

RESEARCH

Unblurring the Lines of Responsibility: The Puzzle of Veteran Service Provision and its Gendered Implications

Meaghan Shoemaker and Stéfanie von Hlatky

Queen's University, CA

Corresponding author: Meaghan Shoemaker (9MLS7@queensu.ca)

The ever-increasing representation of women in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has sparked discussion about the gendered implications of military-to-civilian transition. Women are now the fastest growing cohort of veterans in Canada and represent nearly 16% of the military. As the demographics of the military change in Canada and elsewhere, so too will the face of veterans. Despite the Government of Canada's clear mandate to include gender-based analysis in all policies and programs, has this really been accomplished in the field of veteran service provision? We grapple with this challenge by problematizing the division of labour in veteran services and programs, examining whether programs have been responsive to gender mainstreaming commitments from the federal government. Finally, we demonstrate how a gender-based analysis can enhance services. We conduct a comprehensive environmental scan and create an original database for veteran services and programs in Ontario. A total of 211 individual programs and service offerings were examined and coded, with 5 found to integrate gender considerations into their program delivery. Our analysis is further supported by focus group data from 52 veterans. In addition to generating important recommendations for veteran service providers and employers tied to our data analysis, we also provide further best practices drawn from the experiences of two close allies, the United States, and Australia.

Keywords: Veterans; Gender; Women; Focus Group; Database

Women are now the fastest growing cohort of veterans in Canada (Tamez & Hazler, 2014) and represent nearly 16% of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) (Government of Canada, 2020). With between 4,000 and 5,000 service members leaving the military each year at an average age of 37 (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2015), the stakes are high to get veteran service provision right, with clear implications for both provincial-level services such as health care and employment, and federal initiatives which are specifically designed for veterans. These stakes are even greater in light of the growing diversity of the CAF, including commitments to reach targets of 25% women to be achieved within a 10-year timeframe (Department of National Defence, 2017). This increasingly diverse veteran population, which was estimated at 697,400 in 2014,¹ confronts veteran service providers to consider the unique needs of military personnel and to acknowledge gender-based differences in how groups experience their transition to civilian life.² Since there has been a clear mandate to include a Gender Based Analysis (GBA)³ into all policies and programs, we would expect this lens to be applied to veteran services and military members transitioning to civilian life. But has this really

been accomplished? To answer this question, we examine what veteran services currently provide, and the experiences of currently serving and veteran women to better assess how their needs could be accounted for in veteran policies and programs.

When we refer to veteran policies and programs, we want to make clear that a diversity of actors are involved in this space. While veteran policy is a federal portfolio, there has been a proliferation of veteran service providers outside of the public realm, including organizations from the not-for-profit and private sectors. This has resulted in blurred lines of responsibility, areas of overlap, and duplication. In what follows, we grapple with this challenge by problematizing the division of labour in veteran service provision, examining whether programs have been responsive to the gender mainstreaming guidelines of the Government of Canada. Finally, we demonstrate how a gender-based analysis can enhance service provision. We leverage an original database of 211 veteran programs in Ontario, Canada, in order to first assess the extent to which women veterans are considered in the development of programs and services.⁴ While a wealth of services exist for veterans, this "sea of goodwill"⁵

has limited programming tailored for the growing population of women veterans in Canada. The implications of gender-blind programming are further contextualized using qualitative interviews with veterans in Ontario.⁶

This research provides an overview of current initiatives and efforts in Canada for women veterans. We begin with a discussion about the gendered experiences of veterans and how these experiences affect military-to-civilian transitions while providing examples of the limitations of government programming in Canada and the United States. Based on these gaps, we propose a framework of gender mainstreaming for veteran services to determine the extent to which Canadian veteran programs and services include a gender lens, with our environmental scan of Ontario-based programs as the empirical testing ground. We explain the division of labour between multiple levels of government as well as the not-for-profit and private sectors. Finally, we draw from focus group data with military personnel and veterans in Ontario to demonstrate the implications of a lack of gendered programming. We conclude with policy recommendations for the way forward based on best practices from the United States, and Australia.

The Experiences of Service Women and Veterans: Implications of Gender Blindness

As women have been increasingly integrated into the armed forces—and consequently transitioning into the veteran population after service—an approach which can best be described as gender-blindness has nevertheless continued to dominate policy efforts. Gender-blind policies are understood as policies which do not differentiate between men and women when it comes to how programs are designed, which contrasts with gender-mainstreaming approaches that seek to identify the differentiated impacts programs may have on women and men. Gender-blindness and gender neutrality have been used to “create apparent efficiency and effectiveness for the military” (Davis, 2009, p. 450), with such approaches assumed to help promote equal opportunity and access to resources for serving military personnel (Levy, 1999, p. 17). While Levy’s account suggests that military personnel should have equal opportunity regardless of race or gender, this argument is not translated to veterans transitioning to civilian life. There is evidence that one-size-fits-all models may work for the majority, in this case men, and might be suboptimal for women who tend to have different experiences while in the military, such as increased risk of sexual violence and a greater share of caring responsibilities at home (Baechtold & De Sawal, 2009; Burkhart & Hogan, 2015; Middleton & Craig, 2012; Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, 2014, p. 8; von Hlatky, 2014).⁶

To borrow from Cynthia Enloe’s famous dictum, it is not just about asking the question “where are the women?” but also about asking why their absence or under-representation matters. In the case of veteran policy, failing to consider women’s unique experiences within and outside the military has led to the development of services which are

more geared toward men, given their historical predominance within the armed forces. This predominance has led to “a privileging of men and hypermasculinity” (Taber, 2009, p. 29) in military contexts. By contrast, our analytical approach adopts the concept of gender mainstreaming, which enables us to assess the impact of policies and programs on members during every stage of the process—from the moment a policy is designed to when it is carried out and implemented. We caveat that gender mainstreaming in itself is often based on a narrow conception of gender, a bias that often omits lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer, questioning, and two-spirit (LGBTQ2S) identities that would lead to a fuller, intersectional analysis of human experiences.

While a 2014 study of public and private sector services for veterans in Canada begins to grapple with gendered dimensions of transition, it is one of few which accounts for veterans as a non-homogenous group, providing discussion on the unique experiences of women veterans and recommendations to increase research on the topic (Senate Subcommittee on Veteran Affairs, 2014, p. 10). The study commits the CAF and the Department of National Defence (DND) to consider evidence-based research on transition and to regularly review and upgrade their transition programs accordingly, but it does not recommend the consideration of women’s experiences in how programs are reviewed (Senate Subcommittee on Veteran Affairs, 2014, p. iv). In other words, the review collects sex-disaggregated data, but often does not analyze its significance for the deployment of veteran programs. Tracking the proportion of women veterans is important, but tells us little about the specific challenges they encounter on the road to civilian life as it overlooks gender norms and inequalities based on gender (Eichler, 2017). Alternative framings of gender for veteran studies, and the opportunity of “broader integration for gender considerations into veterans policies and programs,” are core contributions from the Canadian literature to date (Eichler, 2017, p. 687). While there has been an increase in research conducted on military veterans in recent years, there are asymmetries in the definition of veteran and opportunities to contribute qualitative Canadian content to the field (Eichler & Smith-Evans, 2018, p. 5).

