal racial schema of alien other(s) which helped to glue collectivities of whiteness with a superior sense of their ‘natural’ right to occupy privileged spaces of institutional representation on both a national and international scale” (p. 40). What is evident through Charlotte and Shannon’s narratives
is how black female bodies in the West signify meaning that is articulated through space (Mohanram, 1999). She explains that the black body is read by the dominant as rooted in other places, apart from respectable space while whiteness remains unmarked (Nelson, 2008). As Puwar (2004) explains “disorientation” as one the processes that highlights the space invader status of racialized bodies in privileged occupational positions:

The claims ‘black bodies’ make on institutions by occupying spaces they are not expected to be in are constantly challenged by a look which abnormalises their presence and locates them, through the workings of racialized framings, belonging elsewhere. It is important to note though, that the black body is fixed by a white gaze, the white gaze itself is disoriented by the close proximity of these foreign bodies. Their very presence as ‘equal’ members rather than as service staff, who take up a different rhythm in the occupation of space, challenges the ways in which racialized bodies have been characterized and fixed…there is a disturbance of a certain order. A racialized episteme has been interrupted. (p. 42).

To further understand the operations of whiteness Ahmed (2000) examines the concept of strangeness to conceptualize how bodies are constituted as “Other” when they are “out of place” in neighbourhoods, institutions or nations. She explains that “strange bodies are precisely those bodies that are temporarily assimilated as the unknown within the encounter: they function as the border that defines both the space into which the familiar body… cannot cross, and the space in which such a body constitutes itself as a home” (p. 54). Therefore, in various contexts, but more specifically in the Canadian Forces what becomes evident is that through the mechanism of the look or white male gaze, the racialized body is rendered outside legitimate space; “its movement dictated by tacit rights of occupancy” and as such “cannot simply be” (Nelson, 2008, p. 40). This is
particularly instructive, because the making of dominant subjects in spatial terms is contingent on how differently marked subjects take on disparate meanings through their ability to enter and remain in certain spaces. As Nelson (2008) argues bodies must be read against the “backdrop of their geographies” in order to understand who belongs and who does not (p. 4).

5.4 The Making of National Warriors in Rural Spaces

Both reserve and currently serving soldiers are often sent to spaces located outside of urban centers to train and carry out specific postings. Soldiers from urban centers tended to seek both comfort and invisibility in urban spaces, and expressed concern and even trepidation with respect to training or being posted in smaller towns. As Cowen (2007) argues, there is a rural geography to contemporary warfare that is evident in both the contemporary Canadian and American contexts. She states,

While both warfare and the global population are increasingly urban, the majority of soldiers who fight these wars from the national militaries of leading states of the 'coalition of the willing' are rural recruits. Military personnel are drawn overwhelmingly from rural areas, which are understood to have both the economic motivations for mass enlistment coupled with small-town culture of patriotic nationalism. (pp. 1-2)

In contrast, most of the racialized soldiers I interviewed were from urban centers that are required to train in rural spaces, foreign to many of them. Small towns such as Petawawa and Gagetown located a couple hours from urban centers were often understood as “white places”\(^{53}\), and “not really diverse”\(^{54}\), from which their bodies could not hide or “blend in”

\(^{53}\) Interview with Alfred, Regular Force, Canadian Forces
despite being shielded by the Canadian Forces uniform. In my exchange with George below, he explains some of his concerns and fears of these rural training grounds:

**George:** To be honest, when I was younger in the military, I didn’t notice race or ethnicity having an impact very much 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 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, getting yelled at or I’m being treated this way because I’m a minority. So 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].

Being from [a bigger city], we’ve got so many different cultures in our unit, we’ve got a whole bunch of Asians, Russians, and Europeans, everything under the spectrum. So here back home, it’s a non-issue really. But when I do on courses in smaller bases such as Petawawa, even Gagetown which is in New Brunswick close to Fredericton, there are a lot of predominantly white people in those areas. That’s where you’ll get a little bit more of the different treatment. One of the main things for me is coming from a big city, if I join the Regular Force as an engineer, I know I’d have to go to Petawawa and that’s a tiny little town in the middle of nowhere, which is not close to anything. The whole town revolves around the base. That really just didn’t appeal to me because I grew up in the big city, I’m used to the traffic, the people, and I like meeting people in the city. You can go to a different place every day for the rest of your life and never see the same person twice. That was big city living versus living in a small town; I couldn’t do it in a small town.

**Tammy:** What is it about the small town in comparison to the big city?

**George:** I think a big part of it is the 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 when they hear me talk about an experience we just had together, they’re like, “I don’t know what you’re talking about, man. They didn’t treat you any differently.” However, you feel it being a minority, even though I was born and raised in Canada. I don’t have a thick accent, I just look this way because of my genetics and they don’t necessarily understand that and treat you a little bit differently. It’s hard to explain how they treat you differently, it’s a little bit of attitude here, and it’s a little bit of poor service at whatever

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54 Interview with Maya, Regular Force, Canadian Forces
George reveals much about the contrast between how he experiences himself in a small town versus the big city. For George, who identifies as a mixed race soldier, when he first began his career in the military he never attributed the treatment he received from his superiors during training to racism. In many ways, George articulates a discourse of meritocracy, the idea if you work hard, you will be rewarded. He later reveals that he “proved himself” and attributes his success to his hard work. Only later in his career does George begin to consider that race and racism may have had an impact on his career and the treatment he received in the military. Further into the interview I asked George if he would consider staying for a longer term in the military if it were more racially diverse. Comparing both urban and rural spaces, George feels much safer and comfortable in big urban centers because of the presence of various racialized groups. He expresses concern when having to travel to smaller towns suggesting the different treatment he receives, however subtle. What further describes George’s alienation is when he tries to speak about these incidents with his fellow comrades and they do not acknowledge the difference in treatment he receives thereby isolating him further. His comrades deny that race and/or racism might be part of his everyday lived experience in a small town where he works and trains. 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 even consider how George and his comrades could be positioned differently in this rural space. Later in the interview George expresses to me that he is seriously
contemplating leaving the Canadian Forces to pursue a career in firefighting, in an urban center and I ask him if he would continue to serve in the CF if it were more diverse:

Tammy: Would your choices change, let’s say, if the military was a more diverse place? For example, would you still be pursing firefighting or more likely stay in the military?

George: Good question. It’s hard to say. I think [name’s city] is my home, that’s where I want to be. I don’t really want to move elsewhere. If there was a full-time position in [name’s city] with the military, I think I would do it but again, [name’s city] very multicultural so that could be part of the reason why. A lot of the Regular Force units full-time guys, they’re predominantly white and come from those small towns. Moving to the small towns like Petawawa, Meaford there’s a bunch of Reg Force out there, so I think it’s probably easier for them to move from place to place like that, calling anywhere really home. Whereas for the racial minority, it’s a big shift to go from somewhere where you can identify with a lot of people to somewhere to where you identify with one or two people here and there and live in that community.

Similarly, to George, Maya explains her concerns with being stationed in Petawawa and goes into detail about how she grew up in an urban centre and how she understands the urban-rural divide and its connections to exclusion and belonging:

Maya: My first posting ended up still being in [the big city] at the recruiting centre, I was there for about a year and a half but I was also bumped down a rank and had to move and I was moved to Petawawa. Even though that was the whole intent of me going Regular Force, I was now scared to go to a place like Petawawa. I’m from a part of a city which is straight up all immigrants. It’s just immigrants everywhere now but even going from elementary school to my high school, it was a huge difference for me, let alone going to a place like Petawawa. I was scared for a few things; work wise because now I’m going there as Master Corporal and I don’t know how to do Regular Force administration. That was one reason. Second was my lifestyle there. So here I am, not only am I a city girl and growing up where I did looking at all my class photos in elementary school at least 50% of us were from my community and there was a rare white kid. And if they were white, they were immigrants like Polish. So now, here I am being posted to Petawawa and my fears were, can I
Both George and Maya’s fears of encountering racism or experiencing racial violence in rural small towns is not unfounded or unjustified as I will demonstrate below. Petawawa, a small military town located just two hours outside of Ottawa evoked much anxiety for racialized solders in this study. Historically, the earliest settlement in the region of Petawawa was inhabited by the Algonquin First Nation. Through a series of heated land disputes between settlers, German immigrant farmers, and the Canadian Government, the Canadian Forces Base Petawawa also known as Garrison Petawawa (in 2013) became an official training base in 1910 for the Canadian militia (Garrison Petawawa Military Museums, 2016; Thompson, 1991). During the First World War, in reaction to a fear of invasion and outright racism against foreign nationals, it was been documented that the Canadian government established 26 internment camps across the country, one of which was Garrison Petawawa which opened in December 1914. Serving as prisoner of war and labour camps, the camps used the internees to build roads and railways, clear land and cut lumber. The prisoners were comprised of predominantly Canadians of German and Ukrainian descent, although there were smaller numbers of Czechs, Turks, Bulgarians and others of Austro-Hungarian origin. The camp closed in 1916 and one year later, the camp was reopened to house approximately 2300 Chinese railway labourers.

A second camp known as, Camp 33, opened in September 1939. Guarded by young soldiers and the Veteran’s Guard of Canada, the camp held Canadians of German, Italian and Japanese descent. The camp did not officially close until 1946. This history of
Garrison Petawawa is significant in that it demonstrates how despite being a military base to train Canadian soldiers, it was also used to other those deemed a threat to the nation during particular moments in Canadian history.

Significant here is the intimate connection between bodies, nation and rural space. Mohanram’s (1999) work on what she terms “the cartography of bodies” is a useful discussion on the links between bodies, nation and nature (p. 3). In her examination of the relationship between bodies, race and knowledge Mohanram explores how nation and landscape are intimately connected. Her analysis of how undeveloped natural features are deployed to ground assertions about national belonging is instructive, as Vander Kloet shows in her exploration of rural white spaces. (Vander Kloet, 2011). Describing these connections she argues:

> [t]he landscape functions as a scribe recording the passage of history of the nation and its people. The emotion attached to the landscape relates to its ability to release memory…the reference to landscape makes the reader/viewer think of the nation; the nation, in turn links it to its people. (p. 5-6).

Mohanram explains the discursive role which nature or landscape play in the making of a national community. Moreover, she and other scholars link landscape and nation to racialized bodies, arguing that imagining the nation is also about the strategic inclusion and exclusion of specific bodies (Razack, 2002). Therefore, according to Vander Kloet (2011), “the imagined nation cannot be abstracted from the materiality of the landscape or its investments in the racialization of its citizens and non-citizens” (p. 30). Building on Mohanram and others, there is also an intimate connection between the notion of ‘wilderness’ and Canadian national mythology. As Cowen (2007) states, “the association
of nationalism with the rural executes some powerful political work. It simultaneously constitutes a positive notion of national identity and denies alternative possibilities” (p. 11).

I raise these connections between Canadian wilderness, whiteness, the nation and rural space to demonstrate that racialized subjects like Maya and George’s are not typically seen to inhabit rural space. Despite serving in the Canadian military – a site of quintessential national belonging – their fears of venturing to small towns for training and employment are grounded in a colonial history that evicts racialized bodies from rural, wilderness spaces. How we understand and conceptualize Canada as a northern nation is not simply grounded in geography. Rather, this idea is embedded in myths about qualities of Canadians and their relationship to wilderness (Vander Kloet, 2011). This notion of the wilderness, like “the north,” is assumed to play an important role in the experiences and identities of Canadians (Atwood, 1995; Friedrich, 1997; Grace, 2001). As Grace’s (2001) states, “Canada’s idea of the North, she purports that the fantasy of a northern Canadian wilderness is highly valued because it works to spatially legitimize our desirable national qualities (Grace, in Vander Kloet, 2011, p. 31). Hence, these ideas are meaningful because they illustrate how the north, wilderness and Canadian natural landscapes are discursively produced to define who belongs to the nation. I extend this logic to military geography and labour to understand how racialized bodies navigate rural spaces as part of their every day existence in the Canadian Forces.

Analyzing how ideas of the north, nature, wilderness, whiteness and the Canadian nation are all connected, Carl Berger (1966, 1970) has carefully assessed the nationalist discourse of the “true north strong and free”. In his work, he describes how in Canadian
mythology, northern climate has been used to construct Canadians as strong, healthy and pure (Berger in Vander Kloet, 2011, p. 32) He further emphasizes the idea that by representing northern climate in particular way reinforces the belief that very specific (white) bodies can live and prosper in the North, thereby ensuring racial purity and specific “northern” values. As Vander Kloet (2011) states “Canada is understood as the home to a superior race capable of physically enduring and prospering in harsh conditions… and the physical prowess of northerners is viewed as a testament to both their physical and moral qualities” (p. 31-32). Therefore, the intimate relationship between nation, north, wilderness and whiteness works to construct specific subjects within the Canadian national imaginary. Used as a nation building device, the idea of wilderness serves to deny both urban images of national identity and “aboriginal presence on the land in favour of images of 'empty' landscape open for European settlement or solitude” (Cowen, 2007, p.11). Various scholars and aboriginal activists have argued that the romanticized fantasy of Canada as a vast and 'empty' wilderness has been central to colonial imaginaries historically and the reproduction of colonial practices today. Explaining how the production of an innocent white Canadian subject and Canada as a democratic and moral nation relies on the discursive production of wilderness as empty space to remain intact. Bonita Lawrence (2002) writes,

Canadian identity is deeply rooted in the notion of Canada as a vast northern wilderness, the possession of which makes Canadians unique and “pure” of character. Because of this, and in order for Canada to have a viable national identity, the histories of Indigenous nations, in all their diversity and longevity, must be erased (p. 23).

Lawrence makes the key connection between the fantasy of an empty wilderness with a
particular myth about Canada and its citizens. Despite being met with much resistance, writing Indigenous peoples back into this emptied wilderness, Lawrence fundamentally challenges one of the central stories told about Canada. Returning to the narratives of Maya and George, it becomes understandable how their apprehension with working and training in the more rural spaces of the country conjure up some unsettled feelings. Both Maya and George by virtue of being racialized bodies also embody the urban. Wilderness mythology constitutes the rural landscape as authentic, national, political spaces that are highly suspect of cities and urban forms of life. It further constructs rural and wilderness spaces as alternatively uninhabited and inextricably tied to racist formations of national identity and citizenship (Cowen, 2007, p.11). Making the connection between the rural and militarism, Cowen (2007) asserts, “the rural ideal has hardly been explored in relation to the particular and powerful form of nationalism that constitutes contemporary militarism” (p. 11). 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” (p. 11) Citing a feature article in the Globe in Mail of the previously appointed Canadian Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier, his mother offers a rich description of her General Hiller as a subject-citizen produced by a space of patriotic militarism. His mother is quoted saying that she “believes his Newfoundland upbringing made young Rick a natural for the army. People from the outport of Newfoundland lived their lives in the woods and on the seas in rugged activities and fit into the armed forces quite easily” (Globe in Mail, cited in Cowen, 2007, p.12). This rural idealism lies in stark contrast to how racialized soldier subjects experience the rural in places like Petawawa,
Gagetown and others.

Racialized soldier subjects fear and concern, both anticipated and lived is viscerally felt through rural spaces of military labour and life. Below Maya explains how belonging was tenuous for her through a historical reminder of whiteness that continues to imbue the present:

*Maya*: Let me tell you one of my first days when I was in Pet, I was driving on the main road because there’s always just one and I passed by this tow truck. I’m like saying in my head, “Oh my God, this is where I live. I actually live here now.” I’ve been to Petawawa before and I passed by this tow truck company and I see a Confederate flag and it says, “Proud to be a hick.” And then I think I cried. I think I had a tear come from my eye. I think it was one of the first few days I was in Pet, and I was like, “This is where I live, oh my God.” But to them the Confederate flag is not like how I understand it in my head. I’m like, I know the Confederate flag wasn’t initially supposed to be a racial thing but, over the years, guess what? And now it’s on a business in Petawawa and I was like, “Oh God, this is where I live. Got it.”

Maya’s experience of racism in Petawawa and her deep distress goes to the heart of the paradox experienced by soldiers of colour. In that moment, while sitting in her car and coming face to face with the Confederate battle flag, she is starkly reminded that national belonging is tenuous even as a soldier. Belonging neither to military space nor to the public space of the town where the base is located, for Maya this racist encounter is an emotional moment when the eviction from citizenship is palpable and when not even the Canadian military uniform can shield her. The presence of the confederate flag for Maya and so many other racialized bodies is symbolic of the presence of white supremacy, demarcating who belongs and who does not. The Confederate battle flag, also known as the “Southern Cross” or the cross of St. Andrew has much significance in the US as it has been described as a proud emblem of Southern heritage and deeply connected to a
shameful reminder of slavery and segregation. In recent history, the Confederate battle flag has also been appropriated by the Ku Klux Klan and other racist hate groups. According to the Southern Poverty Law Centre, more than 500 extremist groups have appropriated the Confederate flag as one of their organizations’ symbols (National Post, June 15, 2015). In Canada however, there is a tendency to fly a significant amount of Confederate flags, primarily in rural areas of Alberta and parts of Ontario and has known to be linked to pick up truck culture. A recent American company has started selling bumper stickers and decals merging the Canadian flag with the confederate battle flag. What this signals in the Canadian context is a heavy rural sentiment that figures closely with both Canadian national identity and the racist fraught history of the US that this flag symbolizes for so many. Exploring the connection between whiteness, rurality and multiculturalism in Canada, Anne O’Connell (2011) addresses the rise of the Canadian redneck that is closely aligned with symbols such as the Confederate flag in parts of the nation.

