



Graduate School of Development Studies

Changing nationhood and masculinity:

Dutch veterans of peace operations

A Research Paper presented by:

Lisa Bay
(Italy)

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for obtaining the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS IN DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Specialisation:

**Conflict, Reconstruction and Human Security
(CRS)**

Members of the examining committee:

Prof Dr Dubravka Zarkov

Dr Helen Hintjens

The Hague, The Netherlands

November 2008

Disclaimer:

This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

Research papers are not made available for circulation outside of the Institute.

Inquiries:

Postal address: Institute of Social Studies
 P.O. Box 29776
 2502 LT The Hague
 The Netherlands

Location: Kortenaerkade 12
 2518 AX The Hague
 The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

Acknowledgements

I sincerely wish to express my thankfulness and appreciation to the following for their assistance, presence, and inspiration in the course of writing this paper:

The Veterans Institute;

All the veterans and people I interviewed, who gave me their precious time and trusted me with the accounts of their experiences;

My supervisors: Dubravka, whose firm and practical guidance and untiring reassurance were invaluable not only during the research process but all year long; and Helen, who always made me question my thoughts and see a different perspective;

My discussants, Archana and Cayathri, with their useful comments;

Des Gasper, whose teaching made me look at academia in a different way;

Josée, our CRS Program Administrator, for her kind assistance and for her friendship;

My friends at ISS, in particular Diana, who made a difference in the classes we attended and who gave me insightful ideas for my work;

My 'Kurhaus' family, Karoline and Cayathri, whose friendship I will always cherish;

Ana, for our 'intricate' conversations about Former Yugoslavia but not only;

My family, for their ceaseless encouragement and support despite distance;

Reyes, whose unconditional love, affection and presence were a constant source of inspiration and made me believe in myself and in what I was doing.

Table of contents

| | |
|---|----|
| List of tables and figures | 6 |
| List of Annexes | 6 |
| List of acronyms | 7 |
| Abstract and relevance to Development Studies | 8 |
| Chapter 1. Introduction | 9 |
| 1.1 Research Objectives..... | 10 |
| 1.2 Relevance and Justification | 10 |
| 1.3 Research Questions | 11 |
| 1.4 Research Methods and Data Collection..... | 11 |
| Chapter 2. Contextual Background | 14 |
| 2.1 Veterans and Veteran Policy | 14 |
| Chapter 3. The Theoretical Context – Situating my Research..... | 18 |
| 3.1 Current Research on the Intersections of Masculinity, Nationhood and the Military | 18 |
| 3.2 Dutch Military Masculinity: The Nation-State and Colonial Expansion..... | 20 |
| 3.3 Orientalism and Balkanism | 22 |
| Chapter 4. Nationhood, Masculinity and Military: Defining the Self through the Other | 26 |
| 4.1 The People and the Geographies of Possibilities..... | 27 |
| 4.2 The People and the Habits: Distance and Proximity with the Dutch..... | 28 |
| 4.3 The People and the Wars: From Empathy to Indifference and Distance..... | 32 |
| 4.4 Gendering the Soldiers | 37 |
| 4.5 Western Peace-keeping Troops: A Different Kind of Other | 39 |
| 4.6 The Other Within: Veterans in Dutch Civilian Life..... | 40 |
| Chapter 5. Conclusion | 43 |
| References | 46 |
| Bibliography | 48 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Annex I - Tables..... | 50 |
| Annex II – Information on veterans from Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq | 52 |
| Annex III – Questionnaire..... | 54 |
| Annex IV – Guide questions for interview..... | 60 |
| Annex V – Examples of quotes of veterans | 62 |

List of tables and figures

Table 1. Profile of veterans interviewed – Annex I

Table 2. Overview of Dutch veteran population – Annex I

Table 3. Comparison of military and veterans divided by operation - Annex I

Table 4. Military personnel currently in the Dutch armed forces - Annex I

Table 5. Percentage of military personnel by age group – Annex I

Table 6. Division of ethnic minorities over the ranks in the Dutch armed forces – Annex I

List of Annexes

Annex I. Tables

Annex II. Information on veterans from Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq

Annex III. Questionnaire

Annex IV. Guide questions for interview

Annex V. Examples of quotes of veterans

List of acronyms

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| ANA | Afghan National Army |
| BNMO | Bond van Nederlandse Militaire Oorlogs (Association of Dutch Military War and Service Victims) |
| GRP | Group |
| IED | Improvised Explosive Device |
| IFOR | Implementation Force |
| ISAF | International Security Assistance Force |
| MSL | Missile |
| MoD | Ministry of Defence |
| NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organisation |
| NTM-I | NATO Training Mission Iraq |
| NIOD | Nederlands Instituut voor Oorlogsdokumentatie (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation) |
| OMLT | Military Observation and Liaison Team |
| PRT | Provincial Reconstruction Team |
| PTSD | Post Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| RNLDAF | Royal Netherlands Air Force |
| RNLMC | Royal Netherlands Marine Corps |
| SFOR | Stabilisation Force |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNAMA | United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan |
| UNPROFOR | United Nations Protection Force |
| UNSC | United Nations Security Council |
| VMBO | <i>Vorbereidend middelbaar beroepsonderwijs</i>, (preparatory middle-level vocational education) |
| WAO | Arbeidsongeschiktheidsverzekering (Invalidity Insurance) |

Abstract and relevance to Development Studies

Based on interviews to Dutch veterans deployed to Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq, this paper aims at exploring the relationship between their nationhood, militarism and masculinity. Through the analysis of their narratives about the people encountered abroad, either the local population or peacekeepers of other nationalities, this paper also examines how the definition of the Other is created in these narratives; and if, and how this definition is related to the veterans' sense of nationhood and masculinity. Moreover, it examines to what extent this definition relates to discourses of Balkanism and Orientalism, and to training received prior to deployment.

This paper argues that the concepts of nationhood, militarism and masculinity of Dutch veterans exist in relation to each other, both when Dutch veterans position themselves within their own society, and when they relate to the people they meet during deployment. Secondly, it points to the existence of multiple Others in veterans' narratives, and to masculinity, military and nationhood playing significant roles in the processes of Othering.

These findings, although limited to a small number of veterans, point out the 'strategic location' of the veterans vis-à-vis the population they encounter. All their accounts not only relate to 'Dutch values', but also place these in a superior position, compared to the local ones. This reflects both Balkanist and Orientalist discourses in which Europe and the West are always depicted as more civilized than the Other, and in a superior position.

The results of this research make a small contribution to the feminist debates about the nexus of gender, nationhood and soldiering, and to Dutch debates about manhood, nationhood and peace-keeping. Moreover, they contribute to understanding the relevance and importance of the specific social locations of the veterans within the societies they are part of, and those in which they find themselves in the country of deployment.

Chapter 1. Introduction

This research is about the relationship between nationhood, military and masculinity of Dutch veterans of peace operations in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. I explore veterans' individual sense of nationhood and manhood through their narratives about soldiering and peace operations, and especially their stories about people encountered during the missions abroad, either the local population – women and men, civilian and military – or soldiers of other nationalities.

Regarding veterans of Bosnia, I analyze whether, and how the definition of the Other is created, and whether it is related to the veterans' sense of nationhood and masculinity within the more general Balkanist discourses of the twentieth century. Hansen (2006) and Todorova (1997) argue that in these discourses the Bosnian war is defined as a 'Balkan' war, driven by intra-state ancient hatred, violence and barbarism, situating the Balkans 'as radically different from the modern, Western world of the nation, order, civilization, and reason' (Hansen 2006:107). According to this discourse, the Other is negatively seen, as barbaric and violent; and issues normally used to explain similar happenings in the West - such as self-determination, citizenship and rights of ethnic/religious minorities, amongst others - are not taken into consideration (Todorova 1997:186).

I have asked the same questions about veterans deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan¹, analyzing if, and how, their national identity and masculinity are defined in relation to the civilian and armed local population. I was interested to see whether veterans use the discourse of Orientalism, as defined by Edward Said, in which Europe is defined as superior to the Oriental Other. Finally, this research also explores whether the veterans' notion of the Other is related to the training they receive prior to deployment.

My interest in doing a research on veterans of peace missions, and their sense of self and others, began years ago when I was working in a non-governmental organisation in East Timor. Australian peace-keepers on the ground, who supported us in our movements, made me curious, as they had completely different roles, tasks and responsibilities compared to me. I also often wondered how they see, and are seen by, the local population.

¹ The majority of soldiers deployed to Afghanistan are still in service, according to the Veterans Institute head of Communication Department, and do not consider themselves veterans.

1.1 Research Objectives

This research aims at exploring intersections of Dutchness, military and masculinity of veterans in relation to their actual engagement in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia, and to their perception of the Others, within the European discourse of Orientalism and Balkanism. In doing so, this research hopes to contribute to the ongoing feminist debates about the nexus of gender, nationhood and soldiering, as well as to specific Dutch debates about manhood, nationhood and peacekeeping.

1.2 Relevance and Justification

In the Netherlands, military culture does not have a long history: the wave of national revolutions which took place in many European countries in 1848 didn't touch the Netherlands, and the Dutch declared themselves neutral in WWI. Moreover, the existence and function of the Dutch armed forces is not taken for granted by Dutch society. After WWII, it was generally held in the Netherlands that the country has not taken part in any real war. This was partly due to the fact that Dutch territory has not been attacked after 1945, but also because Dutch participation in *peace missions* is not seen as participation in *wars*, although Dutch soldiers, in many missions, use and are exposed to force, not only in self-defence.

The Dutch society therefore perceives itself as one without war: both the military and the civilian population seem to have a self-image of a 'nonmartial' nation (Sion 2006:456). At the level of scholarship, journalism and politics, the absence of military credentials is seen positively and not as a defect, leading to a presumption that the Netherlands can excel in areas such as peace operations and international relations (Dudink 2002:149). Even the events of the Decolonisation War in Indonesia, in which soldiers were (seen as being) guilty of committing war crimes, did not change this self-perception, but rather led to a limited trust of the public in the military. The killing of more than 7000 Muslim men in Srebrenica, in the presence of Dutch soldiers, reduced this trust even more.

There are several studies about Dutch military masculinity and nationhood, and many more about militarized masculinity of soldiers and its effects on peace operations. This study not only focuses on intersections of masculinity, nationhood and the military, in relation to self-perceptions of soldiers as peace-keepers, but also aims at showing how these intersections and perceptions are framed through interaction with the local population and other armed forces. I think this is very current especially in light of the engagement in Iraq and Afghanistan, where Western countries are conducting the 'war on terror' in accordance to Western democratic values, which very often leads to a definition of local values – social, historical and cultural – as negative and inferior.

1.3 Research Questions

The main research question is:

What are the intersections of manhood, nationhood and militarism in the narratives of Dutch veterans of peace-keeping missions, and to what extent are Orientalist and Balkanist discourses of Self and Other present in these narratives?

The sub-questions of this research are:

1. What are the soldiers' notions of their individual nationhood and masculinity, and how are these narrated in relation to participation in the Dutch peacekeeping military?
2. What are the soldiers' notions of the Other, and how do nationhood and manhood impact on these notions? How are they related to the training veterans receive? Are there differences in perceptions of local women and men in the Middle East and Bosnia, and if so, how do these relate to the perceptions of Dutchness?

1.4 Research Methods and Data Collection

This research was conducted mainly through collection of qualitative primary data. I conducted semi-structured interviews with male veterans from different parts of the Netherlands who had been deployed in peace operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and Bosnia. The interviews took place in their home town, or by telephone, from July to September 2008, and were all individual. Being about personal experience, I thought they would not speak freely if talking in a group. I tried to avoid the phone, since it was more difficult to build up rapport, but in a third of the cases, due to time limitations, it was necessary. At the end of each interview, I would ask them if they had any questions, or wanted to add something.