We view the process of amplifying the experiences and struggles of women veterans with this gender mainstreaming lens as a necessary first step in better tailoring veteran policies to their needs. With women representing an ever-increasing portion of the military, there is an emerging evidence-based rationale for taking into account the effect of gendered experiences such as military sexual trauma, barriers to access veteran agencies, and homelessness on veteran transition (Montgomery & Byrne, 2014, p. 236). For example, finding and securing gainful employment is identified as one of the most important factors of veteran wellness regardless of gender (Dobie et al., 2004; Middleton & Craig, 2012; Thompson et al., 2016, p. 71), but the road to finding professional fulfillment is quite different when

we compare women and men (Maharajan & Rudramoorthy, 2016). From military-to-civilian professional transitions to veteran health, studies considering the gendered experiences of Canadian veterans are in short supply.

Furthermore, this asymmetry between men and women veterans' experiences is even more pertinent when considering the interconnected relationship between professional transitions, mental health, and gender roles. Scholars argue that obtaining gainful employment can be considered to be a mental health treatment in and of itself (Ainspan, 2011). This is an interesting proposition, but the causal connection is not as straightforward as one might think; women and marginalized groups are also at a higher risk of confronting career challenges *due to* mental health and medical conditions (Boulos & Zamorski, 2016, p. 6; Crompvoets, 2011, p. 25). Further evidence supports this claim, where women veterans demonstrate higher rates of depression, eating disorders, and panic disorders (Dobie et al., 2004, p. 1). While both men and women veterans may experience mental health challenges, gender can complicate and magnify the prevalence of particular mental health issues, which carry over in their transition to civilian life and employment. This transition pressure is compounded by women's higher likelihood of being primary caregivers. In sum, mental health challenges may influence one's ability to find gainful and satisfying employment, while care work and gender norms for transitioning veterans may impact time availability and access to resources as one enters the civilian labour force. These overlapping stressors on women veterans' transition help explain the thirty percent decline in income during their first 3 years post-release (Veterans Affairs Canada, 2017).

To a certain extent, Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has tried to remedy some of these challenges through the *Enhanced New Veteran's Charter Act* (2011), by introducing additional financial benefits for veterans, but still overlooks how women and men experience transition differently. In short, the experiences and challenges of women veterans must account for the interconnections between gender roles, mental health trauma during service, and finding gainful employment post-release.

When it comes to this professional aspect of transition, research conducted in the United States and Canada stress the need for enhanced employment training in order to ensure strong veteran labour force participation (Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015; Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, 2013, p. 7). The *Transition to Civilian Life of Veterans Senate Subcommittee Report*, for example, recommends using the United States as a benchmark for veteran programs and policies, particularly to connect veterans with employers (Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, 2014, p. v).⁷ But in addition to adopting these best practices, Canada may also replicate certain shortcomings, such as the absence of gender-based considerations in the design and delivery of veteran employment programs. This is observed both in the policy and research realms; while there are studies that compare the differences of men and

women veterans, the focus is often not on Canadian veterans themselves, and research on women veterans' professional transition is even scarcer.

Thus, there are implications stemming from the limited literature that problematizes this conception of the "veteran" as a homogenous male group, particularly when considering national contexts. There are differences, for example, in the definition of a veteran in Canada and the United States (and beyond), the prevalence of public and private health care and access to mental health care, and jurisdictional divisions between the federal and provincial governments. These factors alone require a context-specific consideration of veteran transition in Canada using a gender lens.

To summarize, the available literature has demonstrated that there are gender-based differences within the military and in the process of transitioning to civilian life. This literature tends to be heavily focused on mental health issues, demonstrating the need for further research on military-to-civilian professional transitions, a need which is reinforced by the established link between professional fulfillment and mental health. Our review of the literature also makes clear that, while the gender dimension is acknowledged as being important for veteran policymaking, it is not systematically integrated into service provision.

Why Gender Mainstreaming for Veterans?

As the demographics of the Canadian Armed Forces slowly shift to reflect representation commitments, the veteran population has also changed. Women comprised approximately 11% of "early era"⁸ veterans in Canada and 13% of "recent era"⁹ (VanTil et al., 2018). As of 2018, women make up 14% of the Canadian veteran population (MacLean et al., 2018). Despite this growing population, we argue that policies and programs for Canadian veterans have not kept pace with changing demographics, despite the federal government's commitment to gender mainstreaming. As Ylöstalo (2016) states, "even the strongest political will is not sufficient if there is a lack of commitment to gender mainstreaming on the organizational level, where gender mainstreaming is implemented" (p. 552). This may be partly explained by the slow pace of bureaucratic adaptation, the lack of new resources or expertise committed to support gender mainstreaming, as well as organizational resistance to change (Moser, 2005, p. 585; Squires, 2007, p. 73). The transformative potential of gender mainstreaming thus disappears in the process of implementation (Daly, 2005; Ylöstalo, 2016).

The gap between issues of representation, where sex-disaggregated data is collected, and gender mainstreaming in service provision is common, a fact that is well acknowledged by the feminist literature. Where it exists, gender mainstreaming is often mere window dressing. National efforts that claim to prioritize gender mainstreaming are often "hollow;" that is, based on varying political rhetoric, inconsistent implementation, and lacking "breadth and depth" (Daly 2005, p. 439). As Daly's comparative research

shows, these challenges are by no means unique to Canada. Research has been particularly vibrant in the United States, which has a huge veteran population and a menu of veteran services, both public and private, which is unparalleled anywhere else in the world. To be sure, the United States, like Canada, also faces significant challenges in reacting and adapting to the needs of veterans, particularly those who are medically releasing (Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2015; Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, 2013, p. 7). In the Canadian case, there is both a need for systematic data collection to identify shortcomings related to this kind of gender-blind service provision and to elaborate on the potential impact of a more gender mainstreamed approach.

Beyond gender mainstreaming implementation challenges, coordination problems amongst government and non-government service providers are widespread (Armstrong et al., 2015; Berglass, 2010; Williamson, 2009). In Canada when we consider transition challenges, we quickly fall outside of the federal government's area of jurisdiction. Both access to healthcare and employment, the most important variables of a successful transition, fall under provincial jurisdiction; thus, the role of provinces cannot be overlooked in terms of how we assess the veteran experience, as well as the not-for-profit sector, which also plays a role in veteran service provision. A collaborative approach that supports the understanding and implementation of gender mainstreaming into veteran programming is thus required across different types of stakeholders to ensure aligned efforts. To this end, we undertook stakeholder mapping through an environmental scan and collected data on women's experiences to better understand the landscape of veteran service provision.

Database Creation, Study Population and Analysis

This study consists of two main empirical contributions which are related to two complementary data collection methods; the first being an environmental scan of veteran services in Ontario which resulted in an original database of 211 coded services. Programs were excluded if they were not operating or headquartered in Ontario, Canada. At the sub-national level, Ontario was chosen as the province of analysis as it hosts the largest veteran population in Canada and, unsurprisingly, the largest aggregate numbers of women veterans (estimated 235,700 veterans as of 2019) (VAC, 2019b, see Veterans Affairs Canada Statistics – Facts and Figures 2018). Programs were coded on 22 criteria, including but not limited to operating budget, funding source, gender-based programming, type of delivery, and target population.