Describing the Canadian redneck as exhibiting a form of rural pride that both

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55 According to O’Connell (2011) and others, the meaning of the term redneck has undergone significant changes historically and is at times was considered a racial insult that could be launched at a white individual. “Once used to denote a white rural farmer or steadily employed manual laborer in the southern United States, redneck is now applied to many regions in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. Viewed as a masculine term associated with manual labor and hard physical work, rednecks are deemed to be particularly racist and fulfill a specific role within the history of racism in the United States. Emerging in the mid-nineteenth century, the term identified white working class or poor people with rural and southern regional origins” (p. 546). Often characterized as degenerate, uneducated, ignorant and backward, the redneck was part of a pollution ideology that helped police the boundaries between the white working class and white middle class. Concomitantly, redneck racism is often associated with the history of lynching, KuKluxKlan activities and right-wing militia groups. The term redneck has specific and contradictory meanings in different locations and economies; a national redneck discourse emphasizes white rural spaces as either lazy, violent, dirty, obsolescent, conservative, or alternative. This, like other terms for whiteness is constantly shifting to differently construct white subjects who struggle to conform to ideals of white respectability. For more insights into the connection between the rural, whiteness and the evolution of redneck whiteness see: Jarosz, Lucy, and Victoria Lawson. 2002. “Sophisticated People Versus Rednecks: Economic Restructuring and Class Differences in America’s West.” Antipode 34 (1): 8–27. Hartigan, John. 1997. “Unpopular Culture: The Case of ‘White Trash.’” Cultural Studies 11 (2): 316–43. Hartigan, J. 2005. “Who Are These White People?: ‘Rednecks,’ ‘Hillbillies,’ and ‘White Trash’ as Marked Racial Subjects.” In Whiteout, Eds. Ashley Doane, and Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. New York: Routledge.
rejects and aligns with liberal tenants of multiculturalism and its national investments in whiteness, she concludes,

The redneck remains both a recent challenge to and an entrenchment of liberal whiteness. Once part of a pollution ideology that drew lines between respectable and nonrespectable whites and racialized others, the redneck has reclaimed its reviled status. Able to ridicule the apparent political correctness of diversity policies, rural rednecks have capitalized on conservative politics that features whiteness in ways that multicultural policies either ignore or claim do not exist. At the same time, urban spaces and city policies embody and capitalize on an imagined tolerant diversity that separates and elevates urban life from supposedly less advanced rurality. (p. 538)

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. Territories often conceived as passive geographical spaces, Lefebvre (1976) and Goldberg (1993) remind us that they are far from neutral, objective and naturally occurring. According to Lefebvre (1976) “space has been shaped and molded from historical and natural elements, but this has always been a political process” (p. 31). Putting Lefebvre in conversation with Goldberg (1993), Goldberg asserts that “racisms become institutionally normalized in and through spatial configuration, just as social space is made to seem natural, a given, by being conceived and defined in racial terms”. (p. 450). Therefore, the urban and rural binary is reinforced through the racial meaning attached to individual bodies. As O’Connell (2010) emphasizes, “These bodies then come to symbolize the nature of particular spaces, reinforcing their racialized nature” (p. 540) Emphasizing the multidimensional and fluidity of spatial racializations then Goldberg argues, “there may
be different racisms in the same place at different times; or different racisms in various
different places at the same time; or again different racist expression – different, that is, in
the conditions of their expression, the objects of their expressions, and their effects-
among-different people at the same space-time conjuncture” (p. 95). In the passage
above Maya was fully aware that her body was being evicted from the rural space in
which she worked and trained, however, below Speedy describes that while he has not
been explicitly told that he does not belong in rural white spaces, he is keenly aware that
it could happen and lives in anticipation of experiencing such an eviction:

**Speedy:** *In the city, there’s so many cultures you feel like you’re at home, you
know. I go downtown and I see a lot of Hispanic people there and you’re like
wow, this is cool, you know. You feel like you’re with family. You couldn’t talk
to them, but you just feel comfortable, you don’t feel in danger or, you don’t feel
like somebody’s gonna come up to you and be like “oh, you don’t belong in this
county” or, you know, “get out of here” or “why are you in the military, why
are you protecting our country”. In Petawawa there were times where I felt I’m
gonna go to the Walmart and somebody’s gonna say something to me cause
right away they see a guy with a shaved head, brown, you know, right away they
know you’re in the military, right. And I was always afraid that there was going
to be this one person, especially this white person that was going to come up to
me and say, “You don’t belong in our country, why are you in the military? You
know you don’t belong in our military”. But it never happened, but it was
something that always worried me based on all the things you hear and see
about this place.*

Speedy’s fears are premised on a precedence of exclusion based on what he has heard
from his colleagues and the general feeling he gets when working in a military town. He
had mentioned to me that there were moments in his career in the military where he felt
that he “wasn’t quite what they were looking for” suggesting that it had to do with his
racial make up, but never explicitly saying so. He has acquired prior knowledge of the
military town in which he trains and works, and revealed on a number of occasions that
he might be marked for exclusion. In many ways, he was constantly preoccupied with what it means to be a real Canadian, despite being legally a citizen and a member of the Canadian Forces. A significant concern for Speedy was that the Canadian military uniform and all that it symbolizes does not shield or protect him from his marked body. He expressed that his greatest concern working in a rural military town was that he would be considered a national imposter, eventually be “discovered” as not a “true” Canadian and evicted from citizenship. Speedy was very aware that for him being a member of the Canadian military does not ensure belonging. What this reveals for Speedy is that there is a racial basis to citizenship, one that does not guarantee permanent membership. Similarly, David describes how his nationality and hence his suitability to be in the Canadian Forces was questioned in a small town out East:

David: This one regular force guy that I met in a small town out east- I don’t really recall his name - said to me when I first arrived, “How does it feel like to wear that flag when you’re not even a Canadian”?

Tammy: Oh, wow...

David: Yeah, so I was like whoa, yes, 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. Yeah, but I was so shocked I didn’t even really say anything.

Tammy: Yes, I totally understand.

David: He was an untrained private and I was a trained private at that time. So technically he’s still lower ranked than me. And now he’s telling me this, you know.

Tammy: How did you respond?

David: I didn’t even say anything. They say don’t fight pigs; pigs likes to get dirty when you fight them, so...
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. The question he gets posed, suggests a racial basis to citizenship. David is reminded in this moment 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. What I also find particularly striking about my exchange with David, is his negotiation around what it means to be Canadian even after confirming his Canadian citizenship and serving in the Canadian military. When David says, “I may not be Canadian by blood [emphasis mine]”, it signals that he too is grappling with Canadian identity in a way that reveals a particular authenticity around who is and isn’t Canadian. 

What does the evocation of “Canadian by blood” mean for racialized bodies? Examining the relationship between blood, nation and whiteness, Dryden (2015) explains that “the hermeneutics of blood operates 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” (p. 122). 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 (Dryden, 2015, p. 122). In the Canadian context, there are a several narratives that connect the colonial
significance of blood to the production of Canadian nationalism.\textsuperscript{56} Interestingly, Dryden, drawing on Picard’s (1995) work examines how in 1940s the Canadian Red Cross Society held its first public, non-military blood donor clinic. As Dryden (2015) states,

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.

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 archetypically and emblematically a white practice. In the military context, the first individuals to receive blood transfusions were white American and British soldiers. Describing this process, Dryden states:

Following the direction of the American Red Cross Society, all blood collected in Canada was racially catalogued with the purpose of ensuring that white soldiers did not receive blood from not-white bodies, as it was believed that not-white blood was inferior to white blood and therefore not fit for white soldiers. In 1940 and 1942, women who largely ran the clinics were not allowed to donate blood, as it was suggested that women would not be able to handle or manage the physical process of donation. It was not until 1947 when the first peacetime blood donor

\textsuperscript{56} There are several narratives within the Canadian context that use blood to inform the relationship of nation, national identity and the body politic. While not discussed in detail here, Canada is also implicated in blood quantum and miscegenation practices particularly with respect to racialized bodies and Aboriginal bodies. Please see: Dryden, O. & Lennon, S. (2015). Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalism and the Politics of UBC Press. See also: Lawrence, B. (2004). “Real” Indians and Others: Mixed-Blood Urban Native Peoples and Indigenous Nationhood. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
What is doubly revealing about this history is not only the gendered and racial practices of exclusion with respect to blood donation practices, but that 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 is not surprising and reveals a legacy of the connection between “real” citizenship and belonging.

5.5 All in the Family: The Making of the Traditional (white) Military Family

The Canadian Forces is steeped in military tradition that can be traced back to its colonial history. Part of what it means to be part brought into the military family, is grounded in many of these traditions that are embedded in military service and part of becoming a soldier, quite separate from civilian life. Spending time with some soldiers and observing their daily lives, I witnessed and was privy to a number of traditions that shaped their lives as soldiers in the Canadian Forces. For example, Canadian infantry and armoured regimental traditions are strongly rooted in the traditions and the history of the British Army. Many regiments were patterned after regiments of the British Army, and a system of official "alliances", or affiliations, was created to perpetuate a sense of shared history. While Canada is a relatively young country, with a short military history, some of the military traditions and customs of contemporary military life can be traced back to the legions of Rome. Much of military life in the Canadian Forces is regulated by customs and traditions such as the Oath of Allegiance, the National Flag ceremony symbolizing many things such as loyalty to the country, laws of the nation, the authority of the government, and the heritage of the people of the country. Other military traditions
include The Fly pass, known as a formation of aircraft flying over a specified path which came into effect after World War II, the reveille (the morning wake up call), while not formalized, is often used in the field. Finally, the mess considered one of the more important traditions in the CF throughout Canada’s history is used to foster morale and promote military values including camaraderie and cohesiveness. Mourning fallen soldiers and memorialization has also become extremely powerful markers of nationalism and belonging and play a key role and extend into civilian life. Not only are they considered military traditions, but national traditions. As Osbourne (2001) argues, “The power of war as an agent of nation-building transcends the logistics of implementation of state power. It is as if societies are hard-wired to always transform the grim realities of human sacrifice and suffering into collective psychic energy and confirmation of putative national values” (p. 52). While statues and monuments honouring those who served in colonial wars were erected in the early part of the twentieth century across Ontario and Québec, it was Canada’s involvement in the first World War that sparked decade long practices and public commemoration across the country (Hale, 2014). Remembrance Day in Canada observed on November 11th, initially observed to commemorate the losses during World War I (November 11th, 1918), gives Canadians the opportunity to pay their respects to veterans. These military memorials often take place near monuments and attract many in uniform, involve observing moments of silence, the wearing of the poppies, the laying of wreaths and often a recitation of the renowned poem “In Flander’s Fields”. As Hale (2014) states, “These Remembrance Day traditions are institutionalized performances, taught to Canadian school children through solemn assemblies and lessons in military history, treated as a statutory holiday in most provinces, and frequently
attended by public figures” (p. 33). They are highly instructive and serve to mobilize the
nation in a particular way. As Hale goes on to state,

These secular public rituals that through their repetition aim to establish
identification with a sense of shared historical past, the production of a timeless
nationalism is especially evident in formalized expressions of gratitude. Gathered in
a memory of Canadian veterans, the timely reenactments of mourners serve to
military dead as exalted national subjects (Thobani, 2007), celebrating particular
virtues as inherent to a quintessential and eternal Canadian identity, and producing
sacred political space around the body of the “fallen” soldier. (p. 34)

An important question to ask is here is: What is being obscured by virtue of these
powerful commemorations that “exalt” some and not others? In what I demonstrate
below, belonging to and being part of military tradition is powerful in the lives of
racialized soldiers’ because it becomes conflated with this idea of family and by
extension inclusion from the ‘national family’. In effect, it is through these traditions and
practices that the military family is made. However, I would argue that belonging to the
military family means belonging to the white national family. Military traditions are
steeped in colonial traditions that do not typically include the histories of soldiers of
colour. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a significant war monument that
commemorates and honours the lives and sacrifices of Canada’s soldiers. This notion of
the “unknown” is a powerful one because it calls us to ask what continues to remain
unknown and unknowable in the Canadian national imaginary. As Benedict Anderson
(1991) argues in the British context, one of the most powerful ways in which the myth of
the nation is preserved is through monuments and cenotaphs to the Unknown Soldier. He
goes on to argue that they enable any figure in the “imagined community” to occupy this
subject position. In the Canadian context, I am not necessarily convinced that this is the case. It is worth asking who is imagined in this subject position? Following Joanne Sharpe (1996) who points to the gendered dimensions of the figure, states, “Surely, the Unknown Soldier is not entirely anonymous. We can all be fairly sure that the soldier is not called Sarah, Lucy or Jane” (p. 99). In a similar vein, if we are to take Anderson’s assertion seriously with respect to race, and trace who is inherently grievable over the years of Canadian Remembrance Day commemorations, it becomes quite clear that racialized soldiers do not feature prominently as symbols of the nation. On the contrary, if they are featured, they are often relegated to the space of special interest stories or tokenistic anecdotes paying homage to the discourse of multiculturalism. Below Jane describes what she believes is the appeal of belonging to an institution steeped in Canadian military tradition. For Jane it is being part of family with a long 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 tradition might be an issue for some members of the CF, particularly if they are non-white:

Jane: The military in general, let’s face it, is quite traditional. What are some of the best aspects of the military? You’re based in a history; the history of your regiment is of utmost importance. Knowing that you have the hundredth anniversary, Princess Patricia, Canadian Light Infantry, it’s great so the history is very important but the pomp and the ceremony and the traditions are all very important as well. That’s a positive aspect because when you join that regiment, when you join that battalion of that company or platoon, you’re not just there, but you’re part of all of those who have been there before you, all of those who have fought in the battle. It’s the one battle that honours the regiment and that’s a positive aspect of the history because you’re part of that family immediately. A negative aspect is that you know, anything that’s traditional, you don’t tamper with traditional, you don’t change things and so there are positive and negative
aspects to tradition. There are some issues... For example, if you’re a person who rebels in a sea of change, then maybe the military tradition is something that you would find a bit frustrating.

Jane’s evocation and conflation of the military family as linked to tradition is significant here. Several soldiers 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 every day practices is significant in the lives of some of these soldiers and provides an emotional and occupational security. The notion of “brotherhood” and establishing this bond through these traditions works 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 this has placed on him.

**Blaze:** Looking back, I was torn. On the one hand I really loved how the daily activities we did together, eating together, training together, living together, shooting the shit together really made us close. We were family you could say, but stronger than that and weaker than that. But in retrospect that kind of bonding was important to build trust in the field. I had to trust my guys and vice versa because we are putting our lives out there for each other. I needed to feel really secure with my guys in order to feel ok in the field. But there were times, it all felt a bit much and I wanted to break out of it all. Unless you’re in combat or on a mission, being a soldier is not a natural thing on the daily.

Blaze 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 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 bodies could exist and benefit in the same manner as white subjects. Reflecting on both Blaze’s and Jane’s concerns for those who may not fit the homogenous mold of military life, I contend that racialized soldiers, by virtue of being other in a white world and space, struggle with military tradition and being part of the white military family precisely because they are seen as different, foreign and other. In addition to their eviction from the military family, racialized soldiers inhabit and live an acute contradiction within the Canadian state by virtue of being evicted from citizenry both historically and in the contemporary moment, but at the same time implicated in neocolonial projects. With this in mind Shannon expresses the incompatibility of racialized bodies within the military family and how they physically disrupt this notion of homogeneity and sameness so prevalent in the Canadian Forces:

**Tammy** Do you think this idea of the military family and tradition are compatible with racial difference? Can somebody be different or can they be different but not too different?

**Shannon:** Yeah, they can be different but not too different or if they are different, they just have to prove themselves. It wouldn’t be just, “Hi, here I am. I’m from a different culture, accept me.” I see it in Toronto Fire as well, but I digress. Yeah, you can be as different as you are but don’t think you can just walk in the door and it’s going to be easy. It’s not. It just isn’t because people are standoffish. Even this Canadian guy in Toronto Fire, he said he faced it because people couldn’t understand him because he spoke with what they thought was a strong accent. The military is that way too. I think it comes down to once you prove yourself, you’re ok but the onus is on you to fit in.