I talked to 6 veterans who had been to Afghanistan; two of these had also been deployed to Iraq. I interviewed 9 veterans who had been to Bosnia. All of them are male. 5 out of 15 have completed some form of tertiary education; all the rest have completed secondary education, with the exception of one. None of the veterans from Bosnia are still in the Dutch armed forces; and with the exception of two, all are working. Three of the six veterans of Afghanistan are still part of the military; one is working with the police force. The age of the veterans of the war in Bosnia range from 35 to 42, with the exception of one,

aged 55. The veterans of Afghanistan are between 29 and 39 years old, with the exception of one, aged 24² (see Table 1 in Annex I).

I also interviewed two staff members of the Veterans Institute³ in Doorn. The first is working on research and strategy in the Knowledge and Research Centre of the Institute. The second is a head of the Communications Department. The first staff member is also temporarily contracted by the Ministry of Defence to give a cultural-awareness training for soldiers going to Afghanistan. They both provided me with some contacts with veterans. The other interviewees were found either by browsing the different veteran websites found on the *Veteran's Handbook*, published by the Veterans Institute⁴; or by asking the informants themselves, through snowball sampling⁵. Lastly, the chief editor of *Checkpoint*, a monthly magazine for veterans also published by the Veterans Institute, was interviewed.

The interviews with veterans were usually from 40 minutes to an hour, and were all recorded, with their permission. Confidentiality was guaranteed. When in person, the time spent with the interviewees was longer, and other information came out on their background, experience or ambitions. The interviews were always transcribed and sent back to the informants, sometimes with additional questions. A questionnaire on age, education, and personal background was also given to the veterans before or after the interview⁶. The interviews with the others respondents were not all recorded.

The limitations encountered in finding the veterans were principally that my first point of contact was the Veterans Institute, members of whom, even if showing interest in the research, stated they were busy with their work and could not dedicate much time in contacting veterans for me. Another limitation was the language, which had to be English since I don't speak Dutch. Not all veterans spoke good English, and a few, although showing interest stated that their fluency was limited and could not be interviewed. In addition, the period in which the interviews had to be conducted – July and August – is in the Netherlands a holiday period, and many people were not available. Lastly, I was not able to select the veterans according to their rank, social, racial and educational background or, in the case of the war in Bosnia, when the law on conscription was still in place, according to whether they were conscripts or professional soldiers. To

2 Please see annex II for more information on the informants, divided by country of deployment.

3 The Veterans Institute was established 'at the instigation of the Ministry of Defence... [as] an alliance between the Ministry of Defence, the BNMO, the BNMO Centre, the Veterans Platform and the Foundation for Veterans Services', (Algra et al. 2003:15). BNMO stands for Bond van Nederlandse Militaire Oorlogs.

4 The handbook contains information on the Veterans Institute, the veterans policy, information on care for veterans, protection of their interests, and other relevant information.

5 See Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) on sampling strategies.

6 See Annex III. Annex IV includes the guide questions for interview.

have a different perspective, I also took into consideration the possibility of interviewing female veterans deployed to the same countries. However, I was not able to find any.

To substantiate the primary data, I reviewed secondary sources such as some training materials for soldiers, factsheets and information on websites of the Veterans Institute, the Dutch Ministry of Defence, the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan and the multi-national force in Iraq. Moreover, websites and UN Security Council resolutions concerning the peace-keeping and peace-enforcing operations in Bosnia were consulted. Academic literature related to Orientalism, Balkanism, military masculinity and nationhood was also consulted. I made an attempt to visit the Netherlands Institute of Military History. However, upon explaining the objectives of my research, I was told that all potentially interesting and relevant documents were confidential and not accessible to the public.

Chapter 2. Contextual Background

In the first part of this chapter, I contextualise the veterans in Dutch society and their changing position in time and with regards to legislation. In the second part, I give some information regarding the Dutch armed forces.

2.1 Veterans and Veteran Policy

Veterans form a special group in Dutch society due to their military experiences abroad. Compared to twenty years ago, the composition of Dutch veterans has changed. In the twentieth century, especially after WWI, the number of veterans was very low compared to other European countries, and therefore very little attention was paid to them as a social group. This changed after WWII, and between 1940 and 1962, over half a million soldiers/military personnel were deployed in different wars⁷ by the Dutch government, for a total Dutch population of ten million at the time. The Dutch definition of veteran has also come to include individuals deployed ‘under circumstances comparable to those of war, such as peace operations in an international context’⁸ (Algra et al. 2003:3)⁹.

Despite the big numbers of veterans starting from the 1950s, it was only in the middle of the 1980s, due to negative publicity of the war fought in the East Indies, and criticism of the Dutch colonial past, that the older veterans started forming interest groups to change the negative image they had among the general public. They were also eventually recognised by the government as a group in need and deserving of special attention. In March 1990, the memorandum on veteran policy was published, with the objectives of ‘promotion and showing of respect’ and ‘minimising and making as bearable as possible the immaterial effects of fulfilling service under wartime conditions’ (ibid:6). A number of measures were undertaken in the 1990s following the memorandum¹⁰.

7 These were WWII, the Indonesian Decolonisation War, the Korean War and the conflict in New Guinea.

8 besides former soldiers with Dutch nationality which have served the country under war circumstances or corresponding situations and former soldiers of the former royal Dutch East Indies army (KNIL) (*Handboek Veteranen*, p. 10).

9 Tables 2 and 3 in Annex I contain an overview of the changing Dutch veteran population.

10 Appointment of an Inspector of Veterans as a point of contact for veterans; the establishment of a Foundation for Veteran Services, with the overall goal of increasing the social recognition of veterans; various forms of financial recompensation, supplementary services and structural policy attention, (Algra et al. 2003:6).

The current intention of the veteran policy is to ‘recognise the special role that veterans have played in representing the Netherlands and to compensate or mitigate the adverse effects that a number of veterans were left with as a result of the military past’ (ibid:14).

A reason for the lack of special attention to veterans was the lack of military and veteran culture in the Netherlands, mainly due to the Dutch policy of neutrality from 1830 to the beginning of WWII¹¹. As stated by Liora Sion:

‘The Netherlands has lived contentedly for centuries under Anglo-Saxon protection. Priding itself on a neutral stance in international matters, the Netherlands knew that neither Britain nor the US could afford to lose control of the Low Countries to an opposing great power. In accordance with such a perspective, the Dutch perceived the development of their armed forces as less of a priority than economic and social matters’ (Sion 2006:456).

A second reason was the high standards of social and health services in the Netherlands, which gave the idea that anybody, including veterans, could access excellent medical assistance. But this did not cater to special needs such as veterans’ mental health, which was affected by the deployment in military missions.

When the memorandum on veteran policy was published in 1990, there were approximately 270,000 veterans. In 2003, the numbers fell to 150,000¹², majorly still composed by groups of older veterans, but with an increasing number of veterans that had taken part in peace operations - therefore much younger. The Veterans Institute has calculated that by 2010, the total number of veterans will be less than 100,000, but that it will be constituted mainly by veterans from peace operations. As already mentioned before, these ‘new’ veterans have served in peace operations, starting in 1979 with UNIFIL, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, and continuing in various other missions during the 1990s¹³ and currently¹⁴.

11 ‘WWI, which had been a major influence in the process of development of a veterans culture in the surrounding countries such as the UK, France and Belgium, in a military sense, passed our country by, as it were, almost unnoticed. Due to the absence of a veterans tradition, the longstanding tradition of neutrality, the small size and limited scope for exercising power, coupled to a string of disappointing military experiences in the years between 1940 and 1950, public manifestations related to the armed forces were hardly popular and therefore hardly visible’, (Algra et al. 2003:8).

12 Mainly due to the deaths of veterans which had taken part in WWII (Algra et al. 2003).

13 One of these missions was in Former Yugoslavia. With regards to the war in Bosnia, the UN had declared an arms embargo on the whole of Yugoslavia since September 1991, and in February 1992 a resolution to authorise the deployment of peacekeepers of the UNPROFOR mission was passed, lasting until the end of 1995. UNPROFOR was replaced by IFOR, a UNSC-authorized NATO-led mission subsequently established to guarantee a durable cessation of hostilities. In January 1996, IFOR was replaced by SFOR, whose role was to stabilize the peace (<http://www.nato.int/Ifor/un/un-resol.htm>).

In 1992, the Dutch parliament suspended the conscription model military service foreseen by the Constitution¹⁵ and in 1997 a new law on military service was passed (called *Kaderwet Dienstplicht*¹⁶), which repealed the 1922 law. Under this new law, conscription still exists, but there are no regulations on the performance of military service¹⁷. As stated by the Veterans Institute, the reasons for this change were not only due to the end of the Cold War¹⁸, but also because of ‘the practical impossibility of deploying conscripted personnel in the context of peace missions’¹⁹ (Algra et al. 2003:19). Therefore, ‘the Dutch political ambition to make a sizeable contribution to the UN missions was insufficiently supported by the conscript personnel’ (ibid).

This brought change in the Army regarding composition and backgrounds of the soldiers, the future, professional veterans in the Netherlands. A lot of effort was put into recruitment. Initially this effort was successful, but later the results were disappointing, especially in the second half of the 1990s, when more jobs became available, and the Dutch economy started to grow again (especially after 1994, a year of

14 Current missions are in Afghanistan, with ISAF, and Iraq, with SFIR. The Dutch armed forces were first deployed to Iraq in August 2003, with an average strength of 1,395. The military mission ended in March 2005. Currently the Netherlands are contributing to the NATO training mission in Baghdad, and the commitment will last until June 2009 (http://www.government.nl/Subjects/Dutch_military_mission_to_Iraq).

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) was created in accordance with the UN Bonn Conference in December 2001, after the ousting of the Taliban regime. The concept of a UN-mandated international force to assist the newly-established Afghan Transitional Authority was conceived to create a secure environment in and around Kabul and support the reconstruction of Afghanistan. The Bonn conference led to the creation of a three-way partnership between the Afghan Transitional Authority, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and ISAF. ISAF is not a UN force, but a ‘coalition of the willing’ deployed under the authority of the UNSC, with a peace-enforcement mandate under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. NATO assumed authority of the ISAF mission in 2003. There are 40 troop-contributing nations and the Netherlands had 1770 troops on the ground (in September 2008, the time of this research - http://www.nato.int/ISAF/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf). The Dutch have been involved in ISAF since January 2002. After being in Baghlan province, in April 2006 the Dutch government decided to send approximately 1600 troops to Uruzgan, southern Afghanistan. This commitment will last until 2010 (http://www.mindef.nl/binaries/Communicatieplan%20Uruzgan_tcm15-65452.pdf).

15 Article 97 and 98 of the Constitution refer to the defence of Dutch territory and conscription for the armed forces.

16 See <http://wetten.overheid.nl/cgi-bin/deeplink/law1/title=KADERWET%20DIENSTPLICHT>.

17 ‘This means registration for the draft is still taking place: all 17-year-old men are to go on a military register. But the recruits are no longer summoned for medical examination and there is no military call-up. However, at any time government may introduce regulations on the length of military service and the Minister of Defence can issue call-up notices. In exceptional circumstances (such as war), the new law permits the call-up of all registered conscripts under the age of 45’. <http://www.wri-irg.org/co/rtba/archive/netherlands.htm>.