The second contribution is a gender-based analysis of veteran experiences, based on 9 gender-segregated focus groups held in Trenton, Kingston, Ottawa, and Petawawa with 52 veterans. Focus group participants were greeted and provided an overview of the study and the intent to understand their experiences of military service and transition to civilian life. Of these participants, 22 were women and 30 were men. Approximately half of the participants were

married ($n = 28$), 8 participants were divorced, 5 common law, 9 single, and 2 did not specify. While many participants did not provide self-identifying information about their ethnic identity, 4 identified as Indigenous, Aboriginal, or First Nation, and 25 self-identified as white or Caucasian. A limitation with our sample is the lack of voices when it comes to visible minorities. Regarding education history, 16 had completed high school or had some high school credits, 19 completed college, 10 had a bachelor's degree, 5 masters' degrees, and 2 did not specify. Focus groups ranged from 43 to 180 minutes,¹⁰ and transcripts were analyzed using a deductive process based on stages of the military career cycle.¹¹ Analytic codes were further developed based on positive and negative experiences with motivations/reasons for joining, experiences while serving and deployments, differences between men and women's experiences while transitioning, and veteran experiences (Gibbs, 2012, p. 6). Overall, the quotes chosen for this study are broadly representative of the themes that emerged in the focus group discussions. A coding team of 6 research assistants was put together to make sure that all transcripts were coded by 2 people thereby ensuring inter-coder reliability. The coding instructions were designed based on sociological approaches to coding qualitative data (Hesse-Biber, 2010). The main goal was to code the focus group transcripts based on a number of key variables that can impact veteran transition such as financial considerations, support systems, mental/physical health, military identity and culture, professional fulfillment, pride and dignity, work-life balance, government resources and programs, sexual violence, gender-based discrimination, etc. We also coded our entries based on which career stage the excerpt was about: joining, deployment, military experience, transition, and life as a veteran in order to get a more granular understanding about how experiences evolve over time.

The Puzzle of Veteran Service Provision

In light of the changing demographics of the Canadian veteran population, limitations of gender mainstreaming commitments and jurisdictional challenges, we developed a database to provide an empirical analysis of veteran services in Ontario. This analysis enabled us to determine who does what across different stakeholder groups, from the government (both federal and provincial), as well as the not-for-profit and private sectors. Although it is argued that no single model of service provision (public, private, or mixed) is intrinsically more efficient than the others, a natural division of labour emerges in response to perceived needs and service provision gaps (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, 2015, p. 4). Our research contributes to the growing literature on military-to-civilian transitions by identifying the current landscape of veteran services and opportunities for improvement, while identifying precise entry points for the incorporation of a gendered approach to veteran services. There is a need for coordination across stakeholder groups and at different levels of governance in order to observe the benefits of a gendered approach to veteran service provision.

While the lead veteran service provider in Canada is Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC), a plethora of organizations and foundations have popped up across Canada to fill some of the gaps in services identified in our literature review. This section provides an overview of recent changes made at VAC, along with observable trends in veteran services that are offered by other organizations and sectors.

A Clouded Gender Lens: Government of Canada Veteran Services

Through the Government of Canada, VAC does not currently provide gender-specific programming or services, although there is renewed emphasis on its GBA+ tool for the design and delivery of government programs. The service provision framework, however, shifted as of April 1, 2018, to a provider named Agilec, so it is unclear as of yet whether this contractor would use similar or distinct approaches when it comes to considering the unique needs of women or men veterans. Within the first year of service delivery, however, VAC brought together stakeholders to discuss the challenges women veterans experience in Canada at their Women Veterans Forum held in Charlottetown May 24, 2019.

This new contractor provides up to 4.5 hours of intake assessment and education planning, which is comprised of planning and information regarding labour market services. There is unlimited access to online resources, up to 7.5 hours of one-on-one career counselling, and 12 hours of job placement assistance. These services for veterans and their families are provided by a Virtual Delivery Model, through an online portal and live chat service. An online interface, as opposed to face-to-face contact, has been proven to be less efficient in United States studies and would presumably prove harder to tailor to specific communities of veterans (Perkins, 2018). Prior to the online system, some Career Transition Services were available for military personnel and veterans, but underutilized. In 2016/2017, for example, VAC reported that only 644 veterans accessed Career Transition Services (VAC, 2019a, Table 7.1), with an average of 10,000 regular and reserve force personnel leaving the military each year (Duval-Lantoine, 2018). In this respect, the provincial and community-level services are there as an alternative.

Filling in the Gaps: The Third Sector and Gender-Based Programming in Ontario

The term “Third Sector” has emerged as a concept to encapsulate more hybrid policy development, which is neither purely public or private (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, 2015, p. 4). Pete Alcock (2012, p. 221) defines the Third Sector as involving government engagement with voluntary and community organizations, charities, and social enterprises and can be considered a site of policy and practical intervention.

The current ecosystem of veteran programming in Ontario is comprised of an array of non-profits, charities, and private sector organizations to provide a range of services to veterans. Through a database of service providers in Ontario, or

who have operating bases within Ontario, 45 organizations were identified and 211 individual programs and service offerings were examined (last updated August 30, 2018). Of these programs, 5 were “gender conscious,” or geared specifically towards women. The initiatives are reviewed on 4 thematic areas: career transition, military sexual trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), homelessness, and physical rehabilitation.

Career Transition

Of the 62 programs identified that seek to develop career skills or aid in professional transition of veterans, 1 provided gendered programming. The *Veterans Transition Network* provides segregated seminars and career transition consultation in groups of 8 to 10 participants.

Military Sexual Trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

Of the 60 programs and services that provide mental health support, including military sexual trauma and PTSD, 2 had a gender focus. *It's Just 700* supports both currently serving and veteran survivors of sexual violence in the CAF. While *It's Just 700* provides a directory for any military member or veteran who is a survivor of sexual assault, the *Marie Deschamps Report* (2015) has found that women are disproportionately affected by military sexual trauma, which has also been validated by surveys Statistics Canada conducts with the CAF annually (Cotter, 2019).¹² The *Women Warriors' Healing Garden*, a registered non-profit, provides peer support and therapy to those “who do not fit the societal stereotype of a military veteran, including Women, People of Colour, First Nations, and those who identify as 2SLGBTQ” (Women Warriors' Healing Garden, 2017). Their work supports women military veterans and active-duty CAF personnel who are experiencing PTSD which can be related to sexual trauma, deployment, or other causes.

Homelessness

The *In Her Boots* campaign seeks to bring awareness and raise funds for women veterans experiencing homelessness in Canada. It is the only women-specific programming of the 5 programs that support or advocate for homeless veterans in Ontario.

Physical Rehabilitation

Of the 17 initiatives that support physical rehabilitation, *Soldier On's Invictus Games* was found to be the leader in providing women's-only events and challenges.