**Tammy:** Do you think that’s harder for women or racial minorities?

**Shannon:** You know what; I think it’s hard depending on the people who receive you. Some people have no problem. They just know how to, like my
friend, who was in the military and was actually my boyfriend for a while. His father was Jamaican and his mother was French Canadian, really handsome man. I don’t know if people just welcome you when you’re physically more attractive he just cruised into any social situation and was accepted. Like, when I was young, there was my family, my brothers and sisters and one other black kid in these catholic schools and we stood out but so did he, you know, in his school? He was the only person of color but his personality, he just fit in fine or if something did happen with him it certainly didn’t resonate with him. His memories are all great, you know? Like he was big man on campus throughout his entire school year and yeah, he’s a very handsome man and I don’t know if that played a role because he’s also not white but he’s very Canadian and he’s also very attractive. I don’t know. It depends on your community really. Let’s just say in here you have to “put on your soldier”, you have to put on your Canadian, you have to blend in. It’s not like, for instance, you can take yourself from your culture and try to put it into this culture. It’s much harder to do that.

Tammy: That’s interesting; can you speak to what that blending in in military life looks like?

Shannon: Even if I say it, it sounds racist. But this idea of blending in is about being white Canadian. This is literally what’s going on in here, but that is what they’re thinking, the majority of the members in the CF. It is what they are thinking. Like they are the majority, they run things, you know? Majority rules. They are the majority and they set the rules and we fit in to the roles they assign. That’s how I see it and that’s how I think we fit in to some degree. As insulting as that is, it’s accepting that as well and then making yourself fit in.

My exchange with Shannon reveals much about the tensions between difference and belonging in the military. She explains that racial difference is permitted as long as you perform whiteness and that responsibility lies squarely on the racialized body. However, she also describes that racialized difference does not necessarily mean exclusion or entail conditions of acceptance. Those individuals who pass and move through white spaces with facility are also rewarded membership. Individuals who are able to “put their soldier” on and embody characteristics that are connected to traditional, and thus white, soldiering succeed. Their success is contingent on their approximation to whiteness.
Departing from this notion of family, Shannon below conflates this notion of military tradition with Canadian-ness and whiteness and expresses the difficulties she has navigating the inflexibility of military tradition in the face of including racialized bodies for service:

_Tammy:_ Would you say that the military is a place where somebody can display Canadian-ness and prove oneself around that?

_Shannon:_ But that’s it; define Canadian-ness. If you say define Canadians in my mind, you become stereotypical about what someone thinks a Canadian is and someone might think they’re white, enjoy snow, loves hockey, curling etc.; then that’s who you have to be in that atmosphere but then once you get out of there, you know, you can hate hockey, hate curling but even in the military, a lot of the social settings are structured around that. Do you know what I mean? When I was full time we used to have these curling bond spiels.

_Tammy:_ I didn’t know it was such a big part of military life. I mean, hockey yes, maybe even football because of the parallels.

_Shannon:_ Go to Kingston and you’ll see what’s important and in the CF it is curling, its hockey, and its darts. You know, 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 kind of what I mean by just fitting in. Just kind of accepting what already exists and just trying to be part of it.

_Tammy:_ Did you ever find that really difficult at times? Were there moments where you were like, I can’t do this anymore?

_Shannon:_ Yeah, there are times that it’s difficult but you can always do it. You don’t go into this blind and it doesn’t take long for you to see what the situation is. So either you get out or you make the decision you’re going to stay.
Earlier, I described that a “white habitus” was essential to the socialization process in the Canadian Forces. Embodying this racialized knowledge with respect to particular practices of socialization are also necessary to cultivating a white habitus. Those who are not the somatic norm carry the responsibility of approximating this subject position. Later, when I suggest challenging the culture as a way of being more inclusive for racialized bodies, Shannon responds in the following manner:

Shannon: You know when you said something about suggesting basketball and other sports, other than what the military attaches itself too, I could literally hear in my head “I don’t want to watch those monkeys jump.” Do you know what I mean? Like, a lot of people here think like that but they’ll say they’re not racist but that is not a sport that people in the military generally speaking want to watch.

My suggestion to request alternative ways of socialization was met with a deep cynicism that is not unfounded. It comes from an appreciation for how pervasive practices of whiteness are in the Canadian military. Similarly, Maya, speaks about an encounter with a fellow comrade one day when she was at the recreation centre and about to engage in a game of broomball. While she had heard about broomball, she was not familiar with the game and is reminded by another fellow soldiers of what should and should not be part of her knowledge base in order to exist in the Canadian military:

So, we were divided into two teams and told that we were going to play broomball. I had no idea what that was and was confused. I asked one of the women on my team, she happened to be white about what this game was all about and she was like, “You don’t know what broomball is?” I told her I had never been exposed to this game and I reflexively asked her whether or not she knew this game that we play in my culture and she immediately said, “We don’t have to know what you know…but you have to know what we know”. It was in that moment, I knew that there were certain things, some white cultural stuff that I had to learn quickly and anything outside of that I carried with me had no place here.
Whiteness signals the production and reproduction of dominance. In Maya’s exchange with her white Canadian comrade, it was apparent that no loss was experienced by not hearing Maya’s thoughts, questions, and experiences. This ease of loss suggests an internalized sense of entitlement and reinforces a message that there is nothing of significance to learn from peoples of color, either intellectually or personally (Castenell & Pinar, 1993; Dyer, 1997; Macedo & Bartolome, 1999, McIntosh, 1986). In this instance, Maya’s narrative reveals the ways in which she was silenced, but also demonstrates a privileging white racial knowledge grounded in certain practices and ways of being. This privileging of white racial knowledge alongside displays of institutional white supremacy are evident in commemorations around Remembrance Day, Yellow Ribbon Campaigns, Red Fridays, Tickets for troops,bond spiels, hockey tournaments and a cursory national fixation on multiculturalism serve not only as reminders of how whiteness circulates but demonstrates and anchors whiteness as a dominant mode of being. As a result, these practices and modes of socialization grounded in a white habitus instead confront “political correctness” by providing a space for the celebration of white culture. Consequently, white celebration and white violence become indistinguishable (O’Connell, 2011).

5.6 Fostering A Culture of Silence

As I expressed in chapter two, a feature of neoliberalism and its impact on race is a pervasive colourblindness. Under such conditions Goldberg (2010) argued that: “It is not that race is simply silenced, if silenced at all. It is shifted to less formal domains for the most part, embedded in structures, without being explicitly named, where it is more difficult to identify, more ambivalently related to, more ambiguous” (p. 90). He goes on
to suggest that as a result of this shift, “as race evaporates from the socio-conceptual landscape, racisms (in their plurality) are pushed further and further out of the sight, out of ‘existence’, unmentionable because the terms by which to recognize and reference them recede, fade from view and memory” (2009, p. 36). Consequently, this situation can permit racism to flourish, permeating beyond detection of the general public (Goldberg, 2010). Following Goldberg, I contend that racism and racial microaggressions remain embedded within the military structure and have been increasingly difficult to recognize (Sue, Capodilupo, Torino, Bucceri, Holder, Nadal & Esquilin, 2007).57 One of the main ways in which the discourse of silence operates around race in the Canadian Forces is to redirect blame onto soldiers of colour, where they in effect are responsible for their hardship and oppression because of their inability to “handle it” or “work it out”. This was most visible through the claim of playing the race card. Below my conversations with Liza and Alfred illustrate this point:

**Alfred:** A white female private, less trained than I was, literally, applies and she gets the job. And there's a pattern of that throughout. So you see all of this. You raise your hand. You say what the hell's going on? And they say, “Oh you're trying to pull the race card”. They go on to say, “Don’t worry, no one is racist, I have a best friend who's black” and so now I'm the one who is responsible.

**Liza:** I’ve thought many times about mentioning something about race, the problem is every time you try to bring it up someone is saying that I’m too sensitive or that I’m playing the race card or making a bigger deal of the issue than needs to be. I have a problem with someone and then it turns into me being the problem. I don’t get it.

Suggesting that race and racism are factors in criticism of some of the issues that arise in the CF is often met with strong opposition as evidenced by Alfred and Liza. Furthermore, they are also considered disloyal and unpatriotic for “rocking the boat.”\(^{58}\) Behind the statement “playing the race card”\(^{59}\) is the moral assertion that within the Canadian Forces and in other neoliberal institutions that race is unmentionable. The assertion of the ‘race card’ is not compatible within Canadian multicultural spaces. The very accusation of “playing the card” has become a way of disqualifying the attempt to discuss past and present racial injury (Williams, 2001). As Anne Cheng (2002) has observed the rhetoric of the race card betrays a peculiar logic, where a winning hand has been identified with a handicap. Therefore, to succeed in naming the race card is to lose in the larger game life. Consequently, policing the use of the race card aims to discredit racialized suffering and turned into an advantage. This tactic contributes to the culture of silence around race and works to consolidate whiteness. In my conversation with Shannon we discussed how issues of racism are handled in the military and she offers the following:

**Shannon:** There’s a saying in the military and it has existed forever, its “handle at the lowest level”. Like, they don’t want things escalating. If you don’t get along with your boss, you’re the one who gets the bad PER, which is your personal evaluation assessment. You get the bad one. You learn right from the get go that in order to succeed it’s up to you to get along with your superior. Perhaps rightly so, your superior doesn’t have to get along with you... So, many people who have

\(^{58}\) Interview with Rubin Rocky Coward, Retired Canadian Soldier

\(^{59}\) Linda Williams (2001) examines how the “playing the race card” emerged historically. She argues that it first go much attention during the 1995 O.J. Simpson trial where the defense decided to shed light on how the issue of race was essential to this particular case. O.J. Simpson and his defense team were accused by the prosecution of “playing the race card” in a case where up until that point was not focused on the racist practices of the LAPD. The prosecution accused the O.J. Simpson’s defence team of making “the case a race case” from that point on. For further details of its emergence, see: Williams, L. (2001). *Play the Race Card: Melodramas of Black and White from Uncle Tom to O.J. Simpson*. Princeton, USA: Princeton University Press.
had conflicts with their bosses and not everyone will say he or she is a racist, but maybe their jokes are... I’m not going to say you’re racist but you just displayed tendencies of insensitivity if that’s what you want to call it now days, right?

Tammy: And what are you going to do? Like, it’s a choice now. Are you going to take it up?

Shannon: And if you do, just be prepared for the walls to come down on you. If you’re going to bring something forward like that, I mean, you’d almost have to be like really hurt in order for it to be worth your while to come forward. Like something would have had to happen to you where it was visually documented so you could say, “Look at this. This is what happened and this was him who did this”. But if it’s all-psychological, I mean, good luck. If you don’t have it on tape that someone is over the line, and saying all of these things to you...

Tammy: Yeah, so I guess what you’re commenting on is that the...

Shannon: The burden of proof is on you. That’s really what I’m saying. In this system, you have to prove it. Yeah, you really do because if they want to go with the zero tolerance that means someone’s career is over and I’m not just going to do that. Do you know what I mean? Like especially if this is a so-called good soldier where they review their PERs and assessments, talk to their supervisors and everybody loves this guy but this guy’s racist but everybody loves him. It’s a joke, you know what I mean? Again, it comes down to what’s wrong with you. Joe, Mike, and Sally said this guy is great. I’m looking at his assessments and they’re great too, what’s your problem? Why can’t you fit in and why can’t you get along? That’s what I’m trying to say is because, “Oh, you’re too sensitive.” It just comes back to that, you know? It’s like until you can say well listen to these comments like, is that sensitive? That’s what it will come down too.

Tammy: No, you’ve got some great points.

Shannon: That’s what I’ve found here... Even myself, you know, you just accept it because you really feel like nobody’s interested and you bring forth accusations like that where they promote zero tolerance, which I personally have never seen, then you’re effectively ending someone’s career and kicking them out of the military and it’s just not that high of a price to pay. Like, what they tend to do is just let time go by and transfer you somewhere else but then even when you get transferred it’s a small community and they say “this person’s coming because they couldn’t get along, they were pulling the race card, they were difficult...” if you want a different work environment then you have to be prepared to go get your different work environment.
Shannon describes how difficult it is to name racism or confirm racist acts when they do occur because there is enormous pressure on an individual for ending someone’s career. The soldiers I engaged with often engage in “mitigation strategies” which refer to “the processes through which individuals seek simultaneously to downplay or deny incidences of racism and to exonerate those accused of engaging in such acts (whether that be themselves or others). This involves offering alternative explanations with the purpose of refuting intentionality and responsibility on the part of the person(s) under scrutiny” (Burdsey, 2011, p. 268). According to Doane these strategies of denial are central to the framework of colourblindness. She states, “[G]iven the general social consensus that racism violates social norms and the strong negative valuation attached to the “racist” label, charges of racism are significant rhetorical and political weapon. In the twenty-first century, no one wants to be accused of racism or to be called a racist (2006, p. 260). Doane’s point is relevant here and relates to what Shannon reveals. She also goes on to highlight how the burden of proof and is on racialized bodies which gives way to particular mitigation strategies that take place. It is precisely because the Canadian military is seen as protecting the nation, Canada’s force for good and all its attending values that preserves a particular kind of innocence that allows racism to operate in more complex ways.

5.7 Politically (In) correct: The role of racial military banter

During my time on military bases in urban centers and small towns I immersed myself with soldiers, talking about their daily routines and observed how they interacted with one another. Throughout my interactions with soldiers, I noticed that racial military banter was quite prevalent. In a white space like the military there is no real forum to
actually speak about race and racial difference. That said, there are microaggressions that
transpire around race as a way of centering it. By centering it in this manner, it becomes
relegated to banter and stereotypes that on the surface appear mundane, but in reality
perpetuates a structural privilege of whiteness and depoliticizes racism. When racism is
named in these instances or the banter and jokes go too far, this violates the sanctity and
purpose of fraternity and homogeneity of the CF. Socializing in this manner reproduces a
culture of silence that obfuscates the importance of these issues leaving the CF unable to
dismantle whiteness institutionally and leaving it intact.

**Maya:** Where I worked the majority was white. There was maybe a couple
times where I felt like, “Oh I can’t believe you just said that.” But in all honesty, in a place like Petawawa, I worked with the infantry, we all make fun
of each other and it was all good. I loved it because I made fun of them, too. Yes, in a racial way but it was maybe our way of relating.

Maybe I had one incident where I couldn’t that believe that came out of
someone’s mouth but other than that, there was a general understanding of
how we talk to each other as infanteers because in the end, when they do their
job, it’s so shitty that this is what they do to pass time. And in the end, as long
as the mission is being met, we really don’t care what they joke about or what
we joke about. And I kind of just fit in with it. I was able to walk the walk and
talk the talk with them. And because of that, I was able to fit in. I question
myself, “Am I just doing this to fit in?” But no, this is actually how I would act
if I was in Toronto among my friends and it’s probably more raw in
Petawawa, a lot more raw, a lot more rude but I could dish it out just the
same. It was completely fine with me; it might not be fine for some other
people. I even had my own racial nickname and I loved it and it kind of
followed me here and it’s all good.

Maya was not the only soldier to tell me that racial banter was an important part of
military life, particularly among those in infantry. While she could handle it well, it did
get on her nerves at times and mentioned that it sometimes escalated into territory that
was somewhat blurry. Many soldiers I spoke to dismissed these racial microaggressions
as “just jokes” or “how we relate” Burdsey (2011) illustrates how racism in the sporting world is manifests in a similar fashion. For Burdsey, the place of humour was often used as a device by players of all racialized backgrounds to downplay what has often been described as racial banter or as traditionally isolated sport specific ‘race’ talk (Hylton, 2015). Though racism and racial humour have been evidenced as pernicious aspects of sport, the use of racialized humour in military contexts is complex and requires further examination.

Examining the role of banter in the British military Vron Ware (2012) observes that it is difficult to assess the significance of banter without taking into account the conditions under which soldiers are required to work. This echoes Maya’s point on military cultures and the way they engage with each other at the level they do is grounded in the differences between military and civilian culture. Within the CF, there is palpable tension between exercising control and the use of physical force (Ware, 2012, p. 2012). According to Donna Winslow who has examined military cultures in different settings, the military requires its employees to be warriors who can kill and be killed while operating in a very chaotic and irrational environment (Winslow in Ware, 2012, p. 151). To understand and analyze this part of military culture, we must be aware of the fluctuation and interplay between order and chaos (p. 152). Under these circumstances military rituals such as hazing, initiations, bullying (and while not condoned outright) banter then is a reaction to the regimented nature of military life. It is curious however, that content of military banter is almost always raced and gendered. Discussing the implication for racialized soldiers, Ware poses the question: “If abusive practices considered unacceptable in civilian life are condoned within the military apparatus one
the grounds that they have different meanings, then what exactly constitutes zero policy that is so often evoked as policy within state militaries” (p. 151-152)? Ware’s observation has particular resonance for racialized soldiers in the Canadian military especially with respect to policies and procedures designed to protect them.

5.8 Waging War Within: Surveillance and organizational Terror

In certain cases racism is named and met with great ambivalence. Below Alfred, describes this initial excitement regarding joining the forces and how motivated and energized he was to make a contribution. Deeper into the interview it becomes evident that his optimism is replaced with deep ambivalence as he describes his encounters with whiteness and how he was constructed as other (the enemy within) despite his allegiance to the country. Alfred’s case is not an unusual case nor is it rare. He is reminded that this fraternity does not apply to him.