18 With regards to the end of the Cold War, Laura Sion affirms that ‘Western nations no longer deployed their armed forces to deter a known adversary but rather to maintain or enforce peace in regions where their interests were in jeopardy or where human rights were being abused’ (Sion 2006:456).

19 According to the head of the Communications Department of the Veteran Institute, this was because the government could not force the conscripts to go abroad on missions. This was confirmed by the veterans. Many of them, who have been to Bosnia as conscripts, affirmed that, even if they had requested to be deployed, and had received the training necessary, they were free to change their minds until the moment before boarding the plane to the country of deployment. Therefore the government could not be sure of the numbers of soldiers it was sending on peace missions.

negative growth)²⁰. Less young people wanted to enter the armed forces, and many vacancies opened - a factor which, coupled with an increase of Dutch participation in international missions, put a lot of pressure on the available forces. The Dutch Ministry of Defence carried out research on who were the groups of young people most interested in joining the army, and these turned out to be people taking VMBO training (pre-vocational secondary education), which ends at the age of 16. The ministry therefore organised training courses to introduce these groups of youth to the armed forces, while waiting for them to turn 18, the legal age for joining. In combination with the short length of the contract period (initially three years), this led to a very low average age of the 'new' veterans. There are now more veterans in their early twenties²¹. Moreover, according to the Veterans Institute, the VMBO training includes large numbers of ethnic minorities, in particular people of Turkish origin.²² Lastly, since the military training bases are mainly located in rural areas and in the periphery of the country, the defence organisation decided to recruit in the same areas. Soldiers and veterans therefore, do not often come from the urban areas of the country, or the *Randstad*, the economic centre.

Currently Dutch armed forces have 49,088 people, divided in four services (see Table 4, Annex I) According to the same source, there are 20,169 civilian personnel. Almost 9 percent (8.9%) of the military personnel and 23.6% of the civilian personnel are women (*Facts and figures about the armed forces*. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, p. 61). Although it has not been possible to obtain figures concerning the percentage of ethnic minorities in armed forces²³ in each service of the Dutch armed forces, table 6 in annex I gives some indications.

20 'The Netherlands in figures' – 2004. Statistics Netherlands. www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/1351F633-78C3-4339-AAA5-D377A8A6C8D7/0/thenetherlandsinfigures.pdf

21. Table 5 in annex I shows percentages of age groups for each service in the Dutch armed forces.

22 In fact 'almost 20 percent of the 16.4 million inhabitants of the Netherlands are persons with a foreign background (i.e. they have at least one parent born outside the country). Migrants who originate from Turkey, Africa, Latin America, and Asia (with the exception of Indonesia –the former Dutch East Indies – South Korea, and Japan) are considered to be 'non-western' by official statistics. People with at least one 'non-western' parent comprise almost 11 percent of the Dutch population. The three largest 'non-western' migrant communities (each with more than 300,000 members) originate from Turkey, Morocco, and the former Dutch colony of Suriname'. The Netherlands: Discrimination in the Name of Integration: Migrants' Rights under the Integration Abroad Act. Human Rights Watch Report number 1, May 2008, p. 5.

23 According to Rudy Richardson, 'Dutch government policy on ethnic minorities began in the early eighties and it was also then that the concept of 'allochtonous people' was introduced. The Central Bureau of Statistics defines an 'allochtonous people' as someone: who was born in a foreign country and has at least one parent who was born in a foreign country, and who was born in the Netherlands and has at least one parent who was born in a foreign country' (Richardson 2004:1).

Chapter 3. The Theoretical Context – Situating my Research

In the first section of this chapter, I situate my research in the literature about masculinity, nationhood and the military. The second section includes elements of the literature on the creation of the Dutch nation-state and the colonial expansion, and the parallel formation of Dutch military masculinity. The third section covers elements of Orientalism and Balkanism and how these discourses are linked to my research.

3.1 Current Research on the Intersections of Masculinity, Nationhood and the Military

Many of the studies on gender in situations of war have concentrated on integration of women and women's rights during war and in post-conflict situations, and not as much attention has been given to men and masculinities. However, as stated by Connell, the concepts of femininity and masculinity exist in relation to each other (Connell 2005:68), and they both arise, and make sense, in a system of gender relations, in which gender is 'a way in which social practice is ordered' (ibid:71). Citing Gramsci's concept of hegemony in analysing class relations as the 'cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life', Connell states that 'one form of masculinity, rather than others is culturally exalted' (ibid:77), leading to a hegemonic masculinity in a specific culture, which allows men to occupy a dominant position and makes women subordinate. Hegemonic masculinity sustains and legitimizes patriarchal authority and a patriarchal political and social order (Hutchings, 2008). Forming part of the social structure, gender - masculinity and femininity - intersects with other social relations, such as race, class, ethnicity, religion, age – and, relevant to this research, nationhood. Thus, multiple masculinities exist in intersections with these social relations, varying in different periods of time and social-political contexts. There is a hierarchy between the hegemonic form and other subordinated, marginalized, oppressed, and 'protest masculinities' (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:847), and not only between masculinities and femininities. Peace-keeping soldiering is certainly one of the contexts within which relations of gender, race, class, ethnicity, religion and age become significant, as men and women of peace-keeping forces, and of the society within which the peace-keeping intervention happens, interact.

Organization studies have analyzed these gendered interactions and hierarchies and gendered character of workplaces and organizations, including the armed forces. Men dominate in, and are the majority of the world's armed forces (Connell, 2002), and, as stated by David Morgan, 'Of all the sites where masculinities are constructed, reproduced, and deployed, those associated with war and the military are some of the most direct. Despite far-reaching political, social and technological changes, the warrior still seems to be a key

symbol of masculinity' (cited in Whitworth 2008:113). Moreover, different masculinities co-exist also within military institutions, depending on military rank (Connell, 2002), on race and class (Higate, 2003) and on sexuality, and this again points to the existence of hierarchies between different constructions of peace-keeping masculinities.

Nation-state, nationhood and nationalism are yet another set of social relations within which a close link between masculinity and military is formed. Starting from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in Europe, 'the propaganda of men at war... has defined masculine possibilities... and the interdependence of the army and the political state, the growing expense of military preparedness, have their cultural corollaries in the focus on military service as the prime form of masculine citizenship' (Braudy 2003:246). From the American and French Revolutions, until the nineteenth century, in which European nation-states emerged, power and authority, previously coming from 'monarchic and religious models of fatherhood' (Horne 2004:23), were placed in citizenship and nation. However, the citizenship never included women, and was granted only to certain categories of men. New and different formulations of (hegemonic) masculinities were also developed: one of these was an 'idealised version' (ibid:27) of the soldier, whose main characteristic was heroism. In all European nations cults of 'great men' - among these soldiers and warriors, with positive masculine ideals - appeared. Moreover, as argued by Braudy, war became an ideological operation of the state, and military service became a citizen's obligation, with 'soldier-man-citizen... the implied equation' (Braudy 2003:252).

Masculinity in the Western world has been shaped by war and the military, and the link between these concepts has contributed to shaping the national identity of Western countries (Dudink 2002:146). Referring to Cynthia Enloe, who, when talking about nationalist movements, affirms that 'nationalism has typically sprung up from masculinised memory... humiliation and... hope' (ibid:147), Dudink stresses the issue of 'masculinised' (ibid) sources of nationalism: these are not naturally belonging to men, but are articulated as such when connecting national memory, humiliation and hope to masculinity. Furthermore, Horne argued that war and politics have historically been areas of 'cultural representation of dominance' (Horne 2004:22), i.e., the exercise of power, expressed as authority and force. Beyond the right of using force - nation, war and politics are areas in which the authority is granted to the hegemonic notions and practices of masculinity in many other ways. One of those is through production of the Other: the forms of manhood that are socially and symbolically distant and different. As will be discussed below, the Dutch history of (creating a) nation-state - and social and symbolic exclusion and marginalization of different masculinities within and outside the state - has to be related to the history of expansion and colonialism, and social and symbolic hierarchies of colonial masculinities.

3.2 Dutch Military Masculinity: The Nation-State and Colonial Expansion

In the Netherlands, hegemonic masculinity also contributed to shaping the national identity. However, compared to other European countries, this was not always a classical militarized, heroic masculinity. Rather, Dutch hegemonic masculinity was a relatively moderate one when it comes to use of force and militarism, but with high moral values.

Dudink argues that the Netherlands assumed the identity of a ‘minor European nation’ (Dudink 2002:156) in the nineteenth century, presenting itself, firstly, as a politically and militarily weak nation compared to the countries surrounding it; secondly, as a stable country in which the European revolutionary events of 1848 did not have an effect. The liberal monarchy based on a constitution established at the end of the nineteenth century contributed to the idea that Dutch politics were moderate, especially in comparison to the French, and the French revolution. The period of civil war and political conflict that the Dutch territory had previously gone through as a republic²⁴, which did not fit into this idealized self-representation of the nation, was explained by historians as exceptional and an ‘unfortunate incident’ (Stuurmann 1992, in Dudink 2002:157). The centuries of colonialism and colonial violence were also excluded from this image of the highly moral nation, open to negotiation and compromise, rather than use of violence. This image had an effect on both artistic and symbolic representations of Dutch past, and in the constructions of Dutch hegemonic masculinities. Dudink argues that in monuments erected at the time, historical national and military heroes were depicted in an ‘introspective’ rather than ‘classically heroic’ way, either without many weapons, or with weapons not very visible (ibid:158). These heroes were also the symbols of Dutch masculinity: moderate and contemplative.

Parallel with the process of creating a nation-state within Europe, the Dutch were expanding their sphere of influence politically and economically through colonialism, especially in South East Asia. With the acquisition of colonies, the Dutch also saw themselves as being a civilizing power vis-à-vis the natives of the colonized territories, and efficiently and peacefully managing these in comparison to other European nations. As stated by Vollenhoven (quoted in Dudink 2002:150) the Dutch defined themselves as ‘a small people but a great nation’, gentle and sophisticated. Even the violent competition with other European colonial powers for colonies in the 1890s - which raised a ‘mood of militant nationalism’ (ibid:159) and gave an appealing status to soldiering to the Dutch – did not substantially contrast with the above-mentioned notions of national identity. The violence, also used to gain control of the outer regions of the colonies, was apparently devised as an instrument to reach the political goals of the war and not taken into consideration by the public. When it became apparent that brutal force was being used, the high officials

24 Until 1806, the Netherlands was a republic, ruled by Stadholders (see Dudink, 2004).

leading the war lost public support, and the war became unpopular. Still, The Colonial Institute²⁵ established in Amsterdam – now called Royal Tropical Institute – was designed in a way to bring focus on ‘the uplifting of the colonized rather than on the violence that had subordinated them... Heroic masculinity was not to be enshrined by the ultimate monument to Dutch empire’ (ibid:160). But here, the marginalization of the classical heroic, militant, masculinity seems to have contributed to the obscuring of brutal force and military violence used both in the creation of the nation-state within Europe, and in the country’s colonial expansion.

A similar process took place with the events of the Indonesian decolonisation war, after WWII. Anti-colonial struggle was initially seen as a disturbance that needed a few ‘police actions’, as the violent quelling of the struggle was officially defined. But when the brutality of the soldiers that had fought there was discovered, they were depicted as ‘perpetrators’ (Camacho 2007:314) by the media and in political discussions. This led to a general limited trust in the military, and added to the public debate on the role and nature of the armed forces, to it having to ‘justify its existence’ (Sion 2006:456) to the public and media. However, it did not contribute to change the perceptions of the Netherlands as ‘somewhat less militarised and more pacifist than others’ (Pollmann, 2000, in Dudink 2002:160). A consequence of this perception is that both the armed forces and the population in general seem to have a self-image of “‘non-martial’ or ‘un-heroic’ behaviour” (Sion 2006:456). The Dutch present ‘the country’s lack of regular military credentials... as a virtue rather than a weakness’ (Dudink 2002:149), and perceive their national identity as ‘problematic or unusual in relation to traditional military values and behaviour’ (ibid).