Upon review of the programs and services offered at the federal level by VAC and provincial programs and services, it is clear that the vast majority of programs do not have tailored programming for veterans or leverage gender mainstreaming and continue to cater toward a majority male audience. The limitations of gender mainstreaming identified in this article exist at the federal level where GBA+ is, in theory, integrated into all policies and programs; yet we observe a clear gap in services that take into consideration

the needs of women veterans. This gap in gender-conscious services for veterans is filled by Third Sector organizations, which tend to grow from grass-roots initiatives and are often found to be led by veterans themselves. Despite some tailored programming, these initiatives remain scarce and often do not have guaranteed or sustainable funding. Limitations also exist at the non-government service level, with minimal programs and services available specifically for women veterans. However, it is at this level that the most options are made available.

Military to Civilian Transition: Implications of Gender-Blindness

The implications of our environmental assessment of programming for veterans are reinforced by qualitative focus groups which were conducted across Ontario. While the population sample of focus groups were both currently serving and veteran personnel, we argue that the experiences of personnel while in the military inform their transition to civilian life. The impact of gender-blind policies and programs follow personnel throughout their military to civilian transition. The ongoing exclusion of gender-based policies in the CAF is exemplified by Participant 2 in Ottawa:

I think we need to be open to that and recognize that men do not go through the same thing ... And sure, they're sad to leave their family and they can cry too, but the mom guilt will always win and I don't care how tough you are, it's gonna get ya. So, I think we need to keep going forward and supporting and promoting women and having families, that work/life balance. Whatever their needs may be, it's different for women. No matter which way you slice it.

This excerpt speaks to the experiences of military personnel while serving, and how gender-based guilt or judgement can affect women during deployments. The problem is that policies supporting military families have not kept pace with the evolving demographics of the armed forces, where more women have served during the last generation. Improving services, however, requires the acknowledgement of women veterans at the outset. Participant 2 in Ottawa expressed frustration with the lack of public recognition of the changing demographics of veterans:

We're getting there. You know? It's nice to see more and more women. And, it's still frustrating when you see, like the VAC posters? The new VAC posters? There's no women in them. Like, where are the women? We're not allowed to be depressed or have issues?

This lack of recognition is experienced throughout the military career cycle. Testimony and research finds that women veterans are often not recognized for their service (Maples, 2017), which can arguably influence morale and wellbeing.

This sentiment and lack of recognition was reinforced by many women in the study.

We also observed the implications of both gender-blind, heteronormative and traditional military families, and the impact on service members. Where Military Family Resource Centers are meant to provide support and community assistance, there is a perception that some veterans are excluded and isolated due to their marital status and gender. This notion was further supported in focus group conversations where women veterans shared stories about how their husbands received an outpouring of community support when their wives were deployed, but the same assistance was not reciprocated when military women remained at home and husbands were deployed.

Participant 2 in Ottawa noted, "[T]he perception that it's a man taking care of the house with three kids while the woman, the wife is deployed, everyone is like, 'oh you're so brave and you're such a good dad and you're supporting (her name), good job!'" Participant 1 in Ottawa also talked about this discrepancy in recognition and support: "People who were in infantry units, guys in infantry units whose wives left them with kid, I remember in Calgary, they took up a collection for this guy, his kids, for Christmas time, because his wife had left him. And then the three of us, two of my friends and I, single parents with kids, nothing was done." Some women, far from receiving attention or assistance like their male peers, were even judged for leaving their children behind when deploying. As Participant 3 in Ottawa described, "I was a single parent too. I got deployed, uh, three times, but twice when I had my son and I had to leave him behind. And the people were so judgmental about the fact that I was leaving my son behind when I got deployed."

This need for community and peer support is highlighted in the literature on veterans, with Lehavot et al. (2013) finding that peer support improves mental and physical health, particularly for women veterans, but it is clear that women have experienced peer support in a different way than their male peers. A desire for connection, pitted against the reality of isolation while serving, may ultimately reify itself in the civilian world when women transition to civilian life.

Implications of this isolation are further exacerbated by the fact that women are more likely to be exposed to certain types of stressors, like harassment, when compared to their male peers (Statistics Canada, 2019), which was also reflected in our focus group responses. The testimony of male participants, when referring to their female peers, proved especially telling. An unidentified male participant in Ottawa said, "On the infantry side we had a couple women. They loved what they were doing but they couldn't take the harassment." Another male Ottawa participant added: "I would say women try to hide more things. Because they already have that stigma, they're already a woman, so when now that woman starts to say that 'I am injured because of this, or I have menstrual cramps' like basic women needs, then people start saying she can't hack it." Participant 6 in

Ottawa talked about the hardships women face while in the military “Cause there’s a lot of macho bullshit.” As argued throughout this article, the implications of experiences while serving in the military can reify themselves as women transition to veteran life; exposure to stressors such as harassment and exclusion continues to be felt when transitioning to civilian life and support programs are not in place to recognize their service.

Women talked about this challenge as well, though there was sometimes confusion or uncertainty about what constitutes harassment. As Participant 3 in Ottawa described, “Yes, there was harassment all the time, uh honestly, I just didn’t, I was never sexually harassed ... no, that’s not true.” Similarly, Participant 2 in Ottawa said, “Women were not necessarily welcomed with open arms by everybody. So being on board a ship, I mean a lot of the men were very welcoming, but there was very blatant harassment, but you didn’t know any better. Harassment was not a word yet during this time.” These experiences that women face while serving, from social isolation and stigmatization by their peers to outright harassment, are important to address for a successful military-to-civilian transition, as they impact mental health. These incidents might even be the cause of their exit from the military and the reason women suddenly find themselves as veterans. Moreover, part of servicemembers’ social networks carries over with them as veterans, which provides additional peer support during transition. Women’s experiences where professional exclusion and workplace harassment were the norm shed light into the difficulty of securing peer support both during and after service.

There is, as a result, the opportunity for improved transition services which takes into account the gendered needs of Canadian veteran populations and the differentiated experience of members while they were in the military. As we design more gender-sensitive research, it is also important to identify aspects of transition where concerns are similar when comparing female and male veterans. One aspect where both male and female participants experienced common challenges is in the ability to transition to civilian employment after a military career. Participant 3 in Ottawa noted that “When you’re in the military, everything is taken care of. You know, they even call you to report to your medical appointment.” In our focus groups, women talked about feeling overwhelmed by the demands of military-to-civilian transitions, both professionally and personally.¹³ Other participants highlighted stereotypes associated with the military. As Participant 1 in Ottawa noted, “People are afraid to hire veterans too because of PTSD, like PTSD is out there, it’s the big boogie man that the military brings.” The challenges of professional transition, mental health, and gender norms are further reinforced. As we consider potential improvements, turning to success stories in other countries is particularly instructive when considering gender-based programming for women veterans required in the realms of professional transition, mental health, and community support.

Best Practices from Canada’s Close Allies: Initiatives for Women Veterans

Initiatives in the United States serve as potential areas for replication in the Canadian context. With the number of women veterans using Veterans Affairs (VA) services in the United States doubling since 2000 (US Department of Veterans Affairs, 2016), and nearly 345,000 women serving in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, there has been recognition at the government level of the increased focus that must be directed toward women (National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics, 2016). In recent years, the spotlight has been on women veterans in light of inappropriate treatment of military women and veterans, and recognition that women represent one of the fastest growing segments of veteran beneficiaries in the United States.