Alfred: I had an experience where someone in the military called the police on me. Someone called the M.P.s (military police) and made a complaint that I was selling drugs -- I'm not even kidding selling drugs to the transients and going out and smoking. It was so humiliating. Whatever the case was, it was all false. M.P.s came down, searched my room. Funny enough I was the only black guy at the base, literally. M.P.s came down. They did their search. They probably followed me around one or two days. And of course nothing came of it. They told me, “There’s been a complaint. We're going to look into it”. And I'm like, “Yeah, do what you need to do. Search away. I'll kick back here”. I've had that experience. At that point I still kind of cared about making a difference in the military, so I was really upset for a while. But after a while you realize -- and this was again in [names city] -- what are you going to do? Are you going to accuse everybody on the base of racism? You don't even know who it was because their information is protected. You get the request and their names are redacted. What exactly are you going to do? You can't fight the system. You really can't. I mean you can try to shape it. But it is what it is. So I just stopped caring because I'll worry myself, or
stress myself into an early grave. And it sounds bad, but I got to a point in the military where I'm just like this is my life plan, achieve it and get out.

Alfred’s scenario begs the question that lies at the core of this thesis: Can racialized soldier-citizens participate in citizenship in the same ways as others? Moreover, does this scenario not reveal something about the racialized structure of citizenship? Indeed it does, as Alfred, even while enacting his patriotic duty as a soldier, is constructed as outside of the nation as evidenced by the heavy surveillance bolstered by the insinuations of drug trafficking on base. Evident in his scenario is the racialized structure of citizenship and how the body of colour continues to try and navigate his or her place within that narrow scope. When racialized bodies are willing to sacrifice their lives for their country, a country predicated on colonial violence and historical injustices against its Indigenous population and people of colour, I ask: how do racialized bodies that are called upon in times of defense and securitization for one’s country, negotiate their subject position when they embody the very threat they are called upon to defend? Alfred after this situation expresses that he was quite disillusioned and lost much of the energy and hope that brought him to the Canadian Forces.

Alfred’s experience demonstrates most acutely that to join the nation one must forget the racial basis of citizenship. This is clearly illustrated by Abouall Farmanfarmahan (1992) in his work on the U.S. military entitled “Did You Measure Up?” when he expresses the following:

The physical participation of African Americans in the army does not automatically overturn the arguments about White boundaries and fantasies of White
consciousness. Physical integration does not mean a change of constructs or signifiers. Even with a Black general or Black CEOs, the association of rape to Blackness will not and has not disappeared—that would mean the dissolution of the White Self which relies on such associations to define itself. In fact, participation merely means acceptance of those boundaries. (p. 292)

Farmanfarmahan’s understanding of “white boundaries and fantasies of white consciousness are important in Alfred’s case. In this moment, despite his inclusion into the Canadian military, this particular incident alongside the claim that he is violating both military and civilian law serve to demarcate the boundaries between whiteness and blackness in addition to keeping the colour line intact. Through the lens of whiteness, blackness becomes objectified as a body rather than subject position. As Katherine McKittrick argues when blackness is made visible, so is the criminal body; and blackness is always made visible (2006).

This event in Alfred’s military career was very significant in that all the passion he had for the military and military life dissipated through this eviction from citizenship. He became concerned that he would be constantly the object of racism and this wore on him and his relationships both within the military and outside of it. When I asked him how he continues to work in and live in a space that would subject him to such treatment he stated, “I just stopped caring. After a while I just stopped caring”. Alfred words are revealing in the sense that he could continue to exist in the Canadian Forces as long as there was very little emotional investment. Again, I am reminded of Farmanfarmahan’s (1992) important analysis of belonging and forgetting and how they come into existence through one another: “To join the nation you must forget the violence done unto you, much like joining the family requires forgetting the possible violence of abuse, incest and
neglect” (in Razack, 2004, p. 87). As I mentioned earlier, the evocation of the military family is not uncommon and is quite provocative in the sense that we must begin to engage with what needs to be forgotten and purged in the history of belonging for racialized bodies in the Canadian nation state. In essence forgetting and purging of violence and violent histories are a precondition to belonging.

Alfred’s experience cannot be examined without addressing the longstanding history of the operations of anti-black racism in Canada. Paraphrasing W.E. B. DuBois, blackness and black people remain a problem in Canada. According to McKittrick, Black people “are not supposed to be Canada, and contradict Canada; they are surprises, unexpected and concealed” (cited in Hudson, 2014, p.2). Canada has perpetuated a multicultural façade and is deeply implicated in anti-black racism through the prohibition of Black immigration from 1896 to 1915; buried slaves in cemeteries entitled Nigger Rock, the atrocities against black communities in Africville, or two centuries worth of slavery in Quebec since the 1600s. This hidden history of anti-blackness has a direct relationship with contemporary black life in Canada from high unemployment rates, to over-representation (and poor conditions) of black bodies in prisons, alongside the current growing issue of racist carding practices in Canadian cities. Anti-black racism is not exclusively an American affair and never has been. The erasure and misrepresentation of an anti-black Canadian history serves as another form of black nihilism and the degradation of a history of black existence. As Walcott (1997) states:

By and large, in both the city and the nation, black appeals for social justice remain unheard by those in authority, and this is largely due to the continuing ambivalent place of black peoples in the national imagination. Do we belong or do we not belong? And if we belong when does the nation begin to acknowledge black arrivals – recently or going back to before Confederation? (p. 12)

When we look at the fraught context under which Alfred’s experience in the Canadian military occurs, it may not be altogether surprising. What Alfred encountered with the racial state’s security apparatus is grounded in colonial legacy that deems black men as less than human. Following Fanon (1967), “at the risk of arousing the resentment of my coloured brothers, I will say that the black is not a man” (p. 8) Blackness as we have come to understand it in the West and conceived by colonialism cannot and does not co-exist with humanity. According to Angod (2006) “This is because goodness resides in the trappings of whiteness. And blackness exists only to instantiate whiteness. By virtue of its degenerate characteristics, blackness gestures to the goodness of whiteness; it brings its opposite into being. Blackness then is a signifier for the superiority of whiteness” (p. 162). As such, there is no recourse or redemption for blackness. For Fanon, it is the reason why “the black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white” (p.228). Despite Alfred’s commitment to the racial state, his experience is stark reminder of the boundaries of belonging and the limits of blackness and the constitutions of whiteness in racial state institutions. The Canadian Forces is not exception.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, drawing on Fanon, I posited that the military encounter is a racial encounter. Understanding the military encounter as a racial encounter, where ideas of
contact and history are central means attending to whiteness and spaces of whiteness, how they are produced and kept alive. I have relied on scholarship that examines the relationship between space and bodies to argue that whiteness in the Canadian Forces and in the lives of these soldiers is secured through proximity to difference. Moreover, through the CF’s established values and military traditions, the military is shrouded in a colonial history and marked by Barbara Heron’s (2007) notion of “colonial continuities” that operate in the day-to-day encounters of racialized soldier in the CF. I also featured how whiteness itself is re-made and negotiated through multiple social practices in visible and less visible ways. In particular, I drew on the literature that examines how racialization and whiteness are spatially organized (Cowen, 2007; Goldberg 1993; Puar, 2004; Razack 2002). In this chapter, understanding the military encounter as a racial encounter requires tracing the discursive construction of liberal whiteness in the CF. Its production can be summarized as 1) through institutionalized responses to racism that reduce and diminish claims about racism and white violence; and 2) through the production of a white habitus, that consolidates a white identity that seeks cultural significance and celebration. The failure to interrogate how whiteness and dominance operates obscures the connections between past colonial crimes and current forms of racial violence, making them all the more difficult to address. By revealing how the CF is made white and in turn holds its place through a variety of processes, is central to understanding how racialized soldiers in this study accommodate and/or resist discourses of whiteness and articulate a subject position for themselves in the contemporary moment. What is evident among these soldiers narratives is the continuing significance of colonialism as a practice that are connected to a set of assumptions that point to the
ways in which the Canadian nation state currently wages and supports the war effort and its role in global and interpersonal inequalities (Basham, 2013, p. 113). Perhaps most significant is that while racialized soldiers narratives in the Canadian military may outright contest liberal claims about tolerance and diversity, progress and civilization “they also reinforce the material-discursive practices integral to ways in which liberal democracies wage war” (p. 113). That is to say, while Canada presents itself as the bastion of multiculturalism and tolerance, modernity and civility, these soldiers’ narratives quite literally embody and point to the limits of these ideals and what that means for those called on to wage war in the modern era. I now turn to Chapter VI to examine how racialized soldiers seemingly live this contradiction in theatres of war.
CHAPTER VI

The Burden of Becoming:
Living with the contradictions in the theatre of war

People just don’t get why we’re there. That’s the problem. They’re ignorant. They don’t know. They haven’t had their full research of why we’re actually there. They might think we’re there because of the Americans and for oil and all that stuff. And we’re not like that at all. Canadians started up as peacekeeping there. We weren’t waging war on them yet – until 2006.

- Zeus, Canadian Soldier

Is not the relationship to an external Other as the Enemy, a way of disavowing the internal struggle that traverses the social body?

-Zizek, 1999, p. 29

At some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling on, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, that is lived on and owned by others. For all kinds of reasons it attracts some people and often involves untold misery for others.

- Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism, p. 7

6.1 Introduction

Describing the contradiction of citizenship brought on by the Philippine-American War, Cynthia Marasigan (2010) describes the often times conflicted role of the black-American soldier in the encounter with Filipino natives. Documenting this relationship, Marasigan carefully describes the exchange between well-known British poet Rudyard Kipling and British journalist Henry Lbourchère. She reveals that Kipling articulated America’s racist imperial motivations in his poem, “White Man’s Burden: The United States and the Philippines” describing the burden that was the 1899 Philippine-American
War. Marasigan goes on to highlight that in Kipling’s poem, he called on white American soldiers to serve their Filipino “captives” as he continued to describe them as their “new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half child”. In response to this blatant racism toward Filipinos, on behalf of African Americans, British journalist Henry Lbourchère wrote to the black press, “The Brown Man’s Burden” (Marasigan, 2010). In his letter, he highlighted the contradictions of black soldiers acting as “freedom agents” given their history of racial oppression within the U.S. charging that “independence/Is God for whites alone”. As Marasigan argues, “In the Philippines, African American soldiers confronted this dilemma of promotion of white supremacist ideologies in the name of freedom, denying independence to Filipinos while blacks were denied full citizenship rights despite their show of loyalty” (p. 12) What this historical example reveals is the inherent contradiction that soldiers of colour live -- that is, they themselves are evicted from the nation but literally give their lives to protect it. The contradictory positioning of the racialized soldier is not new. What I attend to in this chapter is how Canadian soldiers of colour negotiate this condition on the battle field.

While I have explored in the previous two chapters how soldiers of colour come to be part of the Canadian military and how they negotiate a culture of whiteness that operates throughout institutional life on the home front, this final data chapter engages with the complexity of the racialized soldier deployed overseas in the post 9/11era. The civic ethos that drives many to military service, the genuine desire for altruism, service, and the prospect of meaningful and gainful employment, are no small matters. With this

61 While this project was initially conceived with the narratives of primarily retired and reserve soldiers in the Canadian military, several currently serving soldiers approached me with interest in discussing their experiences with me. I explained the risks and they were fully aware and granted me their permission to use their narratives in this dissertation. Some of their narratives are featured in this chapter.
particular condition in mind, I ask, what are the experiences of racialized soldiers in theatre? What do “colonial continuities” look like when the active agents are settlers of colour? I suggest that as the racialized soldier confronts the contradictions of citizenship in theatre, most accept their racialization and the fraught nature of national belonging, as something with which they can and must come to terms. The soldiers in this study did not deny the contradictions of citizenship and instead sought to negotiate it.

**Part I**

**6.2 Unpacking the Contradiction**

In examining the contradiction of citizenship during warfare, there are a few scholars who offer some examples and analyses of specifically the African American soldier’s ambivalent relationship to war and empire (Goodwin, 2010; Kearney, 2000; Lipsitz, 2001; Ontal, 2002; Marasigan, 2010). Examining the tensions African Americans experience during various American historical wars, scholars reveal that the experiences of African Americans in theatres of war were often shaped by their battles for citizenship and civil rights on the home front. Marasigan (2010) traces the complex experiences of African American soldiers who served in the Philippine-American War (1899–1902). Examining their interactions with diverse Filipinos during the war and through a period of formal American colonization until World War II, she reveals the that African-American soldiers often viewed war and their engagement with Filipinos through the prism of their own experiences and battles for inclusion in the U.S. Following their service in the Spanish-American War and upon their arrival in the Philippines, Marasigan (2010) states that, “African American soldiers already occupied an ambivalent sociopolitical status stemming from their simultaneous ties to the state and their history of
oppression in the United States. Seeking to prove their patriotism, manliness, and worthiness for full citizenship rights, black soldiers weighed their goals for racial uplift against their affiliation with a segregated U.S. Army and their role in an expanding U.S. empire” (p. 8). In examining the subjectivity of black soldiers, Marasigan argues that Philippine-American War forced black soldiers to negotiate their ambivalence about their position as African Americans in the U.S. military, while simultaneously being forced to confront the violence of a war defined by its physical brutality on the ground and its racist imperialist mission against Filipinos fighting for independence from colonial rule. The self-sacrifices of war required black soldiers to grapple with and act upon their ambivalence, which was intensified by encounters with Filipinos who recognized the possibilities of shifting loyalties. In the context of the Vietnam War, Gerald Goody (2010) explores this contradiction of citizenship among African American soldiers and their service during this time. For African American soldiers serving in the armed forces during the Vietnam War, the domestic scene weighed heavily on them. African Americans perceived racial issues in Vietnam — race relations, prejudice, and discrimination — through a lens heavily influenced by their earlier experiences in the United States. Issues related to race and race relations helped to define the African American experience in the United States, and these same issues defined the experiences of black soldiers in Vietnam. While Goodwin highlights numerous struggles had by black soldiers in the American Army at the time even during deployments, he also notes that the Vietnamese were not immune to the struggles of African Americans. Interestingly, many African American soldiers believed that the Vietnamese were sympathetic to African Americans’ battles back home. They empathized with African Americans as
persons of color and as victims of white mistreatment. As Goodwin states, “Vietnamese communists actually promoted this idea through the use of leaflets and radio broadcasts, both of which gave the impression that they meant no harm to black soldiers and distinguished them from whites” (p.4). Vietnamese communist forces often dropped flyers that stated, “go home and fight your own battles” (Goodwin, 2010, p. 325). As Goodwin (2010) describes,

Opponents of the Saigon government did their best to convince black soldiers that they empathized with them and did not want them to die. Throughout the war communist leader targeted black soldiers with propaganda in the form of leaflets and radio broadcasts. Generally speaking, these propaganda efforts broadcast what every African American already knew: African Americans did not enjoy equality. Therefore, why would black soldiers fight for a country which continued to discriminate against them? For the Vietnamese communists there was only one answer. Black soldiers should leave Vietnam, go home and fight the “real war” again the racist white establishment in America. (p. 326)

African Americans’ perceptions of the views of Vietnamese civilians were shaped almost entirely by their own experiences in the United States. These soldiers believed that a non-white skin color and shared or similar experiences had a unifying effect. While there is no evidence to indicate that these propaganda efforts influenced black soldiers to desert, they convinced some that their Vietnamese opponents supported them. Furthermore, desertion was more often due to the racism that African American soldiers encountered by the U.S. military than to tensions experienced with the Vietnamese (Goodwin, 2010).
While the War on Terror has ushered in an enormous amount of scholarly work on modern day warfare, very little of it has examined the figure of the racialized soldier and the contradictions of citizenship. Examining two cases of racialized soldiers in the U.S. military, specifically Muslim Corporal Kareen Rashad Sultan Khan, and Asian Muslim American soldier Captain James Yee, Ji-Young Um (2012) argues that they are tasked with an impossible contradiction. They are called upon to stand as proof of the nation’s and empire’s capacity for tolerance and inclusivity precisely because they are always already suspects and enemies, and yet, their labour is vital for military and imperial campaigns. She argues that this inherent contradiction in the figure of the racialized soldier makes his/her meanings and positions radically unstable. This instability, she argues, is why so much work goes into representing the racialized soldier as *either* the unquestionable patriot and citizen *or* as the treasonous other or the enemy, with virtually no room in between for other possibilities. The grey-zone that is often embodied by the racialized soldier in the contemporary moment is one that Um pushes us to contemplate further.