The limited trust in the military diminished even more with the massacre in Srebrenica in 1995 of more than 7500 Bosnian Muslim men, in the presence of Dutch peace-keepers. In the aftermath of this event, a discussion took place among the public, in which the Dutch military were seen from being ‘too sweet and innocent for war’ (From the weekly newspaper *HP/De Tijd*, cited by Sion 2006:454), to being accused of being cowards and passive.

The comparison between the events of Srebrenica and the Indonesian decolonisation war is relevant to understand the different positions of soldiers engaged in two kinds of missions: war and peace operations. While the events preceding Indonesian independence were seen as a war in the Netherlands (although officially defined ‘police actions’), the events related to the massacre in Srebrenica fell under a peace-keeping operation mandated by the United Nations²⁶. In Indonesia, the soldiers were authorised to

²⁵ As stated on the website of the institute, ‘it was founded in 1910 as the ‘Colonial Institute’ to study the tropics and to promote trade and industry in the... colonial territories of the Netherlands’, (<http://www.kit.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=6117>).

²⁶ See note n. 13.

use violence; in the ‘Safe Area’ of Srebrenica, their mandate was less clear. The tasks assigned to them by the Security Council were: ‘(a) to monitor the cease-fire in the Safe Areas; (b) to promote the withdrawal of military or paramilitary units other than those of the Bosnian Government from the Safe Areas; (c) to deter attacks against the Safe Areas; (d) to occupy key points on the ground; (e) to participate in the delivery of humanitarian relief to the population in the Safe Areas’ (NIOD Report, part III, Chapter 1.12. <http://193.173.80.81/srebrenica/>).

In general, despite the main difference regarding the use of force, the training received by soldiers is often the same for both kinds of missions, war and peace operations; more specifically, the training given to soldiers to be deployed as peace-keepers is combat-like. As stated by Liora Sion in her study on two Dutch peacekeeping units deployed to Kosovo and Bosnia:

‘The most striking thing about this training is not its rather short length but the level to which it emphasizes infantry combat core expertise. Most of the training, which is similar for infantry and artillery soldiers, is engaged with shooting, assaulting, and marching exercises... Only the last two and a half weeks are actually devoted to peacekeeping training, but even then, the drills sometimes take the shape of combat exercise’ (Sion 2006:462).

Although Sion’s study dates back a few years, it indicates some sense of frustration in soldiers once they are deployed on peace-keeping missions, since they are not allowed to use force if not in self-defence, and to a vision of the armed forces as ‘soft’ and feminine: not fighting but being present – i.e., ‘monitoring peace’ - doing humanitarian work and working with the local population. Their masculinity as soldiers can be seen as demeaned in comparison to dominant notions of military masculinity, as the image of the ‘warrior’ still seem to be a symbol of hegemonic masculinity (Sion, 2006). Moreover, as stated by Connell, ‘Violence on the largest possible scale is the purpose of the military; and no arena has been more important for the definition of hegemonic masculinity in European/American culture’ (Connell 2002:35).

3.3 Orientalism and Balkanism

In his book ‘Orientalism’, Edward Said analyses the history and the nature of Western attitudes towards the East, defined as the Orient. The Orient does not exist geographically, and Said states that the name has been associated with different countries depending on the period of time, or the nationality of the person in question: Americans associated it with the Far East, mainly China and Japan; while the French and British saw countries of the Middle East as the Orient.

According to Said, the Orient is ‘almost a European invention... a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences’ (Said 1978:1). European representations of the Orient gave no significance to the fact that ‘Orientals’ were living in the place, and could have ‘something at stake in the process’ (ibid). The significance of the Orient was its self-definition and self-understanding of Europe and Europeans. Thus Said defines Orientalism as ‘a way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient’s special place in European Western experience’ (ibid), that is, experience of colonization and imperialism. The Orient was seen as a part of the material culture and civilization of Europe, and this was expressed and represented in the discourse of Orientalism, with supporting institutions and bureaucracies, both in Europe and in the colonies. ‘Orient’ became the focus of scholarly and academic production, and Orientalism became ‘a style of thought, based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between ‘the Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (ibid:2). This distinction was used for ‘dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient’ (ibid:3). Neither the Orient nor the ‘Orientals’ were seen as a subject free to act or think.

By ‘setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self... European culture gained in strength and identity’ (ibid:3). This is because ‘the relationship between Occident and Orient is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony’ (ibid:5). The Orient was orientalised because it *could be* orientalised. In this sense, as a result of cultural hegemony, Orientalism is ‘the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying ‘us’ Europeans against all ‘those’ non-Europeans’ (ibid:7). It is precisely the idea of superiority of the European identity vis-à-vis other non-European cultures and peoples, which makes Orientalism a hegemonic discourse. In addition, Said stresses the fact that this is reiterated by European ideas of the backwardness of Orient.

A central point of Said’s writing is the location of the Orientalist author (politician, academic, traveller) vis-à-vis the Orient: he/she is always external to the Orient, in a moral, intellectual and existential sense, and the way the Orient is represented is a result of this ‘strategic location’ (ibid:20). These representations, forming the discourse of Orientalism, exclude or displace any possible ‘*real thing*’ (ibid:21). The Orient makes sense only because of the West; its techniques of representation make the Orient clear and visible in the discourse about it.

Applying Said’s notion of Orientalism in this research, I examine the self-positioning of the veterans vis-à-vis the places, societies and peoples they encounter in Afghanistan and Iraq, and analyze what is their ‘strategic location’ and how it impacts on their understanding of their own, and others’ manhoods and nationhoods. I especially look whether the ‘us’ and ‘them’ distinction is used to create an ontological and epistemological difference between Dutch, Afghan and Iraqi men and women, be they civilians or military.

Balkanism has often been compared to Orientalism, but, as argued by Todorova, it cannot be considered as 'merely a subspecies of Orientalism' (Todorova 1997:8). There are similarities between the two discourses, but only as far as there is 'a similar rhetorical overlap with any power discourse: the rhetoric of racism, development, modernization, civilization and so on' (ibid:11).

Unlike the Orient, the Balkans (a mountain range in South-East Europe) has a geographic location and a specific history. Todorova notes that Europe was conventionally divided into East and West only in the eighteenth century, although the divisions between an intangible East and West go back to the ancient Greeks, when the 'main dichotomy ran between the cultured South and the barbarous North' (ibid). Europe in the eighteenth century brought other distinctions: the East being seen as less industrial, lacking 'advanced social relations and institutions typical for the developed capitalist West, [and having] irrational and superstitious cultures unmarked by Western Enlightenment' (ibid). This backwardness is similar to the vision of the Orient in Orientalism, but with a twist. The Orient's backwardness is seen as an essential difference with Europe, while the Balkans' backwardness is seen as a transitional status, as something that will be overcome by time, as the Balkans develops and reaches 'Europeanness'. This indicates that the Orient and the Balkans are positioned differently vis-à-vis Europe, symbolically and geographically: the Balkans evokes 'the image of a bridge or a crossroads... A bridge between... Europe and Asia... [and] between stages of growth' (ibid:15-6), but it is always within Europe, as semi-developed, 'Inner Other' compared to the Orient, which is always external to Europe.

Furthermore, there is a geopolitical difference between the Orient and the Balkans. The Balkans is seen as a 'strategic sphere distinct from the Near or Middle East' (ibid:20) not having been colonised by Europe, or the West. The Balkans' predominantly Christian religion is an additional element connecting it with Europe, and making it different from the Orient, since the 'boundary between Islam and Christianity... continued to be perceived as the principal one' (ibid) between Europe and every other non-European or non-Western society.

Another significant element of difference between European representations of the Orient and the Balkans is gender, coupled with sexuality. The Orient is symbolized by sexualized femininities of Oriental women - Said's reference to Flaubert's Oriental experiences and his description of an Egyptian courtesan contain a direct association between the Orient and sex. The harem and the mystical, seductive, and docile sexuality of women remains one of the most potent symbols of the Orient. Notwithstanding the images of the 'noble savage', the Balkans, on the other hand, is most often represented with very specific kinds of manly attributes: uncivilized, primitive, crude and cruel. The war in Former Yugoslavia has only strengthened these images, adding violent male sexuality to the list.

Lastly, Todorova argues that ‘the construction of an idiosyncratic Balkan self-identity, or rather of several Balkan self-identities, constitutes a significant distinction [with the Orient]: they were invariably erected against an ‘oriental’ other. This could be anything from a geographic neighbour and opponent (most often the Ottoman Empire and Turkey but also within the region itself as with the nesting of orientalisms in the former Yugoslavia) to the ‘orientalizing’ of portions of one’s own historical past (usually the Ottoman period and the Ottoman legacy)’ (Todorova 1997:20).

I use Todorova’s concept of Balkanism to examine veterans’ narratives about the war in Bosnia, and especially to examine the way Dutch veterans position themselves vis-à-vis Bosnian men and women, both civilians and military; how they see Bosnian society and the war; and what implications these perceptions have on veterans’ understanding of Dutch and Bosnian masculinities, femininities and nationhoods.

The discourses of Orientalism and Balkanism are utilized to contextualise the way veterans view the conflicts and the peoples in Afghanistan, Iraq and Bosnia. Most importantly, they helped me to understand the perceptions veterans have of themselves, as Dutch, as men, and as soldiers, through the way they see the local population, and how they situate themselves vis-à-vis the others. How close or distant veterans position themselves towards the local population, places and situations, with specific regards to local culture, religion, traditions and the reasons which led to the conflicts, helped me analyse the way veterans see Dutch nation, culture and way of life.

The specific position veterans see women occupying in the local context is also very important for understanding their notions of themselves, as Dutch men. The elements of religion and ‘tradition’ here intersect with the understanding of gender relations and hierarchies, as well as of masculinities and femininities, and sexualities. The way veterans perceive the position of women in the deployment localities, and more generally the way they see relations between men and women, and men and men, in comparison to such relations in the Netherlands, is crucial for my analysis of veterans’ understanding of Dutch manhood and nationhood.

In addition, the training the soldiers are given before deployment is analyzed in order to understand the dominant notions of manhood and nationhood present in Dutch armed forces. By examining training manuals I was able to see if, and how, Orientalist and Balkanist discourses are present in the training, and how different the representations in the training manuals are from veterans’ narratives.

Chapter 4. Nationhood, Masculinity and Military: Defining the Self through the Other

The main question of this research is about the intersections of gender, militarism and nationhood of Dutch veterans and to what extent are Orientalist and Balkanist discourses present in their narratives. The two sub-questions are: what are the soldiers' individual sense of nationhood and masculinity and how are these narrated in relation to participation in the Dutch peacekeeping military? What are the soldiers' notions of the Other, and do nationhood and manhood impact on these notions? How are these notions related to the training they receive? Are there differences in perceptions of local women and men in the Middle East and Bosnia, and if so, how do these relate to the perceptions of Dutchness?