Professional Transition

In the United States, the All-Women Veterans REBOOT Workshops have been implemented as a result of Ford Motor Company’s partnership with the Los Angeles Chapter of the Freedom Sisters and National Veterans Transition Services Incorporated. The REBOOT Workshop provides a 3 week “boot camp” which focuses on personal, lifestyle, and career transitions. The program itself attempts to mitigate a number of challenges faced by women while attending the workshops; mothers are encouraged to bring young children to the seminars (National Veterans Transition Service Inc, 2019).¹⁴

Mental Health

Outside government, there are a number of programs provided by the United States Veterans (“US Vets”) Initiative. Initiatives such as the ADVANCE Program and the Mothers Program are examples of the ways in which programming can be tailored for women veterans (United States Veterans Initiative, 2016). Similar to Canadian initiatives like the Women Warrior Healing Garden and It’s Just 700, the ADVANCE Program in the United States focuses on women veterans recovering from military sexual trauma. In addition, the Mothers Program allows women veterans to bring children to seminars, and in this way appropriately addresses barriers to access that may be more prevalent for women veterans with childcare needs.

Community Support

From the United States, the *Deborah Sampson Act* (2019) is one of the most notable developments for women veterans. At the time of publication, this Bill had been passed by the US House of Representatives (November 19, 2019). The changes ultimately call for a comprehensive change across the board for women veterans: family support, homelessness, child care benefits, increased training at veteran medical centers for women’s health, and the overall treatment of women veterans.

The introduction of the VA’s Center for Women Veterans is another example of a replicable initiative that may already have the foundational tools necessary in Canada, as observed

by the Women Veterans Forum. The Center itself focuses on women-specific programming, monthly emails of relevant research on women veterans, women athletes, and women veteran's mental health. In short, the Center's mission is to "advocate for cultural transformation to raise awareness about the service and sacrifice of women Veterans" (Center for Women Veterans, 2013).

In addition to the Center, in 2010 the Veterans Affairs Women's Health Research Network was created in order to systematically understand and improve access to women veteran's care (Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service, 2020). The CREATE initiative was developed as a multi-year research project that focuses on factors that influence the outcome and effectiveness of services for women veterans. The initiative, in part, involved hosting over 250 researchers and practitioners during a consortium on the topic of women veterans in the United States, and sought to support funding opportunities for women-specific initiatives.

In Australia, like the United States, there are women-centered networks for veterans from the Australian Defence Force. Most notably, the Women's Veteran Network Australia is the only women-centered program for veterans in the country. Unlike the United States, however, the organization is external from government and leverages relationships with multiple partners and donors (Women's Veterans Network Australia, n.d.-a). The network fosters connections on Facebook (with 22 geographic communities), local groups, and hosts a women veterans writing workshop and retreat, leveraging the psychological and coping benefits of writing and expression (Women's Veterans Network Australia, n.d.-b). The role of Facebook support groups cannot be understated as we consider the impact of community and peer support for women veterans; there are implications from the feelings of isolation and a lack of programs for certain veterans. We witnessed the benefit of this community and peer support during our focus groups. As one female participant in Trenton described:

There's an actual Facebook group for veterans ... release that I'm on, so any questions I have, I can throw that out there cause there's so many people who have been through this. So, I have that support right there from people who have gone through it. So, if I have a question, they can throw back an answer and usually you get like thirty, forty answers so there's that nice support group. Cause all of the people on that group, they're like me. So, that's kind of nice to have that.

Toward Greater Coordination for Veteran Service Provision

We offer a number of recommendations for how significant changes could be undertaken in Canada. We start with the view that, similar to the Australian approach, a collective impact model, led by government policies and programs

with a GBA+ commitment, would be the most effective entry point for gendered transition considerations for women veterans. A collective impact model entails the development of a comprehensive "interagency continuum of care model," and developing partnerships with non-profit sector veteran program and service providers to build a "network of care" to improve the "infrastructure to support veteran services" (Berglass, 2010, p. 7). This would support top-down guidance that all service providers may follow. Adjusting the policies and programmatic mindset strike us as a necessary step toward more gender-conscious service delivery for an increasingly diverse veteran population, with the potential to integrate critical shifts through efforts like the *Deborah Sampson Act*.

The need for Leadership from the public sector is further highlighted in the literature (UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence, 2015, p. 5). Indeed, a growing body of work has emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming as a policy strategy, and ways to measure implementation (Morely, 2010). Efforts in Canada have culminated in the Status of Women Canada's creation of GBA+, leading to important changes in the policymaking process such as more inclusive consultations with civil society and academics. These partners can provide timely feedback as well as the stated priority of including gender perspectives by the Trudeau Government which has been observed in both Defence Policy and the Federal Budget (Department of National Defence, 2017; Morneau, 2017). This, however, is only the tip of the iceberg: gender mainstreaming requires change on many fronts. Decision-making structures and processes, the articulation of objectives, prioritization of strategies, the positioning of gender issues amid competing emerging concerns, and building support among both women and men (Jahan, 1995) require coordinated and aligned approach. This could include, for example, ongoing program and service evaluations from the perspective of end-users (in our case, women veterans).

Reports in the United States acknowledge the limitations of purely government-led initiatives for veteran service provision and promote this utilization of the not-for-profit and private sector in addressing the unique needs of veterans (Berglass, 2010). In particular, authors note that the United States government must take advantage of private-sector resources to enhance veteran management and care, as private and non-profit sectors are better positioned to address and adapt to challenges and needs (Armstrong et al., 2015; Berglass, 2010; Williamson, 2009). Perhaps unsurprisingly, non-governmental or civil society actors have been the primary forces driving the diffusion of gender mainstreaming (True & Mintrom, 2001, p. 45). They may also have the upper hand when it comes to funding, since civil society and industry can engage directly with the public or localized communities to fundraise and build awareness (Berglass, 2010).

As a result, we call for creating greater synergies between governmental and non-governmental organizations, as better coordination and a more rationalized division of

labour are seen as desirable to better service veterans. In the United States it is found that, “no government entity adequately stewards the transition from military service and none is concerned with the long-term prospect of veteran reintegration with civil society” (Berglass & Harrell, 2012, p. 6). Further, government bodies do not provide any consistent guidance to the thousands of nongovernmental organizations that have undertaken to fill perceived gaps in service delivery (Berglass & Harrell, 2012). Berglass’ recommendation, despite the clear promotion of the benefits that the not-for-profit sector can provide, is pragmatic. Armstrong et al. (2015) note that a siloed approach is insufficient for solving complex social problems that demand continuous learning and adaptation.

While large government bureaucracies can set important changes in motion by introducing gender-conscious policy frameworks, the Third Sector might be more adaptable and responsive to the changing needs of the veteran population, since they tend to operate at the more grassroots level and solicit the direct involvement of veterans within their governance structure and employee base. Still, the integration of programs across these stakeholder groups is a work in progress. Williamson (2009), for example, argues the military support field resembles a social movement: little infrastructure and varying levels of interagency cooperation as well as documented infighting. Nevertheless, Williamson (2009) recommends investment in partnerships with the non-profit sector, who will be able to undertake regionally focused approaches to veteran care, which has been shown to be most effective (p. 47). Other perceived benefits include greater efficiency, earning higher levels of trust from veterans, and having a greater potential for innovation in the provision of services (Berglass, 2010; Williamson, 2009). In Australia, this is put into practice as there is an intentional focus into the regional and local community-based support mechanisms for women veterans.