In the Canadian context, there is very little scholarly work that examines this contradiction that soldiers of colour represent. While there is scholarly work that attempts to understand why racialized soldiers commit racial violence or why racialized bodies engage in racial violence during war in general, there is a dearth of scholarly research that explores *lived* contradiction of citizenship among racialized soldiers in theatres of war. However, Razack’s examination of the two Aboriginal soldiers during the Somalia Affair and what brought them to commit racialized violence on behalf of the state cannot be overlooked. Theorizing the complicity of Aboriginal soldiers in the torture of Somali
prisoners in *Dark Threats and White Knights*, Razack argued that the soldiers were interpellated, as we all are, into the powerful project of empire, and, although they participate in it in ways that are shaped by their own subordinate positioning, their actions are no less supportive of white supremacy (p.345). Thinking back to the men and women who participated in the torture of Iraqi prisoners at Abu Ghraib—soldiers of both genders who are mostly of working class backgrounds and officers who are likely of different class origins—as individuals interpellated into the project of marking the colour line and coming to know themselves as citizens of empire through these practices. Each individual takes up his or her role in empire differently. As Razack (2005) argues, white women, for example, do so from within empire itself. Their subordination in patriarchy comes into operation paradoxically through their privileged role reproducing the white race. It is the contradictory ways in which we are structured that shape how we come to participate in the maintenance of the colour line and also how we might come to resist it. Razack’s analysis is important here because it reveals how empire and white supremacy are embodied and how they come into existence through multiple systems of domination, and crucially through gender and class. This is important to keep in mind when theorizing how racialized bodies are able to participate in racialized violence in theatres of war.

The historical literature on soldiers of colour (predominantly African Americans) reveals that they never leave their race behind. Black soldiers in the Phillipine-American and Vietnam wars, for instance, encountered racism in the military and on the home front which enabled some of them to see Filipinos and the Vietnamese as people of colour wherein a humanity is revealed. This gave them a critical lens from which to view the wars they were fighting. In many cases, particularly during the war in Vietnam, faced
with continuing racism in the military made African American soldiers want to leave the military and some eventually did. Based on the limited scholarly work in this area, several soldiers at different moments in time connected the violence abroad to the violence they experience at home giving way to a deep ambivalence within the racialized soldier subject. In what follows, I demonstrate how racialized soldiers in the Canadian military live this similar contradiction witnessed historically in the contemporary war on terror.

Part II
6.3 The Encounter in Theatre

Building on the literature that attempts to theorize the paradoxical position of racialized soldiers, in the remainder of this chapter, I examine how several racialized Canadian soldiers deployed to Afghanistan also could not leave race behind. In many ways, their trajectories resemble those of the soldiers examined in the literature insofar as all are aware of their racial positioning, although there are varying degrees of critical reflection on meaning. I begin with Marcus’ account of his first deployment to Afghanistan and his first encounter with local Afghans.

Marcus: In 2005, it was different. You know, I was in Kabul. Yeah, there were some threats that we had to deal with. And then 2010 was my last tour and we were down in Kandahar. We were actually deployed to the province there….So there was an absolute difference. In the beginning a lot of people that had hate in their eyes, that’s for sure. The preparation, sort of, back to the point there, it got better, of course. It became more detailed, when they talked about the region itself.

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62 Out of the 25 soldiers I interviewed for this research study, 7 deployed to Afghanistan. Most of this chapter is reflective of their journeys with the exception of a couple of accounts from retired soldiers.
Tammy: Ah you mean the cultural training before deployment right?

Marcus: Yes. There’s an attempt to try and teach you well, to give you a few words, it doesn’t matter, it doesn’t really help. You need to sit down and ... it’s like learning French, you can’t just give me a few words and we’ll work with it, kind of thing.

Tammy: Right.

Marcus: You know, you don’t have the time, first of all, to learn every ... all the words, putting sentences together and stuff like that. So you might learn, you know, “go here”, “stop”, you know, “hands up”, that kind of stuff and those types of things. But, as far as learning any words to have a conversation, you deal with an interpreter and you rely on them heavily.

Tammy: Are the interpreters also in the Canadian Forces?

Marcus: No. We use the Afghan interpreters.

Tammy: Okay.

Marcus: But that ... yeah, preparation, the region ... they talk about the tribal wars and all that kind of stuff. And, really, when you get there you find out these people are working it out with themselves. Like, they’ve been doing it for thousands of years. But this focus for the guys back in Ottawa, it just seems like they are so far removed from the people, the experience and stuff like that, they go on what was written in books. And my experience was that these people are able to work it out. It may be some kind of personal thing that they have with each other that one family had against another family and that was it. It’s tribal wars and stuff like that. I think it sounds good in a book but may not really reflect what’s going on.

Tammy: I mean, that’s a great point you raise, right? I mean, the disconnect between politicians making decisions. And then, you know, guys like yourself, men and women like yourself who are on the ground. Did you feel that like you were not welcome, that the work you were trying to do --

Marcus: Oh, yeah, all the time.

Tammy: Speak to me more about this phrase you use, “the hate in their
eyes” and this thought of “what am I doing here --

**Marcus:** Well, you know that there’s guys looking to kill you. You’re going to drive with your vehicles, ‘cause they’re so big you’re going to take up the road and you’re going to piss people off. And that happens all the time. And, you know, you’ll get the little kids who point their fingers at you like it’s a gun, and want to shoot you and stuff like that. And the adults know not to do that, adult males definitely won’t do that. But, you know, there is a hate, with some people ... not everybody. There are people who definitely benefited from us being there. Knowing that the money’s flowing, there’s cash coming in to their pockets and they’re going to do whatever it takes to get that. And then still support, you know, the village, the Taliban, you know whomever else because they’ve got to live, because they know we’re leaving.

**Tammy:** Right.

**Marcus:** So there are those survivors, let’s call them, that will play ... you know, it may seem from our perspective they’re playing both sides but, really, they know that there’s the timeline for the Canadians, Americans in Afghanistan, and they’re going to leave and then the Taliban will resurface again. So there is that. And then there’s that frustration that soldiers feel too because we know that’s going to happen, once we’re gone... once we all pull out, well, they’re going to come back in again and do what they’re going to do. But we just hope that the training we gave them to their forces would be able to repel all of that stuff. And, hopefully, we gave them some hope that the rest of the world is out there is concerned. But, you know, there are stresses that happen for anybody in life, whether you’re living in a combat zone or you’re not, you know, your kids ... you got to put the food on the table, keep a roof over everybody’s head, you know, make sure your kids are going to be successful, whatever they’re going to do next, right? We all have those concerns.

In his account, Marcus describes some of the complexities of warfare he encountered on the ground. One of the first aspects he describes is his initial encounter with local Afghans. He describes them as “having hate in their eyes”, especially when Canadian troops first entered the country. He was well aware of the variety of emotions circulating for locals and tries to come to terms with the variety of emotions Afghans felt as a result of the
presence of Canadian troops. He expresses that while over time this sentiment lessened, he was still acutely aware that there always remained people prepared to kill him and his troops. He appears to sympathize with the fact that a foreign presence has taken up space in their lands which gives way to much frustration and anger among the local Afghans. This is in sharp contrast to Tyler Wall’s (2013) study of white soldiers’ involvement in Iraq. Although Wall finds that most of the white soldiers he interviewed viewed the mission in Iraq as one primarily embedded in the discourse of humanitarian rescue, he notes that they “deploy Orientalist logics in that service of the United States Empire” (p. 485). While some racialized soldiers also view the Afghan mission as “doing good”, others are not always sure and/or sympathize with the Afghan natives. Whether this is due to their subject positioning is unclear. In many instances, through the perceived heroism of white soldiers, invasions in both Iraq and Afghanistan have been framed by mainstream media outlets and state politicians as “rescue missions”, where Western militaries are tasked with saving “brown women from brown men” and hence, the result is a confrontation between “dark threats” and “white knights” (Razack, 2004; 2008). Marcus also reveals that before he deployed, he received some training with respect to “cultural differences” and what he might confront upon deployment. He expresses that initially it was somewhat useful, but later on in the interview, he reveals that the training is not reflective of what he encountered on the ground. This disconnect is further articulated when he speaks about the decisions politicians make in state governments about what needs to happen in war torn countries such as Afghanistan. He expresses that there is a disconnect between politicians’ understanding and the reality on the ground. From what Marcus witnessed on the ground, he observes and believes that the complex situation in Afghanistan has a deep history and
does not seem entirely convinced of the mission when he articulates that the Afghans have been able to sort themselves out over time. He goes on to narrate a frustration experienced by him and his fellow soldiers knowing that they will not be in Afghanistan long term suggesting a moral conflict that has been fiercely debated (Klassen, 2014) His narrative is indicative of his critical reflection on the mission. Marcus has come to an understanding that there are different stakes in Afghanistan, but humanizes the mission in the sense that both he and his fellow soldiers and the locals they encountered desire the same basics out of life, thereby humanizing and drawing a commonality between him, his troops and the Afghan natives.

Reactions on the Ground

Whether Marcus’ racial position impacts his critical views on the mission in Afghanistan is unclear. However, below, I directly ask if being a racialized soldier had any impact in his encounters with local Afghans.

**Tammy:** Would you say that, because you identify as racialized, when you were in Afghanistan that there were people who had assumptions about what the Canadian soldier looked like?

**Marcus:** Oh, yeah. My first tour to Afghanistan we went south of Kabul like an hour’s into the mountains south. And we were just stopping and I was a troop leader at the time. And I stopped my troop and we were going to start conducting vehicle searches. And we were told to start vehicle searches in the area because we were worried about guns being smuggled in. So we stopped and the village kids started gathering around us. And they were, kind of, watching me. And one of my sergeants turned to me and said, “Hey, sir, take a look at the kids. They’re all, like, looking at you.” And as I was taking off my helmet, my eye wear and my face mask, a scarf that I had around my face, all the kids, their mouths were opening. And the sergeant was pointing it out to me and they’re like, “Wow, they’re really awed by you.” They had been watching my guys already and nothing was going on, they got no reaction. But I think maybe they were surprised by the colour of my
skin, for instance, being different from my other soldiers that were listening to me and doing things I was saying.

Tammy: Did you find that that occurred a lot or it’s just in these moments?

Marcus: I think it was unique because it was … we were only there the first time … in Afghanistan the first couple months. And they're still getting used to soldiers coming around, right? By 2010, I think they were just kind of … it didn’t matter what colour you were.

But, I’ll tell you, I dealt with the district leader, in [names district] on a daily basis. And when I told him I was leaving he actually … he teared up, he was crying. And I know that, between him and I, we were able to get along. We all completely trusted him as a guy in a position that he was in it didn’t really matter. I think he felt a bit of a connection because of my Indian heritage and was understanding with respect to that kind of stuff. I would go and have tea daily with him.

In my exchange with Marcus, he reveals that during one of his first encounters with Afghan locals, the locals were caught by surprise with respect to his skin colour. Later in the interview, he tells me that because most of his fellow soldiers, including the ones he was in charge of, were white or at the very least passed for white, he stood out among his troops due to his skin colour. This is revealing in that there is an assumption with respect to who embodies the soldier. Marcus also reveals that he was in charge and had a senior role with respect to tasking and commanding his soldiers in the field. He expresses that this also came as a surprise to the local Afghans, indicating that there is an assumption of who embodies a leadership role. Marcus’ account also highlights the connection he had with local Afghanis. He goes on to illustrate that during the beginning of the occupation, relationships were strained; however, near the end his second tour, he had established a connection with the locals, thereby humanizing the so-called enemy. He reveals that not only was he impacted by the connection he had, but so too was the gentleman he befriended in the village. Marcus attributes this to his racial positioning and his “Indian
heritage”, which he speculates facilitated their interaction and relationship. Below, Mario, who completed one tour in Afghanistan, also reveals his thoughts on his racial positioning in Afghanistan through his account.

Mario: *I think the body language had a lot to do with relating to the Afghans; while they were taken over by the Russians back in the ’70s. They’re afraid of pistols. I was given a sidearm, besides my long barrel, and I would have people coming to me to ask me questions thinking that I was the boss. Well, I have an officer who was getting all pissed off and cranky because they weren’t really directed to him. But at the same time, when you’re in a FOB, when you’re in a foreign observation base, some of the military rules, such as shaving, kind of goes out the window. I mean we’re limited on resources. So I had a long beard, really long beard. So not only did I fit in with the locals, a few times kind it got me upset because they employ locals as well over there and when you go through the meal line, they would question me. Can you sign in? Sign in for what? Yeah, all locals working for us, they have to sign in. I’m like listen buddy, I just came from the field, I’m Canadian. He's like no you have to sign in. I'm like want to talk to my boss?*

Mario’s account is interesting because he enjoys the authority he had based on the weaponry he carried, but is also aware of what this evokes among the Afghans he encountered. Mario was also able to blend in with the locals based on his appearance and felt that this worked to his benefit, up to a point. It frustrated him when he would return to his own base and be asked to “sign in” as if he was a local. There are limits in the way Mario desires to blend in. He still desires to be seen as a Canadian soldier, but also does not mind if his ability to blend him affords him some advantage. This was also reminiscent of a struggle that Mario had back on the home front when trying to re-enter Canada after a training mission in the US and he was questioned by a Canadian Border Services agent at home upon entry.
Mario: I went to the States to do some courses through the military and I was wearing my uniform. I was treated like a king in the US. I didn't have to carry my luggage. They took me to a place, they knew my flight, they gave me food for free, they let me sleep there, they gave me full accommodations. And this is at an airport...

I come here to Canada and I get a hard time. They're like oh so where's your second passport. What? This is my military. I'm traveling with the army. This is my military passport. Well where's your civilian passport? Like what? Are you serious? And they're giving me such a hard time just coming into the country. So I can tell the difference.

Tammy: How do you make sense of that? There's so much there in that anecdote you just told me. On the one end it's commentary on what's going on in the U.S.; but then also here you're in uniform and you're presenting your passport and your civilian passport is being asked for. I mean, you're not the first person to tell me the difficulties of a Canadian border. How do you make sense of, I guess, those two examples because they're so rich. What goes on in your head?

Mario: I just turn it around to them. I'm like so what is your name. I want your number, because, I mean, you're giving me a hard time, you think I'm bringing contraband? I don't even smoke, by the way. You're giving me a hard time about my civilian passport and right now I'm traveling with the military, which you're not supposed to be questioning. I need your name and I throw it back at them. I need this, this and this from you so when my boss asks me why I was late they can come back to you and ask you those questions. I mean, they ask me questions I just throw it back at them. But if I travel as a civilian and I'm not adhering to the rules then I understand. I'm sorry, I didn't tell you I was bringing alcohol. Okay, here's your fine and I agree with that. But when I'm in uniform traveling with a small bag and I'm getting hassled. I was a little bit annoyed.

I introduce Mario’s accounts on both the battlefront and the home front in order to compare and contrast his two experiences. In Afghanistan, he is able to blend in, but also expresses his frustration with not being recognized as a Canadian soldier separate from the people he is tasked with helping. That said, his experience with the Canadian Border Services, is interesting because even in uniform, Mario’s patriotism and loyalty are
questioned in the name of national security. While he does not directly attribute this to race, he does have an awareness that “something is going on”. Having his patriotism and status as a Canadian soldier questioned based on his appearance both on the home front and battlefront is a source of frustration for Mario. In contrast, Mario details the exceptional treatment he received upon landing in the US. Later in the interview, he recounts me that while Latin American civilians (citizens and especially undocumented workers) are not treated well on a regular basis in the US and are subject to much racism, he found that for those in uniform, the treatment and respect received are entirely different. Throughout this research, many soldiers expressed to me that the Canadian military uniform does not necessarily shield them from questions about their racial makeup in the way it is perceived to do so in the American context.

In Um’s (2012) examination of the case of Kareem Rashad Sultan Khan, a Muslim corporal in the U.S. Army who died in Operation Iraqi Freedom, she demonstrates how we are uncomfortable and unsettled by the figure of the racialized soldier in spite of his sacrifice for the nation. Um also examines the case of U.S Army Chaplain Captain James Yee who was taken into military custody, detained and charged on a number of counts, including sedition, espionage, aiding the enemy, and failure to obey a general order following eleven months of service as the Muslim chaplain at Camp Delta, the military prison at Guantánamo Bay (para. 18). Yee, a Chinese American who converted to Islam just before the first Gulf War, pursued the study of Islam with a desire to serve as a chaplain in the Army. In response to the attacks on 11 September 2001, Yee embraced his role as a chaplain at Fort Lewis in Washington, but also became a spokesperson for Islam, and went on to educate the military and general public about Islam in an effort to
diffuse the rising hostility against Muslims. As Um states, “in addition to the usual duties of an army chaplain, his duties included meeting the prisoners’ religious needs as well as advising other staff about the prisoners’ religion and culture” (para. 18). Through various media appearances, Yee would go on to be the poster child of a good Muslim, and a devoted chaplain who served both God and the nation (Um, 2012, para. 18 as cited in Yee, 2005, p. 40). However, Yee would come under increasing suspicion as he became perceived as being sympathetic to detainees and as having a close association with other Muslim personnel. This resulted in a mounting investigation against him, culminating in his arrest in 2003. After spending nearly 76 days in solitary confinement, all charges were dropped due to insufficient evidence (para. 19). Yee eventually left the army with an honorable discharge. Analyzing Yee’s case, Um states,

While Yee’s race and ethnicity were not foregrounded in the case or in media coverage of the case the way his religion was, they were conjoined with religion in an anonymous military officials’ reference to Yee as “that Chinese Taliban”. No longer the poster child for the liberal and pluralist nation, Yee as “Chinese Taliban” poses an external threat to the national body and the nation-state through his race and religion. Despite the “terribly American” markers of Yee’s biography – Third generation American, model citizen, graduate of West Point – the east with which his race and religion became legible as external and threatening is a reflection of the racialization of both Asian Americans and Muslims. If Muslim and “Muslim-looking people are racialized as terrorist who stand outside of citizenship and construct the citizen as the opposite, Asians and Asian Americans, too have been long figured as outsiders to the nation. (para. 20)

Um’s analysis of the figure of the racialized soldier in the American context is useful to think about in relation to Mario’s encounters both on the home front and battlefront.
Even with his Canadian military uniform, Mario is considered as suspect and outside the boundaries of citizenship regardless of his formal citizenship status. Abroad in Afghanistan, he is seen as one of the locals and confronts difficulties as being seen as part of the Canadian military and hence a soldier.