As already mentioned, the armed forces are one of the key institutions where masculinities are constructed and reproduced, and where the construction of nationhood also takes place. Therefore, in order to answer these questions I analysed the intersection of masculinity and nationhood with militarism in soldier's narratives about deployment, and specifically in their narratives about the interactions with the local population - the local women and men, both civilian and military. In analyzing narratives I asked: How do soldiers perceive their own or other men's masculinity and sexuality, and the gender relations in Dutch society and country of deployment? How do they define cultures and traditions of their own country and country of deployment? How do they understand the war and the militaries they interact with – both local armed forces or police, or troops of other nationalities carrying out similar tasks to them? This brought me to comprehending how they see themselves as soldiers. Another important element which I took into consideration is the analysis of the training material, in relation to the perceptions mentioned above. Finally, in examining all these issues I asked: in what ways are soldiers' narratives related to discourses of Orientalism and Balkanism?

My analysis of veterans' narratives allowed me to identify multiple Others which the veterans define in relation to themselves, as soldiers, as members of Dutch society and nation, and as men.

When I started this research I was expecting soldiers' narratives to contain differences in defining the Self and Others. However, I never expected that these would be so close to the theoretical models of Said and Todorova. Moreover, as the material below will show, soldiers systematically differentiated between the Afghans and Iraqis as an Other who is culturally distant and impossible to understand, and Bosnians as geographically and culturally close and familiar, but simultaneously distant.

Annex V includes some quotes from veterans, which have been numbered and divided by country of deployment. The presence of an ‘a’ after the number indicates veterans from wars in Afghanistan and Iraq (this is only in the cases of veterans 10a and 12a).

4.1 The People and the Geographies of Possibilities

With regards to Bosnia and the war which took place, a geographical proximity to the Netherlands is often pointed out. In particular, as stated by veteran 1, the fact that he was in a country in war ‘*after a three hour flight... only 2000 km away... surprised me*’. Veteran 5 had very similar views: ‘*The last European war was the Falklands, and suddenly there was a war within two hours flight... On vacation to Greece... and Bosnia is half-way Greece to us*’. But veteran 3, in comparing Bosnia to Spain, made sharper distinctions. He said that if the same war had happened in Spain, the involvement of Dutch society would have been completely different; but Bosnia is, for Dutch society, ‘*a country where only goats can live*’, therefore an unimportant conflict for the Dutch.

As stated by Todorova, Bosnia is a geographical ‘bridge or a crossroads’ (Todorova 1997:15), and this is reflected in the above-mentioned statements. There is a constant comparison to European countries familiar to the Dutch soldiers, nearby places where many people go on holiday, where there are sun and beaches. On one hand, Bosnia is seen as close, with similar attributes to Europe, ‘*where the temperature is great... and nature is beautiful*’ (veteran 5), ‘*a nice, beautiful country over there, you can make something over there*’ (veteran 10a). References to geography here encompass social and cultural possibilities: Bosnia is a place that has a future. This is especially clear when compared to how soldiers spoke of the geography of Afghanistan, stressing dissimilarity with any European country. Afghanistan is seen as geographically, and, by extension, culturally tough: with ‘*many rocks... mountains, it’s hard to begin a civilization over there*’ (veteran 10a).

In the narratives of soldiers who have been both in Bosnia and Afghanistan, differences are obvious: ‘*Bosnia was very green and Afghanistan was a desert*’ (veteran 10a). About Afghanistan, veteran 7 affirms that ‘*I think the country is a difficult country to fight, because of the mountains, it’s big, it’s difficult*’. In this sense, we can see Bosnia as being closer to Europe in the possibility of being developed and having a ‘transitional status’ (Todorova 1997:15), compared to Afghanistan, which is an incompatible entity, an anti-world vis-à-vis Europe, a country difficult, if not impossible to civilize. Many veterans affirm that the international coalition will have to stay in Afghanistan for ‘*at least twenty years*’ (veteran 14a), to ‘*build a generation*’ (veteran

12a), and still they are doubtful whether it will work, since *'many... countries have tried to take the country'* (veteran 10a).

On the other hand Bosnia is also seen as unknown, as underdeveloped, culturally and technologically stuck in the past. Veteran 2 affirms that *'it's like stepping thirty years back... not really a modern place to be, without the war'*. Veteran 5 says that *'an interesting thing is that (it) is really different from the Netherlands... in Holland nobody knew about Bosnia'*. The country is therefore seen as similar, but different, as the Other of Europe, and also a 'bridge between [European] stages of growth' (Todorova 1997:16), only semi-developed and semi-civilized. Importantly, this un-developed state of Bosnia is not only due to the war, as the above statements show. Nearly every veteran I interviewed referred to the developed and wealthy Netherlands compared to the *'simple life'* of people in Bosnia. As veteran 1 stated: *'they are still living in the Sixties'*. But this remark points to the Europe of the sixties, thus still, situating Bosnia in the *European* past.

4.2 The People and the Habits: Distance and Proximity with the Dutch

Next to geography, the local population is also defined through culture and (possibilities of) civilization. Their habits and characteristics are continuously compared to Dutch, creating social distance and proximity.

An important issue of comparison in the culture was religion. Although Bosnia has different religions – Catholic, Orthodox and Muslim - soldiers only give accounts about how Muslim Bosnia is. Veteran 2 states: *'The Netherlands is very open and we have a mix of cultures, and everybody understands and everything goes, but... in Bosnia the Muslim culture... is maybe even today... very strict, very religious'*. Veteran 5 has a similar view:

'I have friends from different backgrounds... Muslim... Negro... Chinese... Caucasian... over there I noticed now we're in a Muslim territory, people wearing headscarves, it was much more fragmented... here it's much more mingled, here in the Netherlands it doesn't matter what you wear'.

The soldiers assert a difference between the liberal and civilized, multicultural Dutch and the conservative and traditional, Muslim locals. Of course there is no mention of discrimination which takes place in the Netherlands vis-à-vis nationals of certain states, when for example, to join their family members already in the Netherlands, they have to pass the overseas integration test. The Netherlands is depicted as an open, liberal country with nationalities from all over the world, of different ethnic backgrounds and different religions living together in an integrated way.

But another veteran states that he didn't see any mosques, or hear the *'shouting at the mosques... We called them Muslims, but if they were really Muslims, I wouldn't tell... The women were not dressed like real Muslims the way you see on television... they were open-dressed'* (veteran 6). For him, Muslims are not 'real' if they do not wear a headscarf or are not covered up. And the fact that they are not 'real' makes Bosnia and the Bosnians close to the Netherlands and the Dutch.

At the same time the Bosnian population is seen as different from the Dutch in many ways. A reference to religious difference turned into a cultural habit is crudely used in the instructions the soldiers receive in their training: *'Don't wave with your left hand, because they wipe their ass with it'* (veteran 9). And there are many other differences. Veteran 1 says that *'there are a lot of people over there waiting, and they don't know what they are waiting for'*, which, indicates passiveness of the people, compared to the Netherlands. Veteran 6, based in Srebrenica, also noted that nobody worked there, *'there was... no companies... everybody was doing nothing, and that of course is nothing you can compare to your country'*. He specifies that this was due to the war, but it is interesting to see how he implicitly sees the Netherlands as productive and developed. Again the semi-developed trait of Bosnia comes out, with 'industrial backwardness' (Todorova 1997:11).

Local people in Bosnia are depicted as *'harder'* compared to the Dutch and *'life is harder there'* than in the Netherlands (veteran 8). At the same time, the same veteran sees the good sides of the difference, defining life in Bosnia more *'Mediterranean'* in the way people interact, and because they live *'more outside compared to the Dutch... when everybody is outside it is easier to talk to each other'*. On one hand he sees them as tougher, harsher; on the other, more passionate, *'living more intensely than Dutch people... They enjoy their joyful moments more, and the sorrow as well, but they're going on anyway'*. This again can be seen as part of the discourse on Balkanism, in which the population is depicted as primitive and crude, but also passionate.

Another interesting aspect of difference and similarity comes with an apparent habit of Bosnians to litter their country. Veteran 4 gives an example: *'even though you would never think of doing it in Holland, you would also throw your stuff out of the window of the car... The joke is they don't care about the country, why should we'*. This depicts the local population as not caring about soiling the country, with different values from the Dutch. But at the same time, it seems that the habit links the two cultures, as the Dutch adjust to it easily. The justification of this adjustment is interesting, putting the blame for Dutch soldiers' actions on the local population.

Like in the case of geography, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq are seen as having rather different peoples, cultures and habits from the Dutch. But they are not equated with each other. Afghanistan and Iraq always appear more different than Bosnia. Afghans are seen as *'tough people that you cannot control. The*

Russians have also tried that, many other countries have tried... but everybody is beaten over there' (veteran 10a). Afghans and Iraqis are seen as similar by the veterans who have been in both places. And religion (like in the case of Bosnia) plays a huge role in defining the population:

'Not so much difference between Iraq and Afghanistan, the people, only in Afghanistan they are more poor. The poorer they are, the more they believe in... the religion. You must watch more on the belief, it's easier to insult that people... Afghanistan, Iraq, it's tough, I don't know if it's going good over there. It's harder; the people are very stubborn... They hold on too much to their religion... And that's why I think they stay in a primitive way over there. And always have the poor life' (veteran 10a).

This veteran does not differentiate between Iraqis and Afghans, but only sees a difference in the poverty of one compared to the other. The cause of this is religion – Islam - which does not allow the population to develop, but leaves them in a primitive state. Implicitly this reflects his views of the Netherlands, a secular state, where obviously there are religious people but who are more civilized than the local population he refers to, since they do not let religion influence their development and progress. Orientalism is evident here both in not recognizing (or assuming that there aren't any) differences between the two countries and in essentializing religion. Another veteran, however, sees a difference between the two peoples: *'in Iraq... the local population over there, I found out, is not active, really passive, and a bit secretive.. But I found the Afghans more proud, and I expected it to be like Iraq. More proud, you can't tell them what to do'* (veteran 12a).

But while he sees the differentiation between Iraq and Afghanistan, he also asserts that they are equally different from Dutch, as he goes on to say: *'we are more what is really said, and facts and figures, and over there it's much, much more non-verbal communication, and that's what I found out also, you're playing around now, or trying to get some stuff from me in a way that it's not good, through a diverted way'*.

Here we can recognize the idea of the Netherlands and 'Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans against all 'those' non-Europeans' (Said 1978:7), through the value-laden judgement of human communication. Another veteran goes on to say that he cannot trust Afghans: *'You can't trust them, because they do everything for money. If you shake their hands everything is OK, but if you turn your back, they may stab you, because they get money from Taliban. They are not reliable'* (veteran 11a). And yet another veteran is surprised at how simple the local representatives are: *'You expect from an authority to talk to you on the same level. That was misinterpretation... [he was talking] as a peasant. Being an ignorant farmer, not even able to read sometimes, but really masking it, because he had people around him, who covered his non-ability to read for instance'* (veteran 13a). The distinctions made here are that the local representatives are backward, not knowing how to read and being ignorant, while Dutch are literate and thus superior. 'Covert ways' come in again, with Afghans not

showing their ignorance, but masking it, and in turn reinforcing perceptions about the Dutch being direct, with ‘facts and figures’. And it is interesting to see how this comes out in the cultural-awareness training given to soldiers, where there is a literal comparison between Dutch culture, based on individualism, a direct manner and verbal communication, and Afghan culture, which is stated to be group-oriented, indirect, and with non-verbal communication. The training also emphasizes the covertness of Afghans, by teaching veterans to respect the ‘three-time rule’. Veterans are informed that, if Afghans invite them to their house more than three times, despite refusal from the soldiers, there is something that the Afghans want to inform them about. They are also told that they should not ask direct questions involving a yes or no answer, since Afghans do not like being direct²⁷.