What would this new and improved infrastructure for Canadian veterans look like? At its very core, programs and services should be called upon to critically assess how their current day-to-day operations are gender-blind and consider how the population they seek to serve is changing drastically in the years to come. The federal government and provinces have a clear role to play in this; guidance, training materials, and even financial support are available to initiatives that fall within this current government priority. The challenge, then, is what happens with a change in government support. This is where legislative change, as well as the integration and mainstreaming of gendered considerations for the non-profit and private sector may be the most salient; where government is open to policy change every 4 years, these organizations remain adaptable and driven by individuals that can progress in advance of the status quo. We have already observed this in practice with a majority of gender-conscious programming being led by Third Sector operators. Although the mainstreaming of gender into policy and programs is not a “free” endeavour, progress

starts with asking the question: what audience is excluded from this program? What barriers exist for people to join a program? It is only through progressing beyond our current vision of the veteran community that programs and services may begin to be more inclusive.

Conclusion

This article has focused on veteran service provision in Canada, arguing that policies and programs have not kept pace with the changing demographics of military service-members. With increasing diversity within the CAF and explicit targets for the recruitment of women, gender-conscious transition services should also be introduced. While the literature indicates that there are important differences in the lived experiences of women and men while in the military and during life after service, those differences are seldom taken into account in the way programs for the military community and veterans are designed. We find support for this after performing an analysis of veteran service provision in Canada through an original database of veteran programming at the subnational level. These findings are underpinned by qualitative data through focus groups with veterans at the subnational level, which provided context and further elaboration into how the lack of gender-based programming both during and after military service, impacting women veteran’s transition and experience as civilians.

What has emerged from the preceding discussion is that federal guidance should be provided to veteran stakeholders with regard to gender mainstreaming efforts, and it would be worthwhile to introduce a collective impact model where service provision gaps can be identified and tackled collaboratively. This networked approach strikes us as a promising model to address challenges in veteran service provision, where there are many participating actors, but little coordination (Armstrong et al., 2015). It would also provide a more flexible structure to accommodate the growing diversity of the veteran community, while withstanding political shifts and ensuring care-after service is relevant to all who transition.

Although our research has emphasized the importance of gender mainstreaming in program delivery for Canadian veterans and the opportunity to improve service offerings through our database, we are conscious that identities do not exist in a vacuum. In identifying avenues for future research, Kimberlé Crenshaw’s (1991, pp. 1245–1248) work on intersectionality can be particularly relevant, as she articulates how converging identities (in her work referencing race, class, immigration status, and gender) exacerbate lived experiences with regard to violence against women of color. This has been considered in terms of inclusion into the “social hierarchy” of national militaries, particularly where the intersections of gender and ethnicity determines one’s place in the military (Sasson-Levy, 2017). In applying this theory to women in the Canadian Forces and women veterans, we suggest this intersectionality may have two

“spheres” of impact that are highly connected: inclusion while serving and tailored services upon release. Our environmental scan for Ontario has found that veteran service providers currently overlook cultural and racial identities in addition to the noted gap in gendered services. We observe, as a result, not only a gender gap, but a lack of services for veterans who expand beyond the masculine, white military norm.

Notes

¹ In the Canadian context, veterans are considered military personnel who have both completed basic military training and have been honourably discharged. A deployment is not a required criterion for veteran status.

² Starting in 2017, an annual workshop has been led by the Center for International and Defence Policy in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, which centralizes the experiences of women veterans and opportunities for policies and programming. These multi-stakeholder engagements identified several key considerations and gaps for women veterans in Canada, some of which are reinforced and identified by this study. The 2017 event, *The Gender Dimension of Veteran Reintegration Workshop: International Best Practices and the Way Forward*, can be found here: <https://www.queensu.ca/cidp/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca/cidpwww/files/files/DEP%20Proceedings%20Report%20-%20Final.pdf>. The report for the 2018 event, *The Gender Dimension of Veteran Transition: Workshop and Mentorship Program*, can be found here: <https://www.queensu.ca/cidp/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca/cidpwww/files/files/Veteran%20Workshop%202018%20Proceedings%20Report%20.pdf>.

³ Gender-based analysis + is a tool utilized by the federal government of Canada to critically assess policies and programs and their impact on diverse identities. For more information, see: <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/gba-ac/index-en.html>.

⁴ This database was created from May 2017 to August 2018.

⁵ For more on the “sea of goodwill” in the United States, see Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Department of Defense). (2015). *After the sea of goodwill conceptual framework*. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/CORe/1509_ASOG_Conceptual_Framework.pdf.

⁶ Although the focus of this article is on women veterans, it is important to recognize there are implications of this gender-blind approach for male veterans. In particular, considerations around military masculinities (Bulmer & Eichler, 2017), the gendered dynamics of seeking mental health help, as well as the differing needs of men who do not conform to the traditional “soldier” mold, or beyond the “traditional” heterosexual military family, may also experience gaps in service due to this gender-blind approach (Eichler, 2012; Eichler, 2017).

⁷ While the comparison of military identities between Canada and the United States is beyond the scope of this study, the 2016 *Report of the 2016 CIMVHR Forum Research Theme Working Group on Veterans' Identities* provides a summary of veteran identities and their construction between the United States and Canada following the Second World War. See James Thompson et al. “Veterans' Identities and Well-being in Transition to Civilian Life – A Resource for Policy Analysts, Program Designers, Service Providers and Researchers,” Report of the Veterans' Identities Research Theme Working Group, Canadian Institute for Military and Veteran Health Research Forum 2016 (2017), Veterans Affairs Canada. <https://cimvhr.ca/documents/Thompson%202017%20Veterans%20Identities%20Technical%20Report.pdf>.

⁸ 1954 to 2003.

⁹ 1998 to 2012.

¹⁰ On several occasions, participants stayed for a longer duration than the initial two-hour commitment. Participants noted their appreciation for the social network that these focus groups provided.

¹¹ Joining, deployment, military experience, transition, and veteran experience.

¹² For additional reports, including previous years and participants in the Primary Reserves, see Statistics Canada. (2020). Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/catalogue/85-603-X>.

¹³ This sentiment was also echoed by male participants: One male participant in Ottawa said that “there’s not enough commonality between civvy street, and military life.”

¹⁴ Decidedly leaving the gender-neutral approach behind, there has also been a shift in the United States in how programs and services cater to male veterans and their unique needs. This is exemplified best by the US Vets Father’s Program, which takes into consideration changing understandings of care work for children, homelessness, substance abuse, and child support payments (“Fathers Program,” 2018).

Ethics and Consent

This research has been approved by Queen’s University General Research Ethics Board (GREB Ref #: GPLST-143-18; TRAQ # 6024766) as well as DND/CAF Social Science Research Review Board (SSRRB) in accordance with DAOD 5062-0 and 5062-1 under SSRRB Approval # 1787/18F.