Violence on the Battle Front

For racialized soldiers in theatre, encountering racial violence in the field was not uncommon. Below, Maya describes one of her first encounters with racial violence against local Afghans and how it impacted her.

**Tammy:** Did you find that when you were deployed in Afghanistan that you started to see a little bit more of this ignorance come out? Or did you find that there were people really trying to negotiate with what they saw with trying to understand what the mission was about?

**Maya:** I didn’t hear too much, again, I wasn’t out where the boys were, so that could be a whole different story. I remember I went to this FOB, forward observation base, where one of my colleagues was. We’re in the mass and there was this bench that said Haji on it. Clearly this was a table where the local workers sat but I’m like, “Haji. Do you know what a Haji is?” I don’t know who did that, it could’ve been anybody. I’m not saying it was someone in the Canadian Forces but it could’ve been someone with the Canadian Armed Forces. But it’s clearly someone that spoke some sort of English because they spray painted H-A-J-I and I just like shake my head, “Do you know what a fucking Haji is?” And I heard a couple other of my friends of colour use it. I’m like, “Do you know what you just said? That’s someone who went to Mecca. You’re just using this random title to out someone down.” I just walk away. This is why I probably have no friends in the military or in general because I can’t stand people like that. So I see things like that and I have to move on because then I’d be angry all day long.
In her account, Maya describes her discomfort and unease when she saw the word “Haji” spray painted on a church bench. Seeing this sight evoked feelings of anger for Maya as she expresses that she works hard to ignore this type of racial violence because she does not want to be consumed with anger. Similarly, Alex, a Corporal in logistics, describes her discomfort when she overhears a group of American and Canadian soldiers talking about the mission:

**Tammy:** Did you every encounter or face any racist or derogatory language when you deployed?

**Alex:** At times you overhear these guys talking about how they have to be “mindful of the enemy” and how you can’t let you guard down and that you can’t really trust anyone even if they are friendly. I would at times overhear guys talking together and they would say some pretty derogatory things. It didn’t make me feel that great, but then I realize where we were and that we were in a combat mission and maybe they have to think that way, I’m not too sure. It’s hard there, day in and day out, pretty routine until something happens, so some of these guys get frustrated.

Both Parenti (2003) and Wall (2011) write of the common use by American Forces of the term “hajis” as a slang term for Iraqis, during the occupation of Iraq. As Egan (2007) explains, several soldiers who have served in Iraq and subsequently have sought conscientious objector status as a result of their combat experiences and further report the ubiquitous use of “hajis” in reference to Iraqis (p. 145) As Herbert (2004, 2005) states, “this terms was not reserved for the national resistance or their more fundamentalist counterparts who were fighting U.S. Forces, but instead applies to all Iraqis, combatants and civilians alike” (p. 35). Furthermore, anyone from the middle East or South Asia, including prisoners held by the U.S. military in Afghanistan and low wage migrant workers hired by U.S contractors to provide services to the U.S. military, is also referred
to as a “haji” (Egan, 2007). In fact, even Muslim members of the U.S. armed forces report that they have encountered the phrase from fellow members of the U.S. military (Golden, 2004). Reminiscent of the Vietnam War, Herbert comments that these practices are “used the way ‘gook’ or ‘Charlie’ was used” (Herbert, 2005). Wall (2005) notes in his study of small-town soldiers that they tended to normalized the phrase “Hadji”, failing to see the use of term as morally and politically problematic, and was simply viewed as a descriptive term for the foreign other (p. 296). Wall, describing through his study with soldiers returning from Iraq, reveals the dehumanizing and homogenizing effects of the term:

One particular soldier told me that he was invited to give a talk to a local high school geography class on what he called “Hadji culture” and “Hadji geography” – without him ever seeing to recognize the political and controversial nature of the term. Yes these racialized imperialisms serve to homogenize and dehumanize the enemy, demarcating clear boundaries between us and them while at once place “them” – both god and bad Iraqis under one distinct label. (p. 496).

Both Maya and Alex express their discomfort and frustration with the racial violence abroad. Their concerns were two fold. On the one hand, they display real discomfort with respect to the blatant racism abroad, and secondly, because they were witnesses to it, they felt that more consideration and sensitivity on behalf of other soldiers should be warranted given their racial positioning. A feeling of frustration and helplessness is also evident in their accounts. Another term with some history in the Middle East and often used to describe Iraqis and Arabs in the Middle East is “sand nigger”. As Spicer states, “Most of the white troops called Iraqis and even the Arabs who are our allies ‘sand
niggers’ and they don’t bother to hold their tongues in the presence of black soldiers (cite in Egan, 2007, p. 145). However, as Farmanfarmaian (1992) explains, during the first Gulf War, several African Americans who served became assimilated into the national project. He states,

Many endorsed it and some soldiers in the front even used the term “sand niggers” in reference to Iraqis and possibly to all Arabs since sand has a geological presence in the whole region. This is the final stamp of participation in the project of nation, for when African Americans, too, begin to define themselves by the same constructs and against the other “rapists,” “deviants,” and “barbarians,” they can join the nation; they can enter its boundaries as long as they bury their own past. (p. 135)

Farmanfarmaian (1992) reminds us in this previous thought that while racial violence in the form of this derogatory language serves a purpose, soldiers of colour are not immune to participating in it as well. However, once again, he reminds us that in order for the soldier of colour to belong to the national project, an element of forgetting must take place which proves difficult for soldiers like Maya and Alex.

**Critical of War and Belonging:**

Several soldiers I interviewed were quite critical of warfare in light of the racism they experience in the Canadian military. Some of them could not reconcile entering combat abroad against other racialized bodies given what they experienced on the home front. Ruben, a former Air Force Captain who did one tour in Israel and one in Germany had this to say about his deployment to during the first Gulf War.
Ruben: I remember back in 1991, my commanding officer was like we’re being told there was a deployment in Iraq and I was like, “Listen, I’m not going as far a Moncton New Brunswick and I live in Nova Scotia, and I’m not going to fight in Iraq, why should I, you guys are the ones that called me a nigger, they didn’t, I’m not going over there to kill people that look like me, they haven’t done anything to me. So, why in the name of Francis would I go all the way there to kill my brothers and sisters. I don’t want any part of that. Pragmatically speaking that doesn’t make sense. If I get a gun, I may turn it on you people first, but I’m certainly not going to get on a plane that I don’t even know and do something over there. They haven’t done anything to me. It doesn’t make any sense.”

Ruben’s narrative is critical in light of the racism he experienced at home. I am reminded of a similar stance taken by Muhammad Ali when he refused to be drafted on grounds of racial injustice at home and the spread of American imperialism. In April 1967, Muhammad Ali, alongside other blacks who objected to the Vietnam War, famously refused induction into the armed forces with the following reasoning:

Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No I’m not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slave masters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality. If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people they wouldn’t have to draft me, I’d join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I’ll go to jail, so what? We’ve been in jail for 400 years. (cited in Eldrige, 2011, p. 79)
Both Ali’s reasoning and Ruben’s narrative are quite similar in their resistance to deployment. They both recognize the battles at home against racialized individuals and find it difficult to understand how they could, in good conscience, be deployed to carry out imperial wars. Ruben was eventually discharged from the military because he suffered PTSD from racial injury in the Canadian military. Late in his military career and upon retirement, he became very critical of deployments and felt that his “fight” was at home on Canadian soil for racial justice, particularly for those who suffer racial injustice in the Canadian military. Since having left the Canadian military, Ruben has worked in advocacy trying to help those within the military who have suffered racial injustice.

Kyle’s narrative below also reveals a critical edge to deployment but he is more supportive of the military’s role in Afghanistan. He states:

*Kyle: Yeah, definitely I try not to base my opinions on what is being broadcasted, for the most part in the mass media. I try as much as possible to learn on my own as to what exactly is going on on the ground, what exactly is going on ... like what exactly is happening. Sometimes what the media wants us to know or what the politicians want us to know is different from what exactly is going on. Again, in most cases everybody has good intentions. But at the end of the day you have to – personally I think it’s a good idea to kind of break it down in your own terms and try as much as possible to get an understanding of what exactly is going on and how did we get to this point to make your decision. So again people might say, “What’s going on here? What’s going on there? Why do we stick our faces here? Why do we stick our faces here?” Case in point – Afghanistan – why do we stick our faces here, why do we stick our faces there? It’s none of our business. But yeah, it doesn’t directly impact us in the sense that no Afghans came to Canada for war. But at the end of the day when you think about it – it was a country that harbored, for the longest time, somebody who has committed one of the greatest crimes against humanity and has killed a lot of people without even stepping on your shores. So again, do you just want to chop off his finger where he sticks his finger, or do you want to go trace him down all the way down to his roots and make sure that his whole support system down at his roots gets broken down? If you chop off his finger – obviously because he still has supplies, he has good roots down
somewhere it’s just going to foster another one like him to grow up. So that’s the way I look at it.

War is war; at the end of the day people are going to die. People are going to suffer on both sides. And at the end of the day you’ve got to look at it from the point of view that the people that are dying on the other side, on either side, they’re humans at the end of the day. And they have links and ties back to ... so for example I will say if you have a kid whose family got killed in an airstrike while trying to just live their lives in Afghanistan because of whatever it is that Al Qaeda and the West clash has made happen to them ... although now he’s in Canada, at the end of the day it’s still going to be hard for him to get his mind out of the fact that his family got killed in an airstrike that was conducted by the military of some country. Although at the end of the day he’s in Canada now, but again, somebody has to educate that kid as to what is going on.

Many racialized soldiers in this study possess critical thinking with respect to Canadian involvement in war. Some embrace it fully and believe the departure from peacekeeping places Canada on the map as a nation that should be taken seriously. Others simply accept the profession they have chosen and feel that their own critical opinion matters little.

Ambivalent Patriotism

From the outset of this project, the military was an important site because it is a crucial nerve centre for national belonging and patriotism in Canada. While there were several soldiers who expressed themselves as being “proud Canadians” or “proud to be in the Canadian military”, it was not without giving some thought to patriotism and what that idea means for them. Many had reservations and were quite ambivalent with respect to their patriotism. Whether or not their racial positioning had anything to do with their patriotism was not always clear. What is perhaps the most striking is that in most cases,
being part of the military did not necessarily make the racialized soldiers in this study feel more patriotic. Below Brad describes his views on patriotism:

**Brad:** I’ve never seen myself as a very patriotic person in which I would boast about my country but I do like to associate myself as a Canadian.

**Tammy:** What does Canadian mean to you, being Canadian mean to you?

**Brad:** It’s hard to say, just being accepting of different cultures and religions and having the opportunity I guess— I don’t know if I would have had the same opportunity if I stayed in Taiwan so Canada is just I guess my home. I wouldn’t think of Taiwan as my home now, it’s like Canada is my home so that’s I guess the way I would see it. Patriotism on the other hand, it seems like it’s conflicting that I identify as Canadian but I don’t think of myself as patriotic even though I’m in the military, I guess it’s the way patriots are described or at least projected on TV that they’d die for their country, that they fought and I don’t like to associate myself as somebody who likes to fight or have conflicts so therefore I don’t think of myself as a patriot. It’s kind of like my thoughts around patriotism haven’t really formed.

**Tammy:** Mmhmm, yeah and like the ideas that we have around patriotism is one that fights you know to the death for something, right.

**Brad:** Right.

**Tammy:** Does that conflict with nationalism for you?

**Brad:** Nationalism in the way -- I don’t like politics in general. I know politics are what drives the Canadian military, it drives a lot of things but I would do my best to steer away from it. I would maybe read up on it and just watch the news but generally just read it that’s it because it changes a lot of times and you just -- I find it exhausting to try to keep up. So you kind of do your own stuff and do the best that you can do with the job that you’re given. So I don’t think about the guys making the policies, at least that’s the idea anyways but I guess at the same time the basic training officers we are ones who have the power to change, make the rules or change things that we don’t like. So I guess I have to start thinking about those things because we are put in these positions. Even back in university in which they said if you don’t really like how something is done go and make a change, even though I’m still trying to steer away from ...
In her account below with respect to patriotism and her involvement in Canadian military, Maya also reveals an ambivalent patriotism. While she is well aware that she is part of a system and does not have any real political decision-making power with respect to deployments, she is critical about the missions and is well aware that “orders come down”. That said, she distinguishes her pride with regard to the Canadian military from what she views as an American style patriotism.

**Maya:** Oh I know. I have my own personal views about Afghanistan, I ain’t stupid, and I know we’re all slaves in the cogwheel. I get it but whatever. People are always like, “Aren’t you scared of death?” No, I’m not. Number one, I’m a Clerk but even that, I can get hit by a bus tomorrow and die and I’m not scared to die, whether it’s hit by a bus or if it’s overseas. So I’m ready to accept that fate, number one. If that’s the case, people need to understand that it’s not us that make these decisions. It’s the people that they vote in. I’m not like the Americans where I’m like, “Go USA. Our troops are the best.” Don’t get me wrong, I’m in the military, I’m proud to wear this uniform but at the same time, our orders come down, they don’t go up. We’re told what to do. Don’t get wrong in the military, especially places like the infantry. They want to go places; Afghanistan’s going, guess what, they want to go.

**Is it worth it?: Negotiating Complicity**

In these final narratives, Mario and Marcus discuss their views on the Afghan mission in terms of whether or not they thought they had an impact overseas. Mario responds in the following manner:

**Mario:** It was worth it. Every person will experience something different. And I have to mention this because it made me really upset. I was invited to go to a thank-you dinner and it was held from-- there was a lot of officers. Have to say that clearly, a lot of officers. And I’m not a kiss-ass. I tell them how it is, as it is, and there was a general that was sitting there. And we were discussing the war and they were all officers except for myself, the only corporal. And this general said all the
lives that we spent in Afghanistan were not worth it 'cause nothing has changed. So I have a general that is telling me-- I'm sorry to say it but I wanted to punch him out. I wish I did it. I probably wouldn't have been in the army right now, but I wish I did. But that negativity and never seeing something positive from someone that has lived there made me realise that everybody's going to experience something different. And from my experience, it is unfortunate that four people that I know passed away through my tour and it was worth it. Because at least it made a big difference in that country.

In the above account, Mario makes several distinctions. First, several soldiers expressed that there is a difference between Commissioned Officers and Non-Commissioned Officers in the military. This distinction usually has to do with university level education and specific training. Officers usually have a minimum of a Bachelor’s degree, whereas post-secondary education is not required for non-commissioned officers. Mario sheds light on this distinction when he shares an experience during which he was at a dinner with a number of Officers and was offended when a General offered his opinion on the mission in Afghanistan. Mario’s account is revealing because it demonstrates that even within the military, there is much dissent and a variety of perspectives on issues very close to them. Mario believes that while he suffered great loss in Afghanistan, that it ultimately served a greater purpose around security and freedom for Canadians. Marcus, however, is less convinced. While he has completed two tours Afghanistan, Marcus remains at times quite certain of Canada’s role in Afghanistan and at other times, quite ambivalent and thoughtful.

**Marcus:** I look at my kids and just those are the huge reminders of why I do what I do. People are flying all around the world and, you know, people ask, you know, “What are the reasons why you joined the military?” and I’m like, “Well, so that you can fly around the world and not live in fear,” for instance. So that you can go to another country and, you know, visit it and not be fear and stuff like that. And, you know, I have girls, right? So, you know, in Afghanistan, my first tour we were
doing a distribution of toys, different things for, you know, kids, clothes and stuff like that for families. We had huge line-up. And I remember I pulled all the girls out of a line-up, I brought them up first to make an example that ... say that, you know ... and that my choice, it wasn’t ... I wasn’t ordered to do that or anything like that. But, you know, I set up a sniper for instance, so that he can look to see after these girls got their stuff they could go off and play and nobody’s going to, like, beat them up and take their stuff. And nothing like that ever happened, so ... so those kind of things, whether ... you know, going back to one of the questions you had earlier, did we make an impact, I don’t know, I hope I did. I hope I did, I hope Canada did, I hope the world did. And ... you know, and I would say that’s probably why we’re not getting guys hijacking some of these planes. You know, we’re not having all these guys hijacking planes and stuff like that, keep the world in fear. So that’s a contribution that I like to think of that made a difference in.