Europe and the West enter the narratives about Afghanistan through many stereotypical references of modernity. Veteran 11a for example states:

‘I think if we are staying in Afghanistan, we have to stay there for a long, long time, because the people are very hard, we are now the strongest there, ISAF... but if we leave, the Taleban come, and people go back to where they were. The Russians stayed there for 10-15 years, and nothing changed. One has to rebuild the country, to build schools, clean water. [Afghans] don’t know anything about the rest of the world, they think of Afghanistan, and that’s it. But they don’t know how it is in the Western countries, because they have no TV. If you have a TV the Taleban will kill you. They are very, very dumb, the Taleban kept them dumb’.

Afghans are systematically seen as backward and ignorant. Their lack of knowledge about the West seems to confirm their ignorance, setting the West as a hegemonic model of civilization. The ignorance is also emphasized in the training. For example, when being shown pictures of Afghanistan, soldiers are informed that Afghans do not know world geography and are unaware that foreign soldiers come from countries thousands of kilometres away. They are told that Afghans think they come from behind the main mountainous chain in Afghanistan, the Hindu Kush. The training also stresses their backwardness, when soldiers are told that Afghans want the same thing as they (the soldiers) want: *‘peace, a house, a wife and kids, and an oak tree in the front yard’* (veteran 15a). It is interesting that they are told that Afghans want the peace which the same soldiers are sent to Afghanistan to bring about – for the Afghans themselves. But whose peace is it? Afghans are seen as not being capable of bringing peace on their own, but need Western – civilized, equitable, direct, open – force to do it for them.

27 All the information regarding training, and specific training scenarios, by which soldiers carry out situations similar to real life on the ground, was conveyed by interviewees.

Social hierarchies are also seen as different between Europe and Afghanistan and Iraq. Veteran 14a talks about power, and how it is seen differently in Afghanistan: *'my experience here in West Europe is that you speak to everyone more on the same level and of course you've got someone who has more power or something like that. But in Afghanistan it's very important on which level you are, what kind of position you have between the local people'*.

Interestingly, the soldiers never compare Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq to any other place on the globe, but to each other, and the West.

4.3 The People and the Wars: From Empathy to Indifference and Distance

With regards to the explanation of the war in Bosnia, the underdevelopment of the local population, both military and civilian, is again brought up, and a violent, irrational and crazy side is pointed out, always in comparison to the rational and reasonable Dutch. This comes out both with reference to the training and to real experiences. Veteran 3 states that the most important piece of information given to him before being deployed was *'the aggressiveness of the culture, the partisan culture... typical of Yugoslavia from WWII on'*, which he also noticed on the ground. After relating that the partisans, under Tito, freed the country from the Germans, he affirms that Tito's policy was to give weapons to every village, so it could defend itself in case of an attack, and then asserts that this was *'the biggest problem because when the war started, everybody who was crazy enough to use it, had a weapon in the close surroundings... because when you have a civil war in Holland, there is nobody who can pull out a weapon out of the garage'*.

While this statement points to a problematic lesion about WWII history in former Yugoslavia, it also implicitly refers to the fact that the Netherlands doesn't have a violent history as Bosnia has, and consequently, does not have a violent culture where everyone resorts to arms. In many statements, the history, the culture and the people are put together and explained through simple essentialized equations of violence, irrationality, and lack of independent thinking. For example:

'People are very easily influenced by political ideas... the main difference between Holland, Belgium or Germany and the population of Yugoslavia is that people in our country are used to thinking for themselves and Yugoslavian people are very reliant on the politics... When in Holland somebody says to you, you have to jump into a river, then you say why. And they don't ask the why question... they do it... people kill their neighbour because the local militia commander says it's a Muslim... he's the enemy'.

The violent nature of people is linked to their family relationships, which are seen as very different from those in the Netherlands: *'People are very close... family like. I think we are more self-supporting, independent.*

And these people cling to families and family ties and blood (veteran 2). This characterization recalls the discourse of Balkanism as stuck in the traditional and violent relationships that modern, non-violent Europe has left behind. This is made even more explicit by veteran 10a, who states that now *'in Bosnia it is much better... but they have the history that can always explode again, they have... blood revenge, that can have a duration of years, maybe 100 years, they can always explode again, and again a war over there'*.

In this way, the local population is depicted as irrational and barbarian, uncivilized because they take revenge, even after a century. The reference to history is particularly interesting if we think of Roger Cohen, an American journalist of the New York Times, quoted by Todorova: *'the notion of killing people... because of something that may have happened in 1495 is unthinkable in the Western world. Not in the Balkans'* (Todorova 1997:6).

The violent, irrational nature of the locals is brought up time and time again, with veterans wondering how a war between neighbours can take place. Veteran 7 asks *'how can you live with someone next to you, one day you're in war, and next day you're living next to each other again?'* And he answers immediately, saying:

'I think it will never go. It's something... maybe in the culture... not only... in Bosnia, you see it in Iraq, people inside the country always fight each other... As Western Europeans, or Americans... you don't understand that. You try to live peacefully, but in countries like that, it just doesn't work. And they need someone like Tito to keep everyone happy, it's not really happy, but... I think that it's unlikely that a war will happen here... because people are different... if you have a problem here you can talk to each other, and you can work it out, and... there it's different... it's something that's inside the people, that changes from talk to each other, to kill each other. That's different here... you can talk to each other, and if you're angry at each other, you just don't see each other anymore'.

So the Dutch are situated with Western Europeans and North Americans, rational, able to talk and sort matters out in a non-violent way. This leads to a conclusion similar to what Mary Edith Durham, quoted by Todorova, states at the end of the Balkan wars in 1913. After having denounced the degradation and obscenity of war, she goes on to say that *'it is quite impossible there can ever be a war in Western Europe'* (Todorova 1997:6).

The definition of the soldiers that belong to the warring parties is interesting, as it could offer a possibility for identification with Dutch soldiers. In fact in principle, soldiers in Bosnia could be similar to the Dutch veterans, having received similar training, and representing their country, just as the Dutch represent the Netherlands. But there was no such identification. This lack of identification may be related to the training Dutch soldiers received, in which they are taught not to have empathy towards people

outside their own unit or army. This was stated by one of the veterans interviewed, also involved in designing the cultural-awareness training soldiers receive before going to Afghanistan: *'the most basic of basic skills that you need to teach soldiers is empathy, because they are professionally taught not to be very empathic towards people outside their unit; inside their unit, they can be extremely empathetic, but there is a professional requirement almost for soldiers not to feel too much'* (veteran 15a). But it also belongs to the Orientalist and Balkanist discourses that define both local civilians and local militaries as barbarian and irrational, and also all the same:

'In Bosnia there were three parties battling each other, and they were always seeing the other part of the story. So if we had a humanitarian convoy which brought food to the Muslims, the Croatian parties were angry, and when we brought food to the Croats, the Serbs were angry. So they all thought we had chosen parties to support... they did not think we were impartial, and there for peace, but... there to help the other parties against them. That made our life and our work there very difficult to do... So everything to make your life difficult. They were good at it... All parties had their own specialties, but they did it all... They all did the same things, but some things were done more by the Croats, and some things were done more with the Muslims, so only the manner how they did it in which it differed, but they did it all' (veteran 3).

In an implicit way, this veteran defines Dutch army as civilized, with high moral values, and impartial, not only for the role they play within the UN peace-keeping troops, but also as an Army. No reference is ever made to violent, or morally problematic actions Dutch or any other UN soldiers may have performed, for example in engaging in prostitution, exploitation of local population, or direct violence against local population. The distinctions between the Dutch and local militaries is even clearer in depicting the latter not really as soldiers, but as bandits: *'The fact that the military parties sometimes stole the food from the warehouses was a grim reminder that several 'army' units were just armed bandits, led by a former business man who wanted riches in the long term. You know, arms dealing, selling the food for black market prices. Again, this made me angry and spiteful towards all the people'* (ibid).

Here it is worth remembering Todorova's statement that, at the beginning of the twentieth century, in the Balkans, 'the standard male is [seen as] uncivilized, primitive, crude, cruel and... dishevelled', (Todorova 1997:14).

Next to using the barbarian and violent side of the warring parties as a distinction between them and the Dutch, the same distinction is used between the innocent civilians, and the small minority who start the war. Veteran 1 starts with identifying himself with the Muslims in the war in Bosnia, who are *'very hurt, hurt very bad... there is a slight movement to the Muslim party... they are the victims... the most deadly party'* being the Serbs. But then after some reflection, he goes on saying that *'it is not fair to say that only the Muslims are the victims, we are all victims, even the military who tried to make peace over there'*. And Veteran 2 states that the *'local people*

themselves were not happy... war was going on'. The issue of a small group starting the war is brought up again by Veteran 8, who affirms that 'if you have a village of... 100 people, if 20 people take part in the war... 80 people... want nothing to do with it'.

In relating the differences between the military and the civilians, some veterans see themselves as in a separate world compared to the locals. In part this may be due to the fact that they were forbidden to interact or have close contact with the locals, which is stated by a few. But one veteran explicitly mentions the two parallel worlds in which the peace-keepers and the locals lived:

'The war is always not your world at that moment. You're a military, and your actions are with other militaries, when or whatever does not matter at that time. But for the Muslims, Serbs, all the people who are in the war, it's always, in my experience, another world. And there are two worlds at that moment, it is the peace corps, if I can call it like that, and the people who are in war. I thought for a moment they couldn't touch me. When something happens, I hear gunfire or something like that, it's always for the others, I was never in great danger or something like that' (veteran 1).

This statement is interesting as it defines peace-keeping as an engagement in 'someone else's war' and thus identifies another kind of distance between the veterans and the locals – a distance not characterized by culture, religion or civilization, but by the exposure to violence and danger, and by the level of suffering the war brings about. It seems that veterans perceived themselves as the outsiders to the war – even when they were in the midst of it. Veteran 4 states:

'The strange thing is that... the local situation didn't really help to let you help the population itself... also the local population were sometimes disrespectful, almost throwing stones at you, and though you meant good... Another thing is when you are in a such a closed military community you're not really focused on the outside world too much, you're doing your own thing, and you have your own group of people, those are the people we deal with and the locals are of less importance. They are an outside factor'.

Veteran 5 states that he also saw this *'when I went there, when I saw our base was fenced, with barbed wire, the posts with machineguns, well OK, this is a little of Holland and Belgium in Bosnia, and everybody else stays out'.*

A clear difference – to the point of indifference - between the Self and the Other is evident here, as both a physical and mental state. The role the veterans perceive to have in the war also comes out clearly, with a marked difference between what their intentions were – help, thus engagement and empathy, and what some of them ended up really living – distance and indifference. At the same time, their narratives show that such dichotomies remained problematic for them, and often left them confused. Veteran 2

relates that his initial opinion was *'we would be welcomed... as helpers in need. That changed after we were faced with locals who hated us and saw us as helpers of the other parties'* He goes on to say that

'People started shooting at us. And I felt, why do they shoot at us, we're only helping people, we don't carry guns... of course we had some to protect ourselves, but I never understood that'. Veteran 3 says that 'it was an ideal for most boys like me, I was nineteen, to help some people who were in distress... we had the idea that we as UN soldiers were impartial and people were happy to have us there to help them'. Veteran 5 specifically says that he chose to go to Bosnia 'to make something good. If I just went there to be a sniper, or drive a tank... I didn't want to go in army which was war-like, it doesn't fit in my idea of a world and how we deal with each other'. Veteran 8 says that they frequently got stopped by people with weapons and 'that's the actual confrontation with people that want to stop you doing good. It's a feeling of being there to help, and not being part of the conflict, but being dragged into the conflict and being stopped and that was the conflict with my thoughts'.