Competing Interests

Stéfanie von Hlatky received funding from the Early Researcher Award program (Government of Ontario) to hire a team of research assistants for this project.

MLS has received grant funding from Canada’s Department of National Defence Defence Engagement Program in support of three workshops for women veterans.

References

- Ainspan, N.** (2011, February). From deployment to employment. *US Naval Institute Proceedings*, 137(2), 44–50. http://bbi.syr.edu/events/2011/docs/052511_shaheen/deployment_employment.pdf
- Alcock, P.** (2012). New policy spaces: The impact of devolution on Third Sector policy in the U. K. *Social Policy & Administration*, 46(2), 219–238. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2011.00832.x>
- Armstrong, N. J., McDonough, J. D., Jr., & Savage, D.** (2015). *Driving community impact: The case for local, evidence-based coordination in veteran and military family services and the America Serves Initiative*. Syracuse University Institute for Veterans and Military Families. https://ivmf.syracuse.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/DrivingCommunityImpactTheCaseforLocalEvidence-BasedCoordinationACC_03.08.18.pdf
- Baechtold, M., & De Sawal, D. M.** (2009). Meeting the needs of women veterans. *New Directions for Student Services*, 126, 35–43. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ss.314>
- Berglass, N.** (2010). *America's duty: The imperative of a new approach to warrior and veteran care* [Policy brief]. Center for a New American Security. https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNAS_Americas-Duty_Berglass_0.pdf?mtime=20160906080455
- Berglass, N., & Harrell, M. C.** (2012). *Well after service: Veteran reintegration and American communities*. Center for a New American Security. https://s3.amazonaws.com/files.cnas.org/documents/CNAS_WellAfterService_BerglassHarrell.pdf?mtime=20160906082143
- Boulos, D., & Zamorski, M. A.** (2016). Military occupational outcomes in Canadian Armed Forces personnel with and without deployment-related mental disorders. *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*, 61(6), 348–357. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0706743716643742>
- Bulmer, S., & Eichler, M.** (2017). Unmaking militarized masculinity: Veterans and the project of military-to-civilian transition. *Critical Military Studies*, 3(2), 161–181. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2017.1320055>
- Burkhart, L., & Hogan, N.** (2015). Being a female veteran: A grounded theory of coping with transition. *Social Work in Mental Health*, 13(2), 108–127. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2013.870102>
- Center for Women Veterans.** (2013). *Inside the Center for Women Veterans*. U.S Department of Veterans Affairs. <https://www.va.gov/womenvet/cwv/index.asp>
- Cotter, A.** (2019). Sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces, Regular Force, 2018. *Statistics Canada*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-603-x/85-603-x2019002-eng.htm>
- Crenshaw, K.** (1991). Mapping the margins: Intersectionality, identity politics, and violence against women of color. *Standard Law Review*, 43(6), 1241–1299. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039>
- Cromptvoets, S.** (2011). The health and wellbeing of female veterans: A review of the literature. *Journal of Military and Veterans Health*, 19(2), 25–31. http://jmvh.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/JMVH-Vol19-No2_FemaleHealth.pdf
- Daly, M.** (2005). Gender mainstreaming in theory and practice. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State & Society*, 12(3), 433–450. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxi023>
- Davis, K.** (2009). Sex, gender and cultural intelligence in the Canadian Forces. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 47(4), 430–455. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14662040903375091>
- Deborah Sampson Act, H.R. 3224, S.514, 116th Cong.** (2019–2020). <https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/3224>
- Department of National Defence.** (2017). *Strong, secure, engaged: Canada's defence policy*. <https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2018/strong-secure-engaged/canada-defence-policy-report.pdf>
- Deschamps, M.** (2015). *External review into sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*. External Review Authority. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/migration/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/caf-community-support-services-harassment/era-final-report-april-20-2015-eng.pdf
- Dobie, D. J., Kivlahan, D. R., Maynard, C., Bush, K. R., Davis, T. M., & Braley, K. A.** (2004). Posttraumatic stress disorder in female veterans: Association with self-reported health problems and functional impairment. *Archives of Internal Medicine*, 164(4), 394–400. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.164.4.394>
- Duval-Lantoin, C.** (2018). *Proceedings report: The Gender dimension of veteran transition: Workshop and mentorship program*. Center for International and Defence Policy. <https://www.queensu.ca/cidp/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca/cidpwww/files/files/Veteran%20Workshop%202018%20Proceedings%20Report%20.pdf>
- Eichler, M.** (2012). *Militarizing men: Gender, conscription and war in Post-Soviet Russia*. Stanford University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780804778367>
- Eichler, M.** (2017). Add female veterans and stir? A feminist perspective on gendering veterans research. *Armed Forces and Society*, 43(4), 674–694. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16682785>
- Eichler, M., & Smith-Evans, K.** (2018). Gender in Veteran reintegration and transition: A scoping review. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*, 4(1), 5–19. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh.2017-0004>
- Enhanced New Veterans Charter Act, S.C. 2011, c. 12, Parliament of Canada.** (2011). <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/BillDetails.aspx?billId=4751553&Language=E>
- Gibbs, G.** (2012). Thematic coding and categorizing. In G. Gibbs (Ed.), *Analyzing qualitative data* (pp. 1–19). Sage. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781849208574>
- Government of Canada.** (2020, February). *Statistics of women in the Canadian Armed Forces*. <https://www>

- canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/women-in-the-forces/statistics.html
- Hesse-Biber, S.** (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: With or without software*. [PowerPoint slides]. <https://www.bumc.bu.edu/crro/files/2010/07/Hesse-Bieber-4-10.pdf>
- Jahan, R.** (1995). *The elusive agenda: Mainstreaming women in development*. Zed Books.
- Lehavot, K., Claudia Der-Martirosian, C., Simpson, T., Shipherd, J., & Washington, D.** (2013). The role of military social support in understanding the relationship between PTSD, physical health, and healthcare utilization in women veterans. *Journal of Trauma and Stress, 26*(6), 772–775. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/jts.21859>
- Levy, G.** (1999). *Moving forward: Report of the House Committee on National Defence and Veterans' Affairs*. Canadian Parliamentary Review. http://www.revparl.ca/22/1/22n1_99e_Levy.pdf
- MacLean, M. B., Clow, B., Ralling, A., Sweet, J., Poirier, A., Buss, J., Pound, T., & Rodd, B.** (2018). *Veterans in Canada released since 1998: A sex-disaggregated profile*. Veterans Affairs Canada. https://cimvhr.ca/vac-reports/data/reports/MacLean%202018_Veterans%20in%20Canada%20Released%20since%201998%20Sex-disaggregated%20Profile.pdf
- Maharajan, K., & Krishnaveni, R.** (2016). Managing the migration from military to civil society: Motivation model for socioeconomic needs in resettlement of veterans in India. *Armed Forces & Society, 42*(3), 605–625. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X16629160>
- Maples, S.** (2017, November 22). The inconvenience of being a woman veteran. *The Atlantic*. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/11/the-inconvenience-of-being-a-woman-veteran/545987/>
- Middleton, K., & Craig, C. D.** (2012). A systematic literature review of PTSD among female veterans from 1990 to 2010. *Social work in mental health, 10*(3), 233–252. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15332985.2011.639929>
- Montgomery, A. E., & Byrne, T. H.** (2014). Services utilization among recently homeless veterans: A gender-based comparison. *Military Medicine, 179*(3), 236–239. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7205/MILMED-D-13-00426>
- Morely, L.** (2010). Gender mainstreaming: myths and measurement in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 40*(4), 533–550. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2010.490377>
- Morneau, Hon. W. F.** (2017). *Building a strong middle class: Budget 2017*. Ottawa: Department of Finance Canada. <https://www.budget.gc.ca/2017/docs/plan/budget-2017-en.pdf>
- Moser, C.** (2005). Has gender mainstreaming failed? A comment on international development agency experiences in the South. *International Feminist Journal of Politics, 7*(4), 576–590. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616740500284573>
- National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics.** (2016). *Profile of women veterans: 2014* [PowerPoint Slides]. http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/Women_Veterans_2014.pdf
- National Veterans Transition Service, Inc.** (2019). *REBOOT Women's Workshop*. <https://www.nvtsi.org/events/reboot-womens-workshop-5/>
- Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (Department of Defense).** (2015). *After the sea of goodwill conceptual framework*. https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/CORE/1509_ASOG_Conceptual_Framework.pdf
- Office of the Veterans Ombudsman.** (2013). *Improving the new veterans charter: The parliamentary review: A review of the financial, vocational rehabilitation and assistance, and family support programs*. <https://www.ombudsman-veterans.gc.ca/pdfs/reports/review-charter01-examencharte01-01-2013-eng.pdf>
- Perkins, D.** (2018, March 27). *Program evidence based on the Clearinghouse's Continuum and understanding common components of programs supporting US veterans* [Speaker series]. Kingston, ON, Canada: Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University.
- Sasson-Levy, O.** (2017). Ethnicity and gender in militaries: An intersectional analysis. In R. Woodward & C. Duncanson (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of gender and the military* (pp. 125–143). Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-51677-0>
- Senate Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs.** (2014). *The transition to civilian life of veterans*. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2014/sen/yc33-1-0/YC33-1-0-412-8-eng.pdf
- Squires, J.** (2007). *The new politics of gender equality*. Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-03653-7>
- Statistics Canada.** (2019). *Gender-based violence and unwanted sexual behaviour in Canada, 2018: Initial findings from the survey of safety in public and private spaces*. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/daily-quotidien/191205/dq191205b-eng.pdf?st=s-ydATYj>
- Taber, N.** (2009). The profession of arms: Ideological codes and dominant narratives of gender in the Canadian military. *Atlantis, 34*(1), 27–36. <https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/216/206>
- Tamez, M. A., & Hazler, R. J.** (2014). Expanding Frain, Bishop, and Bethels's rehabilitation model to address needs of female veterans. *Journal of Rehabilitation, 80*(4), 50–57.
- Thompson, J. M., Lockhart, W., Roach, M. B., Atuel, H., Bélanger, S., Black, T., Castro, C. A., Cooper, A., Cox, D. W., de Boer, C., Dentry, S., Hamner, K., Shields, D., & Truusa, T.** (2017). *Veterans' identities and well-being in transition to civilian life – A resource for policy analysts, program designers, service providers and researchers*. Veterans Affairs Canada. <https://cimvhr.ca/documents/Thompson%202017%20Veterans%20Identities%20Technical%20Report.pdf>

- Thompson, J. M., VanTil, L. D., Zamorski, M. A., Garber, B., Dursun, S., Fikretoglu, D., Ross, D., Richardson, J. D., Sareen, J., Sudom, K., Courchesne, C., & Pedlar, D. J.** (2016). Mental health of Canadian Armed Forces veterans: Review of population studies. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*, 2(1), 70–86. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh.3258>
- True, J., & Mintrom, M.** (2001). Transnational networks and policy diffusion: The case of gender mainstreaming. *International Studies Quarterly*, 45(1), 27–57. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/0020-8833.00181>
- UNDP Global Centre for Public Service Excellence.** (2015). *Is the private sector more efficient? A cautionary tale.* <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/capacity-building/global-centre-for-public-service-excellence/efficiency.html>
- United States Veterans Initiative.** (2016, January). *What we do.* https://www.usvetsinc.org/portfolio_category/female-veterans/
- US Department of Veterans Affairs.** (2016, April 28). *Health Services research and development: CREATE: Women Veterans Healthcare.* https://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/centers/create/womens_health.cfm
- US Vets.** (n.d.). *Father's program.* <https://www.usvetsinc.org/portfolio-posts/fathers-program/>
- VanTil, L. D., MacLean, M., Sweet, J., & McKinnon, K.** (2018). Understanding future needs of Canadian veterans. *Health Reports*, 29(11), 20–25. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/en/pub/82-003-x/2018011/article/00003-eng.pdf?st=499x0Nyr>
- Veterans Affairs Canada.** (2015). *Hire a veteran.* [Poster]. <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/pdf/services/jobs/Hire-a-Veteran.pdf>
- Veterans Affairs Canada.** (2017). *Income study: Regular Force veteran report, executive summary.* <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/research/research-directorate/publications/reports/i-study-exec>
- Veterans Affairs Canada.** (2019a). *7.1 Career Transition Services (CTS).* <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/facts-figures/7-0>
- Veterans Affairs Canada.** (2019b). *Veterans Affairs Canada statistics – facts and figures.* <https://www.veterans.gc.ca/eng/about-vac/news-media/facts-figures>
- Veterans Affairs Health Services Research and Development Service.** (2020). *VA Women's Health Research Network (WHRN): Executive summary.* <https://www.hsrp.research.va.gov/centers/whrn/WHRN-Exec-Summary.pdf>
- von Hlatky, S.** (2014, July 18). The Canadian Forces can't be gender blind. *Ottawa Citizen.* <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/national/the-canadian-forces-cant-be-gender-blind>
- Williamson, V.** (2009). *Supporting our troops, veterans and their families: Lessons learned and future opportunities for philanthropy – a report on the Iraq Afghanistan Deployment Impact Fund (IADIF) of the California Community Foundation.* California Community Foundation. https://www.calfund.org/wp-content/uploads/CCF_IADIF_FullReport_WebOptimized.pdf
- Women's Veterans Network Australia.** (n.d.-a). *Our partners.* <https://wvna.org.au/our-partners/>
- Women's Veterans Network Australia.** (n.d.-b). *Women veteran writers.* <https://wvna.org.au/women-veteran-writers/>
- Women Warriors' Healing Garden.** (2017). *Vision.* <http://www.womenwarriorshg.org>
- Ylöstalo, H.** (2016). Organizational perspective to gender mainstreaming in the Finnish state administration. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 18(4), 1–15. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2016.1149307>

How to cite this article: Shoemaker, M., & von Hlatky, S. (2020). Unblurring the Lines of Responsibility: The Puzzle of Veteran Service Provision and its Gendered Implications. *Journal of Veterans Studies*, 6(2), pp. 88–100. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21061/jvs.v6i2.181>

Submitted: 01 May 2020

Accepted: 24 September 2020

Published: 14 December 2020

Copyright: © 2020 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.