You know, coming from the Caribbean, knowing the lifestyle in the Caribbean, like, the Taliban would string every one of us up. Because, you know, Carnival in itself is the total opposite of what these guys believe in. Imagine –

**Tammy:** Were you born in Trinidad?

**Marcus:** Yes, I was. Yeah.

**Tammy:** Okay.

**Marcus:** But imagine, like, Carnival happening in Afghanistan. These guys would lose their minds. Like, women dressed, you know, the way they are and dancing and, you know, taking a superior position to a man and stuff like that. Oh. And people drinking and having fun and stuff like that. That would never, never be considered. And to know that that’s part of our lifestyle, absolutely, I’ll go out and protect it all the time.

**Tammy:** Yeah. I mean, it’s interesting, right? On one hand it’s like you want to be able to preserve, sort of, this type of freedom where ... this freedom where you are able to do those things and women do you have liberties, that you’re able to, you know, enjoy your life with other people. But then, on the other hand, it’s interesting how I was hearing you say how you’re, like, “I’m not even sure what we’re up to here,” you know. And you, sort of, saying that maybe it’s up to ... and based on history too, if you look at it ... that maybe it’s up to the Afghans to, sort of, figure it out for themselves, right? So --

**Marcus:** Well, it is. Hands down. And they’re going to make the judgment on whether you’ve been effective or not. You know, we can sit there and get steered by the media all we want but if those people aren’t happy they’re not going to be.
Tammy: Yeah. So, I mean, it’s interesting, right, because I see, like, even for you it’s like ... what I hear you saying is that you hope that you make a difference but there’s always this uncertainty, right, we’re just not sure.

Marcus: That’s right. You’re not going to win everybody over. You know, the biggest thing when I was the assisting officer for a family that lost their son the father would ask me, you know, “Was it worth it?” I’m like, “Sheesh, you know what, I want to tell you yes so much. I want to tell you that your son’s death was not in vain but ...” I don’t know, didn’t have an answer for him. I like to believe that we’re making a difference, the different things that we’re doing.

Marcus’ narrative suggests that his belief that the mission in Afghanistan has accomplished some good. From his vantage point, he believes that Canadians are safer and have greater freedom as a result. Marcus is also inspired by what he was able to provide young girls in Afghanistan. In many ways, he adheres to the dominant discourse of saving Afghan women, and hence the initial impetus to wage war in the first place. Both Marcus and Mario draw on the discourse of security and freedom to understand themselves as good soldiers. What I find interesting about Marcus’ notion of freedom is how it is wrapped up his ability to celebrate his Trinidadian culture. While he does mention that the mission in Afghanistan permits Canadians to do things such as flying with relative peace of mind and affords them a relative security, he also contrasts with that of Afghans and suggest that Afghans would not be able to tolerate the way in which women are represented in for example the celebration of Carnival. Near the end of Marcus’ narrative, he reveals an ambivalence toward the mission stating, “I’d like to believe we’re making a difference”. While it is uncertain whether this ambivalence is due to his racial positioning, Marcus’ lived experience in Afghanistan does illustrate some nuances specific to his own subjectivity.
Conclusion

The racialized soldier cannot forget his or her own racial position while in theatre. Whether in encounters with local Afghans or within the military, race is ever present. The five racialized soldiers deployed to Afghanistan had a critical analysis of the war in Afghanistan and were able to humanize the Afghans in their interactions. Fostering connections with local Afghans led to deep feelings of ambivalence and uncertainty with respect to the reasons for the mission. While several experienced being racially marked, they also experienced themselves as sharing an understanding with the Afghans on the basis of race, thereby earning Afghan respect and camaraderie. Their narratives reveal that they are not uncritically patriotic. Belonging is not a linear or straightforward feat. Instead, what has been revealed is an ambivalence that unravels in theatres of war. Soldiers of colour are deeply ambivalent in theatres of war, often oscillating between support for the mission and wondering whether or not their presence is justified in Afghanistan. Their accounts confirm that race remains critical to the experiences of soldiers of colour in the theatres of war, providing them with a complicated and contradictory belonging to the nation. Finally, we need to think through the implication for war, warfare and state sanctioned violence through the racialized soldier’s capacity to humanize the Afghans they encountered.
CHAPTER VII

Concluding Thoughts:
Pushing the Boundaries of Belonging

Why should someone who wants to die for their country be subjected to all these violences by their colleagues?
-Ruben “Rocky” Coward, Retired, Canadian Forces

One does not simply or ontologically “belong” to the world or to any group within it. Belonging is an achievement at several levels of abstraction.
-Bell, 1999, p. 3

What makes for a grievable life?
-Butler, 2006, p. 20

Private Mark Anthony Graham, a thirty-three year old black Canadian male was killed by an American Fighter plane, in a so-called friendly fire incident on September 4th, 2006. On that day, thirty other Canadian soldiers were wounded; however, Graham was the only soldier that was fatally injured. One day prior to Graham’s death, four white male Canadian soldiers were killed in battle in Afghanistan (Douglas, 2015). Before joining the military, Graham, who was originally from Jamaica, but residing in Hamilton, had been an elite athlete competing in both the Commonwealth and Olympic games. As Delia Douglas (2015) observes, following his death, instead of drawing attention to Graham’s sacrifice to the nation, “media accounts (television and print) emphasized Graham’s track and field career, and his physicality, rather than his status as a citizen-soldier who died in the service of his country” (2015, p. 1007).
These representations of black masculinity in the Canadian nation state are not new, but they are instructive with respect to how racialized soldiers are taken up in the national imaginary. As Douglas argues, “owing to the ‘unknown’ imagery of a Canadian black male’s demonstrated commitment to fighting for/defending the nation, in an effort to ‘make him known’, media accounts emphasized Graham’s physicality and his identity as a “Jamaican-born” track and field athlete” (p. 1008). McKittrick (2006) goes on to argue that “Graham’s death by ‘friendly fire’ constitutes a ‘threatening geographic act’ in relation to prevailing spatial and social arrangements associated with masculinity and national identity” (McKittrick, 2005, p. 145, cited in Douglas, p. 1008). As I reflect on Mark Graham’s service and the subsequent scrutiny of his life in public Canadian media, I am reminded of Judith Butler’s notion of “grievability”. In an important and profound interrogation of a hierarchy of casualties, Judith Butler (2004) puts into question the notion of grievability in relation to global military operations. As she notes, “few people ever receive the equivalent to the paragraph-long obituaries in The New York Times, that seek to humanize… often through nationalist and familial framing devices, the deaths or more important the lives, of those who die violently” (p. 12). What this thesis has brought forth is the absent presence of the lives of racialized soldiers and the fundamental paradox they embody within the context of citizenship and national belonging. Building on Butler then and returning to the death of Mark Graham, I ask: What makes for a grievable life? What is telling in Douglas’ examination of Graham’s death is that the figure of the black citizen-soldier is problematic in the Canadian national imaginary. Not only is he simply “unrecognizable, but unsettling, and ultimately, ‘impossible’” (McKittrick, 2006, p. 99 cited in Douglas, 2015, p. 1008). In fact, what Douglas concludes is that Graham’s death is in fact not grievable within the Canadian nation state. Furthermore, the focus on Graham’s athletic career
in death, not only serves to deny his humanity, but speaks to the inscription of colonial power that evicts racialized bodies from the “civilized spaces of the nation” (Douglas, 2014, p. 1008).

From the outset of this thesis, I have demonstrated that the racialized soldier represents an interesting paradox within the Canadian nation state. Without essentializing their experiences of racism and evictions from citizenship, I began this thesis by asking how does the racialized soldier subject negotiate national belonging within the Canadian Armed Forces. I hypothesized that within an institution predicated on violence that this was not an easy trajectory for the racialized soldier. Therefore I asked, how might we understand the racialized underpinnings of citizenship, and more importantly, how is it lived among racialized soldiers in the Canadian military? What I have attempted to do in this work is to demonstrate the conditions of existence for racialized bodies in the Canadian Forces in the contemporary moment. Individuals who are exposed to state violence often have no other option than to appeal to the very state from which they need protection (Butler, 2004). To be protected from violence by the nation-state is to be exposed to the violence upon which the nation-state is built. In effect, to rely on the nation-state for protection from violence is precisely to exchange one potential type of violence for another (Butler, 2004). However, the very state from which racialized subjects need protection is a racial state (Omi and Winant 1994, Goldberg, 2008). State violence is administered and facilitated by a racial state, and is borne unevenly by those who are differentially racialized (Lee and Pratt 2012; see also Goldberg 2002). We assume a kind of comfort, support and safety from citizenship, but based on the social, political and juridical evictions from citizenship, belonging only seems to magnify our vulnerability historically and in the contemporary moment.
What I have argued throughout this work is that the operations of whiteness and white supremacy are central to how racialized soldiers navigate the Canadian military apparatus with important implications for citizenship and national belonging. Whether it is through everyday encounters in the Canadian Forces, policies and procedures with respect to diversity and diversity management, recruitment campaigns and encounters in theaters of war, the act of tracing whiteness is then an act of historicizing whiteness. As George Yancy states, “historicizing whiteness is an act of situating whiteness within the context of material forces and raced interest-laden values that reinforce whiteness as a site of privilege and hegemony. Marking whiteness is about exposing the ways in which whites have created a form of ‘humanism’ that obfuscates their hegemonic efforts to treat their experiences as universal and representative” (p. 7).

In my first data chapter (Chapter IV), I examined how diversity through recruitment has become a priority for the Canadian military in the recent history and more aggressively during the War on Terror. I continued on to showcase how whiteness operates through policies and procedures, wherein the racialized soldier literally comes to embody and inhabit neoliberal racial politics known as diversity within the Canadian Forces apparatus. Under such conditions, institutions like the Canadian Forces are encouraged to recruit non-dominant bodies based on the legal demands of the Employment Equity Act and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms but fail to address racism and their relationship with neoliberal politics. In contrast to the Canadian military’s colonial and imperial history in relation to recruitment, I also showcase the journeys of racialized soldiers into the Canadian military. While their narratives reveal a number of reasons for joining they are often critical of the military’s recruitment tactics, but in the same vein are eager to belong and become a productive member of society. While the Canadian
Forces has appeared to promote racial progress, its recruitment and integration of racial minorities in this research as evidenced by racialized soldiers narratives, reveals the opposite. Therefore, “diversity” can never mean anything beyond assisting racial Others to learn to function within projects of inclusion.

In Chapter 5, inspired by the work of Franz Fanon, I argue that the military encounter is a racial encounter both at home and abroad underpinned by white supremacy and a violent colonial history. Through the narratives of racialized soldiers, I have aimed to shed light on this encounter through the intimacies of military cultural life and how the military is constructed as white space thereby demonstrating the domestic evictions from citizenship. Racialized soldiers negotiate this space in a number of ways but mostly by accepting racism as a term and condition of service and by occasionally naming it. What is striking is how much they have to come to terms with this condition and the extra racial labour involved in order to survive.

Finally, in Chapter 6, I invite the reader to engage with how racialized soldiers live the contradiction of citizenship abroad. This chapter reveals that racialized soldiers do carry with them into the battlefield, but depending on their circumstances their racial positioning varies in encounters with local Afghans. All soldiers who deployed revealed a critical stance with respect to the CF’s involvement in combat missions. However, what their narratives reveal is that they are not hailed by a naïve allegiance to patriotism. Rather, for the racialized soldier, belonging is not a linear. What has been revealed is not a simple trajectory, but one that is fraught with history, contempt and deep ambivalence that at times unravels in theatres of war. Soldiers or colour are at times deeply ambivalent in theatres of war often oscillating back and forth wondering if their presence is warranted. Their narratives reveal a humanizing of the people of Afghanistan with occasional frustrations. My final chapter reveals that, in order to
understand the contours of racial violence abroad, we cannot look at it outside of the bodies who experience evictions on a daily basis at home. I suggest that a reckoning of violence at home is central to understanding violence outside of our domestic borders with different and nuanced consequences for racialized soldiers.

Coming to understand ourselves as racialized subjects operating through a “white world” is profoundly a pedagogical project (Fanon, 1967). Considering the journeys of racialized soldiers and how they navigate systems of white supremacy is central to how those deemed as other live with racial violence in a myriad of ways. The soldiers’ narratives demand that we engage with how we are complicit and/or implicated in larger processes of militarization, white supremacy and imperialism. Racialized soldiers are exceptional and not so exceptional at the same time. What makes them exceptional is that they are operating out of an institution predicated on violence. This has important implications for how military violence is produced and carried out in the making of settler colonialism and imperialism. Moreover, the context in which they exist centers quite literally on the fight for existence, to count, to matter, and to belong. While their lives are quite literally at stake, the military context perhaps magnifies their negotiations and their fight for life and belonging in plain sight.

Throughout the tenure of this thesis, I have witnessed the governance of a Conservative government under the leadership of the former Prime Minister Stephen Harper who remained in power by espousing the values of security, increased military presence and a resurgence of white nationalism in the post 9/11 era. McCready (2013) argues that the Harper years ushered in a “New Canadian Exceptionalism”, characterized by “an emerging cultural and political idiom that defines and represents Canada (both to itself and to the world) as unique and particularly well-suited to find its way in the “‘post 9/11’” landscape by drawing on a perceived
history of peacekeeping and multiculturalism to justify and legitimate neo-imperialism and racialized policing at home and abroad” (p. 254). Therefore in the post 9/11 era, this discourse of Canadian exceptionalism that McCready articulates also requires “a suitable story of origins” and is typically narrated in the following manner: “We were peacekeepers, so now we are fit to overthrow other people’s governments; we embraced diversity through multiculturalism, so now we appropriate the ability to decide who may be included in the global demos and who will remain unassimilable, beyond the borders of civility; we were skeptical and derisive of the bombastic nationalism of our neighbours, so we increasingly gloat about the humility that makes us different” (p. 254).

The legacies of the Harper government remain with the newly elected Liberal Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. While the tone may have changed under the multicultural liberals, much of what the Harper government has put in place with respect to security and military affairs abroad has gone largely unchanged. Many Canadians in a moment of nostalgia believe that like his father, Pierre Eliott Trudeau, Justin Trudeau embodies much hope for multicultural Canada. Diversifying his Cabinet to fifty percent women, and appointing several racialized bodies to prominent cabinet positions inspired much hope and change among the Canadian citizenry. One of these high profile cabinet positions was given to former Canadian Sikh soldier, Harjit Sajjan, now the Minster of National Defense. In this moment, it would appear as though this is a “victory” for people of colour, or at the very least, for the South Asian community. This appointment may be perceived as a strong example of diversity discourse prevailing, signaling a post racial moment akin to the election of US President Barack Obama, where the only limits to belonging are those who choose not to embrace what the nation has to offer. However, upon closer examination, the
limits of multiculturalism are revealed, as the Minister of Defense was and is not immune to racist attacks and criticism by both the members of the Canadian government and the Canadian Forces.  

While the Canadian Forces have dialed back their combat mission in Afghanistan (2014), they have shifted into more of a security and training role in that country. Under Minister Sajjan, Canada is currently involved in Operation Impact, the CAF contribution to the Middle East Stabilization Force (MESF) – the multinational coalition to halt and degrade the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The Government of Canada is implementing a renewed and broadened whole-of-government approach to the fight against ISIL. In February 2016, the Government of Canada announced that the total number of personnel deployed under Operation IMPACT increased to a maximum of 830 CAF members, from the previous mandated level of 600 personnel and 69 advisors working in an advisory and assistance role to the Iraqi security forces. The refocused approach for Operation IMPACT overseas the continuation of air-to-air refueling and aerial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance missions in support of coalition air operations. It also intensifies CF efforts to train Iraqi security forces and to support coalition and regional partners in the campaign against ISIL. The CAF ended the conduct of airstrikes in Iraq and Syria in February 2016. Since the first sortie in October 2014, CF-188 Hornet aircraft has conducted a total of 1378 sorties, resulting in 251 airstrikes on ISIL targets during coalition operations. The six CF-188 Hornets,  

along with associated aircrew and support personnel currently deployed to the region have informed Canadians that they will return to Canada in a phased approach (Canadian Forces, 2016).

Canada’s involvement in global missions and global security also has a cost. To date, one hundred and fifty-eight (158) Canadian Armed Forces members have lost their lives in service while participating in our country’s military efforts in Afghanistan. As for Afghan civilian and military casualties, reliable figures are difficult to track and document. Since the United Nations Mission Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) began systematically documenting civilian casualties in January 2009 up to December 2015, UNAMA recorded 58,736 civilian casualties (21,323 deaths and 37,413 injured)\(^64\). To that, at least 160 soldiers and veterans have killed themselves between 2004 and 2014, more than those who have lost their lives in combat\(^65\).