These narratives reveal high moral values and ideals, and a self-image of non-martial actors that the soldiers have prior to their deployment. At the same time, these ideals and their world-views are part of their nationhood – part of the Western, and specifically Dutch positioning vis-à-vis the rest of the world as someone who can do good where others do bad, who can resolve what others could not. This is evident in several statements about local population, which *'made our life and work there very difficult to do'* (veteran 2). The same veteran says that *'even the people from one party alone try to do everything for themselves to make it better, and if someone else has got it worse because of that, they don't mind. So it's me, me, me, and the rest can go to hell. And that was something which wasn't very nice to see'*. And he adds:

'After a few months the feeling of helping people slowly goes away and it's more the feeling of trying to survive, and hoping that your time goes by... and you can go home again, and then you don't even care about the people anymore. Because adult people sent their kids on the street for a whole day, to beg for food, and they themselves only drink slivovic in the local pub and do nothing, and that makes you angry, that they use their own children, and they do nothing while they are the adults and responsible for everything'.

The local population is despised for its lack of basic morality, while the Dutch - implicitly defined as having higher ethical standards than the locals - are depicted as disillusioned, and thus withdrawing from recognizing humanity in the acts of the locals. At the end, the blame lies on the locals, again.

Again there were differences in perceptions of the Bosnian and Afghan and Iraqi militaries. With regards to the military in Afghanistan, whom the Dutch also trained, a particularly interesting statement is made by veteran 11a. He defines them *'trigger happy, so they have to learn. They think if they shoot, Allah will send*

the bullet to the bad guy. We have to train them to be a good army'. He sets himself apart from the Other both militarily and through religion. As it is the Dutch army who will train the Afghans to be a good army, he takes a superior position.

Another veteran refers to the local Afghan police as corrupt and with their own agendas, *'local tribal guys, with a weapon, picked from the street'* (veteran 12a) and he compares them to the Afghan army, who the Americans have started training since 2001. These local armies are seen as *'the only party that could really do something about security'*, since they were mentored by the Americans, and then by the Dutch themselves. There is an implicit statement on the efficiency and professionalism of the Americans and the Dutch, compared to the Afghans who are not able to train the local police; and an identification with the Western world in opposition to Afghanistan.

4.4 Gendering the Soldiers

Gender issues and specifically issues of masculinity of soldiers have often been present in the accounts of veterans' experiences on the field. Veteran 1 criticises the navy for not having paid him a per diem for his days in Bosnia, and states that *'the only thing I ask for is to do something back for my wife and family, something extra. You never get rich through the allowance'*, identifying himself as the bread-winner and playing a dominant role in the family. All veterans, when referring to their colleagues, use *'boys', 'guys', 'brothers', 'men'*; but whoever was asked if there were only male soldiers on the ground, responded that of course not. This shows the masculinised nature of the Dutch armed forces, where it is easy for male soldiers to forget that women serve among them too. At the same time, equality of Dutch women, and utter subordination of Afghan women has been systematically used to stress the difference between the Dutch and the Other, in which the Dutch are superior because of equality between sexes and general freedom in the Netherlands. With regards to the position of local women, Afghanistan is where veterans' views about women come out clearest. Veteran 10a states:

'It was... not right... I have learned here that women are equal. It was strange over there, if you see how women are, live over there... one time I was guard outside a building... I saw two women with donkeys, and on the donkeys big stuff... the stuff fell off, and she wanted to put the stuff back on the donkey... when she tried, the donkey walked away. It was difficult, she needed both hands to put the stuff up, but she could not hold the donkey... a few metres away... were two men... one man came to the woman, he held the donkey, the woman took the stuff, very heavy. That was not right... The woman should have held the donkey, and the man put the stuff on. But that's my way of understanding over here... Here you are equal with women, but some stuff is done by the man, if it is very heavy, it's logical, I think?'

All of the veterans insist that Dutch women and men are equal, although physically men are superior to women and are the ones to be able to do heavy jobs. The same veteran's observations of the local context are also quite eloquent with regards to the division of labour. In the local village, *'little girls are taking water out of the well... the boys are sitting'*. This reflects his sense of manhood, indicating strength and who must do the heavy work, but also of his Dutchness, since he constantly refers to the relations between women and men in the Netherlands. When he came back to the Netherlands, he was relieved because he *'can talk to women again'*. The Netherlands, through the depiction of gender relations, is seen as being both an open and an egalitarian country, where women and men interact on equal basis.

Another veteran was also surprised at the condition of women, who *'are the lowest of the low... almost nothing more than animals. It's very strange... because in Holland we are all equal, and back there, the women don't count'* (veteran 11a). Yet another veteran confirms that he didn't expect it, although it was mentioned in the training received:

'I found out that... it was really totally separate. And I didn't, probably not consciously, expect it to be true, because they also said: we have a party, you can also come. And the women? No, the women stay home. And... the men party... it's like a party over there, with food and music, and people dancing, but they're all male! Also dancing with each other, all male. And that's, well, in my opinion, a party is not a party for me if not together with, well let's say, not that I really go for every girl, but it's more like, you're equal. It was strange for me, let's say it that way' (veteran 12a).

In this statement Dutch nationhood and masculinity came together most explicitly. The veteran constantly refers to 'over there' as in opposition to 'over here', i.e. the Netherlands, where there are both women and men in parties. He defines himself as Dutch, and as a male, with a dominant heterosexual masculinity, through this opinion on parties. But what about for example homosexual parties/clubs/bars where only men or only women go to in the Netherlands? This does not come up in his account and is not taken into consideration as a 'normal' Dutch gathering. Veteran 13a also states what is not considered normal for the Dutch men, but is for Afghan men:

'Me and my deputy had told an old warlord, becoming some kind of a friend, getting on a kissing relationship with him, and then you're considered to be a friend. Like embracing and kissing each other on the cheek. That's normal for Afghan males to do, but not for us. But it's part of the culture, and to be greeted like this means you're considered a friend'.

This statement also shows the intersectionality between masculinity and nationhood and links it to the military. When the veteran refers to 'us' he identifies himself not only as a Dutch male – vis-à-vis the Afghan male – but also as a soldier. Of course, men in the Netherlands also greet each other by kissing on

the cheek. But the military context and the professional – military – relationship of men in this narrative indicates that such a greeting among male soldiers is not a part of Dutch military culture. This soldier's heteronormative views also came out when he was filling in the part of the questionnaire regarding sexual orientation. Searching for the right word in English regarding his sexual orientation (heterosexual), he asked me *'what is the normal one?'*

4.5 Western Peace-keeping Troops: A Different Kind of Other

The way peace-keepers of other nationalities are seen also contributes to defining the national, masculine, military identity of Dutch veterans. In relating their experiences, the veterans constantly made comparisons to other nationalities. The 'Dutch approach' is frequently mentioned as a distinguishing factor from other troops. Veteran 1 affirms it consists in trying to *'make [locals] trust you... to be on an equal basis... talk to the people and make them part of your effort?'* Veteran 13a says that it can be seen as a compliment

'that the Dutch did something and it turned out to be the right thing. Being very sensible guys, we're doing something, giving it a good thought... The Germans would go there, and they were just giving away money, like... it's not our problem anymore. And then the Dutch come over, and they are going to give away some money, but they want to know why, and is the money well spent. So go to talk to people, see what interests them. That was a big plus, we were just trying something out, and it turned out to be a good solution?'

Interestingly when Dutch veterans compare themselves to other peace-keeping troops, we get quite different statements from the ones noted earlier – where Dutch veterans describe themselves as being distant and indifferent to the local population, and identify with the other (European and Western) nationalities. Clearly, positioning vis-à-vis local population is relative to the positioning vis-à-vis other peace-keepers. Another veteran states that troops of other nationalities were proud to work with the Dutch, who had the *'reputation of being the military with the best ways to relax and with the best communication with the civilian population?'* The British and American were described as *'shoot first and ask questions later?'*, the Spanish as *'the people who run the quickest [to hide] in a conflict situation'* (veteran 3). In addition, veteran 7 says that in the Dutch army *'everyone calls each other by their first name... I've seen other armies, Canadian, there it's totally different. Everything stays the same... we don't have hierarchy... we like to be normal.'*

The objectives of the Dutch in Afghanistan are also described as different from those of Americans. For example, Dutch want to *'build up the country again... to secure the area where they are'* while the Americans *'went there to fight. That was the only objective'* (veteran 7). Veteran 8 says that the Dutch *'are different in their*

attitude, more open to local population', compared to the British who 'experienced Ireland, and the Falklands, they don't want to be there. They are harsher to the local population. They are trained as soldiers and perform peace-keeping duties, but they have more drive to pick up arms... The Dutch got a complete training to stand in the middle and de-escalate things'.

The Dutch army is also perceived better when it comes to treatment of its soldiers. Veteran 11a tells how he talked to an American soldier who was going to be in Afghanistan for a year or more, stating that *'it's too much for the mind'*. Dutch soldiers on the contrary, are sent for a maximum period of 6 months.

In all of the above statements, the civilized, human, open and informal traits of the Dutch military are stressed. This reflects an image of the nation as diplomatic and open to negotiation and discussion. Dutch military masculinity comes out as relatively moderate when it comes to use of force and militarism. And it has high moral values. At the same time, Dutch veterans have not compared themselves to any non-Western peace-keeping troops, although in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Bosnia, these were present. As Dudink (2002) pointed out, these individual perceptions are very close to some of the dominant discourses of Dutchness and the military, indicating that histories of masculinity, nationhood and military have both collective and individual dimensions.

4.6 The Other Within: Veterans in Dutch Civilian Life

For some veterans, there is a clear and critical distinction between themselves, as soldiers, and Dutch society, and in certain situations, even the Dutch Government and Ministry of Defence. This comes out in relation to specific episodes such as Srebrenica, where they were accused of not having done enough to prevent the massacre of July 1995. For example veteran 4 is annoyed at

*'the outcry of many Dutch that the Dutch should have done more in Srebrenica... and were responsible for all those deaths... still raises my blood pressure... sometimes I see the Dutch society as a group of people who want to portray themselves as best in the world. We always have the best intentions, we know the best. But when for some reason they got in a situation that we didn't have control over, they immediately start pointing fingers at a certain group. At least the general public can't be responsible for anything. So they have this scapegoat, the Dutch forces... let these people be massacred... As someone who was shocked by the reality... couldn't really explain what had happened, how could it be that in this modern age, where we think that genocide is something of the past, **suddenly this happens, and of all people, to the Dutch, how can it be?...** So it's a bit of a sad feeling, you try to do the best, and you get this stigma of a group of people who didn't really try'.*

Interestingly, the veteran implies here that the genocide happened to the Dutch and not the people actually massacred. This is quite similar to the discourse of the Srebrenica trauma constructed by the Dutch

press, as stated by Zarkov. This discourse did not refer to the killing of more than 7000 Muslim men, but to ‘the overwhelming feeling of powerlessness of the Dutch soldiers and Dutch military stationed in Srebrenica, and the sense of humiliation of the Dutch nation, in the eyes of the world’ (Zarkov 2002:188). The same veteran mentioned above has a similar thought regarding the Rwandan genocide, and compares it to Srebrenica:

‘The Dutch... were dragged into this whole protection of the enclave. Sometimes the UN learn and sometimes they don’t... And not much later the trouble in Africa started, between the Tutsi and Hutus... also a UN role. The same trouble, a few of these soldiers were also killed in the genocide, and that really makes you sad, of course the whole situation makes you sad, but you identify more with these soldiers being sent there, and get caught up in the fight that they weren’t really prepared for’. Here the veteran identifies with soldiers carrying out similar tasks to him, and mentions the genocide in Rwanda only in as much as it offers a background to explain his empathy for the killed UN soldiers.