In this contemporary context, soldiers of colour experience great costs to themselves when they attempt to perform as both same and other. Any challenges that racialized soldiers make to an institution’s commitment to diversity (such as naming racism) are met with great consequences, such as surveillance of their work, ongoing assessment of their skills and competencies, and in some cases, isolation and alienation from the organization and often times, lengthy legal battles. This does not even include emotional suffering which lies outside of that having witnessed warfare and the trauma that ensues from deployment in the form of


\(^{65}\) Campon-Smith, B. (2014). *Suicide claims more soldiers than those killed by Afghan combat*. Website: http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2014/09/16/suicide_claims_more_soldiers_than_those_killed_by_afghan_combat.html
post traumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). However, in many ways, their narratives also point to sites of resistance and challenge to the very structure and operations of institutional whiteness in the CF. Moreover, their narratives ask us to focus our attention on the racial violence at home from a structural vantage point. This is not to say that we cannot and should not pay attention to our involvement in warfare abroad, but rather engaging with the evictions and racial violence at home within our borders is vital.

**Contributions**

This thesis has contributed to new ways of thinking through the racial structure of citizenship from the vantage point of the *lived* experience of racialized soldiers. As I have demonstrated, the racialized soldier within the Canadian context is not a key figure within the Canadian national psyche. Where s/he is featured, is in sparse historical accounts of military participation, recruitment campaigns, and in calls for increasing diversity under the *Employment Equity Act*, mainly as an added variable or something to be considered for good business. This research illustrates the micro-processes through which racialized soldiers negotiate white dominance domestically and in warfare. Very few studies within military sociology, citizenship studies, or multiculturalism have examined the discursive and material production of whiteness and racism, as examined by racialized people. Second, this research offers a significant critique of the military as an institution and its continuous role in the making of settler colonialism and imperialism, in addition to engaging with how whiteness is upheld and negotiated thus revealing the ways in which the state sanctioned violence and its subjects are produced through racialized discourses. Third, this research reveals the complexity of racialized citizenship and military service at a particular moment, in the post 9/11 era. It
brings to light in a more meaningful way the nuanced role people of colour play in the making of settler colonialism, particularly since the Canadian Forces continue to rely on its peacekeeping and humanitarian past. Finally, this research takes the lives of racialized soldiers seriously and grapples with how they negotiate white supremacy, particularly under racial neoliberalism. This is central to our understanding of national belonging and multiculturalism and modern day citizenship in the contemporary moment. Furthermore, by understanding how race and racism are experienced and lived, these insights will fill an important gap in Canadian and international literature on critical race theory, theoretical debates on Canadian militarism, citizenship and subjectivity.

Gaps and Areas for future Research

In many ways, I began this thesis with a series of questions centering on racialized subjectivities, citizenship, state sanctioned violence and national belonging; however, as I come to the conclusion of this research study, I am left with other concerns and areas for future research. While various promises emerged from this study on racialized soldiers; there were several bigger themes that were touched upon throughout the process that were beyond the scope of this research.

Based on the sheer amount of racism many of these soldiers experience, live with, and anticipate, what has become evident is that there is very little recourse for racialized soldiers with respect to reporting mechanisms and action to protect soldiers of colour who do file complaints. One of the areas of future research is to examine to the lives of soldiers once they return from deployment or leave the Canadian forces. Several soldiers expressed that once they
leave the military (if they leave), they aspire to a career in other security forces or are willing to make the transition to police services. I am also interested in what happens to racialized soldiers after deployment, how is racism understood abroad and reconciled with their understandings with racism at home. That aspect is not dealt with in this research as I am more centrally interested in how racism is a central feature of warfare and how racialized soldiers see themselves as central agents in modern day warfare.

Throughout the duration of this thesis, I found myself engaging implicitly with the connections between racialized violence at home and abroad. The figure of the Aboriginal soldiers is central to understanding that connection. While my research did not engage with Aboriginal soldiers (primarily, due to the my inability to access Aboriginal soldiers in urban areas), I believe that this is a potential gap in my research to understanding the relationship of violence to settler colonialism and interested in how Aboriginal soldiers negotiate these ideas alongside their participation in the Canadian Forces. Targeted by the state for indigenous uprisings and protest, and yet, simultaneously heavily targeted for recruitment as part of the military apparatus, points to a complex and contradictory relationship between Aboriginal soldiers and the colonial conditions of the Canadian nation state. It is this contradiction that I am interested in exploring further and that might assist with understanding state sanctioned violence at home and how it is easily exported abroad from judicial, social and political standpoints.

This research also briefly focused on pedagogical work within the military, particularly with respect to how they are taught (diversity training, S.H.A.R.P training, cultural sensitivity training before deployment) as a way to foster relationships with fellow soldiers at home and abroad. Furthermore, I am interested in initiatives created (or not created) for veterans. For
example, Troops to Teachers (T2T) is a teacher training initiative introduced in the United Kingdom in 2013. It is influenced by a similar programme developed and piloted in the USA in 2014. T2T targets retiring military personnel who are leaving the armed forces and looking to re-train in careers which draw upon their previous military training and in-service military experience as a foundation for such re-skilling (Basham, 2015). The program in the UK is likewise targeted at exiting servicemen and women from the armed forces. My curiosity lies on the largely untested assumption that military training and combat experience are particularly useful attributes for successful teaching in schools.

Finally, while many of the soldiers in this study spoke of PTSD as a result of deployments and what they had witnessed among their fellow comrades, what was also striking is how PTSD was also used to describe the lasting impacts of sustained racism and racial injury. I am interested in exploring future research to further understanding of the connections between racial injury, violence and the language of post-traumatic stress as a result of institutional racism.

**Final Thoughts**

The deep contradiction that lies at the core of this thesis is that soldiers of colour must seek protection from the state that injures; however, by virtue of being soldiers of colour they not only seek protection, but quite literally become the bodies, that protect the racial state. What I have called for in these pages is not only to understand how the racial state operates, but a deep historicization of this ongoing violence we are currently witnessing and to problematize the nuanced subject positions of the bodies called on to commit such violence in our name.
What does it mean to have racialized bodies written into this history as active agents of imperialism? In the end, I am not convinced that national belonging with all its promises should be our final destination, particularly if it is premised on violence. To conclude, I ask: What is at stake for the future of racialized soldiers? In a time when funding for veterans have been cut and there has been virtually no support for the wounded and those traumatized and injured by warfare, what happens to the racialized soldier upon return? In the United States, recruitment among racialized soldiers is up by 42% (Lee, 2012). In Canada, during times of war, history dictates that targeted recruitment will no doubt continue. As Lee states, “It seems the exposing of certain racialized populations for premature death through military service remains a practice” (Lee, 2012, p. 180). While in the American context this certainly seems to be the case, the trajectory in the Canadian context for racialized bodies is different, but no less sinister given its record on race relations and colonial violence. As Goldberg (2009) writes, racialized bodies under racial neoliberalism are “buried alive” and the soldier of colour is no exception. This study allows us to think about Canadian citizenship and belonging from the perspective of those residing on the periphery – always slated for eviction. Perhaps, if we begin to think about racialized soldiers as grievable then this lived contradiction that they inhabit becomes less acute. However, in an intense global moment of racialized imperial violence, my fear is that for racialized soldiers, death is not enough. I am not convinced that they will be mourned or grieved in manner that hails these soldiers as national heroes. Returning to the case of Mark Graham, as Douglas states rather, they must be “deaded” (Fanon, 1967); where “the denial of humanity is an expression of white cultural nationalism, signaling the spatialization of racism and the reassertion of white racial power” (p. 1019). While I take Fanon’s warnings of being “deaded” seriously, I am also mindful of Anne Cheng’s powerful question as I continue to
think about the lives of racialized soldiers coming home, retiring or moving onwards with their racial wounds: “How does an individual go from being a subject of grief to being a subject of grievance? What political and psychical gains or losses transpire in the process” (p. 3)? It is my hope that this work has begun to make that transition -- from suffering and injury to speaking out against it for soldiers of colour who stand at the nexus of neocolonial and imperial racial violence.
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APPENDICES

(APPENDIX A)

SCHEDULE OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

PERSONAL PROFILE

1) What is your current position in the military?
2) How long have you been serving in the military?
3) What attracted you to military service?
4) Do you have any other family members that served in the military?
5) Are you parents supportive of your decision to join?
6) Did you ever consider any other career?
7) Where did you grow up?
8) How do you identify yourself?

JOINING THE MILITARY

1) Can you tell me why you joined the military?
2) Can you tell me your current rank?
3) Are you currently still serving in the Canadian Military?
4) At what age did you join?
5) Have you always wanted to join?
6) Are you currently involved with the military?
7) Where have you been deployed?
8) What do you enjoy most about the military?
9) Did you ever consider any other career?
10) What do you enjoy least?
11) Have you ever experienced any harassment or racism in the military?
12) Have any of your friends or colleagues experienced harassment or racism?
13) What is your most memorable moment in the Canadian military?
14) What is your least memorable moment?
15) Are you proud to be part of the military? Why? Or Why not?
16) Is your family supportive of you joining the military?
17) What did you think you were going to get out of the military (skills, education, financial)?
18) Are you satisfied with your decision?
19) Do you have to deal with any criticism or critique for joining the military?
20) Would you say your experience overall has been a positive one?

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITHIN THE MILITARY

1) Can you describe to me where you have served with the military, both inside and outside of Canada?
2) Did you know about (i.e., the country) before travelling there? Have your ideas or impressions changed or been confirmed?
3) Can you take me through a typical work day for you?
4) What are you goals and aspirations in the Canadian military? What do you hope to achieve?
5) What impacts to you think the Canadian military has world wide? Do you think Canadian soldiers bring anything unique to the experience?
6) In Canada there is a lot of support for the troops, but not necessarily for the missions it participates in, what do you think of this? Do you feel supported?
7) What types of training have you had in the military? Regarding harassment and/or cultural sensitivity? Has it been useful? Why or why not?
8) Are you briefed before you travel? What do these briefings entail?
9) Do you ever feel conflicted about the decisions the military makes? Or your decision to join the military?

**MASCUINITIES AND FEMININITIES**

1) Do you get to socialize with women/men often?
2) What are those interactions like?
3) Do you think they would be any different outside the military?
4) Do you have good friends in the military?
5) Are you close? What makes you close?
6) Did you have to go through any hazing rituals?
7) Can you describe what those rituals were like?
8) Can you describe to me the qualities of a good soldier?
9) What are the qualities that are valued in a good soldier?
10) Do men and women in the military feel pressure to acquire these qualities?
11) Do you find it difficult to fit in sometimes?
12)

**PROCESS OF RACIALIZATION**

1) How do you identify yourself? Do you identify as Canadian?
2) What is your religious background?
3) Are there many soldiers of colour in the military from you experience? Does that bother you?
4) Do you find that you stand out?
5) Are you ever conflicted about your decision to join?
6) What does being Canadian mean to you? Does your experience in the military help you solidify your Canadian identity?
7) Do you find the military a welcoming place? Typically, it is not described as such, could you comment on your experiences with inclusion or exclusion?
8) Do you find that you are targeted in either a positive or negative way based on your race?
9) Have you ever experienced being stereotyped? How do you feel about this?
10) Have you ever experienced any racism in the military? From your colleagues or superiors?

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ABROAD AND THE FIELD**

1) Can you tell me about how many tours you have completed? Which ones?
2) Can you tell me what a typical day in the field would look like for you?
3) Tell me about your encounters with people from the countries of where you were deployed? Were you well received? Did you develop any relationships?
4) Have you ever experienced any racism on tour? Or were you seen as an asset?
5) What most shocked you about deployment?
Hello,

- Do you identify as a person of colour (Black, South Asian, East Asian, African Canadian, Middle Eastern, Indo-Canadian, non-white, mixed race, racialized)?
- Are you currently in the Reserve Force or have retired from the Canadian Forces?
- Are you interested in sharing your experiences within the Canadian military?

If you have answered yes to all of the above questions, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Tammy George and I am currently a doctoral student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. I am currently involved in a research project entitled: *Be All You Can Be or Longing To Be: Racialized Soldiers and the Canadian Military Experience*. This project involves exploring the experiences of soldiers of colour (Black, South Asian, East Asian, African Canadian, Middle Eastern, Indo-Canadian, non-white, mixed race, racialized) within the Canadian Armed Forces.

I am currently looking for men and women who have served in the Canadian Military and would be interested in taking part in an interview that would take approximately one hour (to a maximum of 90 minutes). The interview will focus on your experiences in the Canadian Military, what the military means to you, your decisions to enter the Canadian military, how you identify yourself and how your involvement in the military impacts your identity. I am looking for volunteers who would be interested in sharing their experiences on these issues. The interview would be entirely confidential and we would use a fictitious name when I transcribe the interview in order to conceal your identity.

If you are interested in participating in this interview, please feel free to contact me at the information below. If you have any further questions regarding this research study feel free to contact me. Alternatively, please fill out the attached recruitment form and I will contact you as soon as possible to discuss the study in further detail. From that point, you
will be able to decide for yourself if this is a study you would like to be involved in, from which we can decide where you would want the interview to be conducted at a time that is entirely convenient to you.

Please feel free to ask me any questions you may have regarding this research project. I can be contacted at: mastertg22@yahoo.com OR tammy.george@utoronto.ca

I thank you for time and consideration and look forward to hearing from you.
(APPENDIX C)
RECRUITEMENT FORM

Title of Study:  Be All You Can Be or Longing To Be: Racialized Soldiers and the Canadian Military Experience

Researcher:  Tammy George Department of Humanities and Social Sciences in Social Justice Education (OISE/University of Toronto)

1. Name: __________________________________________________________

2. Age: ________________

3. Were you born in Canada?  Yes:______  No:_______

4. What is your country of Origin: __________________________________________

5. How long have served in the Canadian Armed Forces:
  ________________________________________________________________

6. Are you currently active or serving in the Canadian Armed Forces:
  ________________________________________________________________

7. Are you interested in participating in this study?  
   Yes:_____  No:_____

8. When is the best time to contact you?
   Morning:_____  Afternoon:_____  Evening:_____

Contact Information:

Phone number: _________________________________

Email: ________________________________

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.
I, ________________________________, hereby am interested in collaborating voluntarily and freely to the research supervised by Dr. Sherene Razack and conducted by Tammy George from the Ontario Institute of Studies in Education at the University of Toronto.

I understand that the general goal of this study is to examine how soldiers of colour negotiate national belonging. The specific objectives of this study are to explore how these men and women: (a) understand the Canadian military experience (b) speak about their ethnocultural identities in relation to the Canadian military (c) speak about the
experiences in the Canadian military (d) understand their everyday negotiations of race, racism and national belonging both inside and outside the Canadian Armed Forces.

My participation will consist of participating in one interview session to discuss ideas of national belonging. That interview will last approximately 60-90 minutes and will take place at a time and place of my choosing. My participation will also consist of taking part in another session to read and discuss the written transcription of the interview (about 30 minutes at a time and place of my choosing).

I grant permission for the audio recording of my interview for the purpose of this research study. I understand that my interview will be transcribed and read to me at a later date where I will have the opportunity to re-read and change, remove or correct any passages that I feel may not be appropriate. I will also be given the opportunity (optional) to attend a third session where I will be able to listen to and then discuss the results of the study.

I accept that all material collected as a result of my participation will be used only for research purposes, that they will be available only to responsible professional and that my anonymity and confidentiality will be protected at all times. I am assured that the audiotapes and the transcription of the interview will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in Tammy George’s office. The audio recordings will also be destroyed at the end of the study. I understand that I may withdraw my permission at any time and that any recordings of my participation will be erased at upon my request without fear of negative consequences.

I have also been assured by the researcher that any information that I have shared will remain strictly confidential. My anonymity is also guaranteed. I will be asked to choose a fictitious name and this fictitious name will be used in the interview transcription. Should the researcher cite parts of my interview in their study, my fictitious name will be used and all information that may reveal my identity will be deleted.

I acknowledge that given the nature of this research, I will be required to express or share personal information and as a result there may be a minimal level of emotional discomfort at certain moments. I have received assurance that the researcher will do
everything she can to minimize the risk of discomfort. Moreover, I will not be required to respond to any questions that may bring discomfort, and should I choose not to answer a question, there will be no negative consequences for me. The interview will be conducted in a very informal manner where questions will be posed in simple language. In the event that I do not understand a question being posed, it will be rephrased in a manner that can be better understood. Finally, I am free to withdraw from the study at any time or before the interview, without prejudice.

I understand that I will be asked to sign both copies of the consent form, and that one of the copies will be for me (the other, for the researcher).

For any additional information, I have been informed that I can contact Tammy George at any time. For all other issues concerning ethical conduct in this research project, I have been informed that I can address myself to the Protocol Officer of Research Ethics at the University of Toronto, at: (416) 946-3273 or ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

I freely and voluntarily consent to take part in this research project.

Participant: _________________________ Date: ______________________

__________________________
Signature

Interviewer: I, _______________________, declare having explained the objectives, the nature and any inconvenience of the study to the participant indicated above. I commit myself to the strictest confidentiality with respect to the information received in this study.