Some veterans refer critically to the Dutch government and Ministry of Defence, not only in relation to Srebrenica, but in general. Veteran 8 states that his *‘trust in the government has decreased dramatically... Everything they promised, they didn’t live up to it. So that’s one of the resentments against Dutch government and defence’.* Veteran 9 says:

‘I think the government had to stand behind the soldiers... Nobody could blame soldiers of anything, they only did their mission... So there’s what changed for me about the Netherlands... I’m proud of it, of what we managed, of what the boys are doing now in Afghanistan... My brother in law was there, he fought the battle for Chora... What we do as an army, I’m very proud of it’.

Veteran 2 says that

‘I have also seen what little... especially the Dutch army, which is very small, can do... even if you’re out there, what you can and cannot do there, it’s very tight... Realising how little difference we can make as a small Dutch army... It’s about the fact of being deployed, and... the Dutch people, the Dutch government say they care. But I don’t think they do. You’re out there, you have to do with... with very little means... I always thought that you could make a difference, but I don’t really think people care. Here I mean to say that people, both Civilians and Government, only care when they have to. For instance when it’s on the news or when something bad happens like an accident where soldiers get hurt or killed’.

These statements draw sharp distinctions between individual soldiers with their personal intentions to help, and their official missions to do so, on the one hand, and the Dutch society, government and the Military as institutions and organizations that neither know nor care for their soldiers. Here, Dutch soldiers seem to be the Others within their own society. And as they become critical of Dutch civilian life, they

seem to identify more with the army. The distinction between themselves as soldiers, and civilians, comes out in many different ways. One of these is when they talk about the army as a 'life school' – a discourse that resonates the classical discourse that the army makes boys into mature, adult men. For example: *'The army is good, I think all young people have to go the army, to be more mature, I see some people walking around the street here, relax, smoke joints, all kinds of things, and I say, become adult and this is something to take with you'* (veteran 11a). Veteran 1 says that he has discussed with other veterans or military that *'it would be nice when young people get in contact with countries like this... And the main problems in the Netherlands at the moment for 16-17 year olds are... non-issues. Bring them 3 or 6 months to Bosnia... And it is not only in the Netherlands, but most of Western Europe'*. He sees civilians as not being able to understand why the missions have to take place: *'I think it's more difficult for the civilian people who are just living in their homes and go to work every day... and they have an opinion, because they always think it is millions of... euros costing, but I saw what we can do and I think we have to go on with doing that'*.

But there are other reasons for veterans to distance themselves from the Dutch society and its civilian life. In particular, veteran 3, affected by post-traumatic stress disorder, and not working, stated that he did not identify with Dutch society, which could not understand that he was staying at home, since *'as a man who looks healthy you have to work forty hours a week. And the household is for the housekeeper or for the wife. End of discussion'*. And when he was asked *'why do you do that, are you lazy... are there reasons for it?'*, he reflected that the people asking him always thought *'the negative part is there, that I've been a houseman for my choice, I don't want to work, it's typical of the normal Western society I think'*. In this sense, he prefers to *'have... contact with other military personnel... met in my army days. So other people who have been in Bosnia, Iraq, or Afghanistan, who I know, who are my friends'*, although he says he has not been in the army for the past 13 years.

He does not identify with Dutch society anymore: *'I do not feel at home anymore in Holland, but I am at home in a military organisation or... environment. It's so difficult when I go out on the streets... I might as well walk in the US or Germany, I don't care, I'm not patriotic anymore, but I am very strong-hearted for the army, I support them, those are people of my own level, that's where I changed, I am not a civilian anymore, I will be a soldier all my life'*.

Chapter 5. Conclusion

This research explored the relationship between nationhood, militarism and masculinity of Dutch veterans of peace operations in Bosnia, Iraq and Afghanistan. This was done through the analysis of their narratives about their experience on the ground, and especially their stories about the people encountered abroad, either the local population – women and men, civilian and military – or peacekeepers of other nationalities. I analysed whether, and how the definition of the Other is created in these narratives, if and how this definition is related to the veterans' sense of nationhood and masculinity, and to what extent these relate to discourses of Balkanism and Orientalism. Moreover, I also explored whether the veterans' notions of the Other are related to the training they receive prior to deployment.

Findings of my research show, firstly, that the concepts of nationhood, militarism and masculinity of Dutch veterans exist in relation to each other, both when Dutch veterans position themselves within their own society, and when they relate to the people they meet during deployment. Secondly, my research points to the existence of multiple Others. Veterans' narratives reveal that Bosnians, Afghans and Iraqis are the Other, but not in the same way. And that next to them, different Others exist; finally, that Dutch veterans become the Others too. In all these processes of Othering, masculinity, militarism and nationhood play significant roles.

Dutch national identity was regularly related to veterans' identities as soldiers; and their masculinity was defined in connection with elements of militarism and gender relations of the Dutch society. Their position within Dutch society as men was regularly defined in relation to women; and their position as soldiers, in relation to Dutch civilians.

When abroad, the intersectionality between nationhood, masculinity and militarism of veterans was also defined in relation to the definition of the Other. The process of Othering took place on different levels, and always in relation to the perceptions of the Self, as Dutch men and soldiers.

In relation to Dutch nationhood, the Other was identified firstly in the local population encountered on the ground, as different from the Dutch on the basis of religion, geographical proximity, culture and gender relations. The Dutch were defined as a rational, liberal, multi-cultural, civilized and modern, industrialised society vis-à-vis the local Bosnian population, depicted as primitive, irrational, passionate and passive, thus corresponding to the Balkanist discourses of the twentieth century. While Bosnians are seen as essentially Muslim (although Islam is not the only religion existing in Bosnia) there was a difference with Afghans and Iraqis concerning religion. In the case of the latter, religion was seen by veterans as an element impeding development and progress. With regards to geography, Bosnia was seen as being close to

Europe, a part of it, and the physical landscape was seen as beautiful and having the potentiality of becoming developed, and thus becoming European. This reflects Todorova's statement of Bosnia having a 'transitional status' (Todorova 1997:15). On the contrary, Afghanistan, seen as a rugged and tough land, was seen as being difficult, if not impossible, to civilize, recalling Orientalist discourses.

The perception of the local culture was another element which contributed to the process of Othering by the veterans. Passiveness and simplicity of Bosnians was compared to Dutch industriousness. Dutch straightforwardness was compared to the covertness and lack of trustworthiness of Afghans and Iraqis. The training material through which the soldiers practice supposedly real-life situations, also contains Orientalist discourses, depicting Afghans as treacherous and backward.

The irrational and uncivilized side of Bosnians was also seen in the veterans' perceptions of the war (in which neighbours killed each other in a barbaric way) and of the military (not seen as 'real' soldiers but as bandits). Again, these representations are very similar to Balkanist discourses that explain the war in Former Yugoslavia through ancient hatreds and barbarism.

The perceptions of gender relations and gender hierarchies of the local population, vis-à-vis those of the Dutch, were also an important element contributing to the definition of the soldiers' own nationhood and masculinities. This was especially true in relation to Afghanistan and Iraq, where the position of women is seen as totally different from that of Dutch women. Consequently, Afghanistan and Iraq, and their population, are seen as uncivilized and inferior, while the Netherlands are depicted as being an open and egalitarian country. Masculinity of soldiers, next to being systematically defined through comparisons of the relations between Dutch women and Dutch men, is also defined through the comparison with relationships among Afghan and Iraqi men. Heteronormativity and protective manhood of Dutch soldiers comes out in their accounts, while the subordination of local women by 'their men' symbolizes a negative image of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The link between masculinity and militarism is also very clear, since the masculinised nature of the armed forces comes up again and again in the accounts of experiences abroad, where the presence of female soldiers is completely forgotten and totally absent from the narratives.

On another level, a different kind of Othering took place vis-à-vis soldiers of other nationalities performing similar tasks to the Dutch. Dutchness and militarism of the interviewed soldiers intertwined, creating a specific Dutch militarism: open, diplomatic, negotiating and relaxed, revealing high moral values compared to other, more aggressive, national militaries. A comparison to European or Western forces also revealed how Dutch identified themselves with this part of the world, with no mention of forces of other non-Western countries.

Finally, a process of Othering also took place vis-à-vis civilians of Dutch society, disclosing veterans' positive views of the armed forces, with values such as loyalty, comradeship and the army as a life school, against negative views of civilian society, seen as not understanding or respecting the military and soldiers. In this sense, it is the Dutch veterans who seem to be the Other in a society alien to them.

These findings, although limited to a small number of veterans, point out their 'strategic location' vis-à-vis the population they encounter. All their accounts not only relate to 'Dutch values', but also place these in a superior position, compared to the local ones. This reflects both Balkanist and Orientalist discourses in which Europe and the West are always depicted as more civilized than the Other, and in a superior position.

I hope that the results of this research contribute to the feminist debates about the nexus of gender, nationhood and soldiering, and to Dutch debates about manhood, nationhood and peace-keeping. Moreover, I also hope they contribute to understanding the relevance and importance of the specific social locations of the veterans within the societies they are part of, and those in which they find themselves in the country of deployment.

References

1. Algra, G. E., M. Elands and J.R. Schoeman (2003) 'The times they are a-changin: Veterans and veterans policy in the Netherlands'. Paper presented at IUS Conference, Baltimore. 26 p.
http://www.veteran.nl/media/med_view.asp?med_id=138
2. Braudy, L. (2003) *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity*. New York: Knopf. xxiv, 613 p.
3. Camacho, P. R. (2007) 'Veterans and Veteran's Issues'. *Armed Forces & Society*; Vol. 33; no. 3. London: Sage publications. pp. 313–315.
4. Connell, R. W. (2002) 'Masculinities, the reduction of violence and the pursuit of peace' in Cockburn, C. and D. Zarkov (eds) *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping: Bosnia and the Netherlands*. pp. 33-40. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
5. Connell, R. W. (2005) *Masculinities* (2nd edn). Cambridge: Polity. xxv, 324 p.
6. Connell, R. W., and J. R. Messerschmidt (2005) 'Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept'. *Gender & Society*; Vol. 19; no. 6. London: Sage publications. pp. 829–859.
7. Dudink, S. (2002) 'The unheroic men of a moral nation: masculinity and nation in modern Dutch history' in Cockburn, C. and D. Zarkov (eds) *The Postwar Moment: Militaries, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping: Bosnia and the Netherlands*. pp. 146-61. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
8. Dudink, S. (2004) 'Masculinity, effeminacy, time: conceptual change in the Dutch age of democratic revolutions' in Dudink, S., K. Hagermann and J. Tosh (eds) *Masculinities in Politics and War. Gendering modern history*. pp. 77-95. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
9. Hansen, L. (2006) *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War*. London: Routledge. xxiii, 259 p.
10. Higate, P. R. (2003) *Military masculinities: identity and the state*. Westport, CT: Praeger. xxii, 233 p.
11. Horne, J. (2004) 'Masculinity in politics and war in the age of nation-states and world wars, 1850-1950' in Dudink, S., K. Hagermann and J. Tosh (eds) *Masculinities in Politics and War. Gendering modern history*. pp. 22-40. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
12. Human Rights Watch (2008) 'The Netherlands: Discrimination in the Name of Integration: Migrants' Rights under the Integration Abroad Act'. Report number 1, 46 p.
<http://www.hrw.org/backgrounder/2008/netherlands0508/netherlands0508web.pdf>. Accessed on May 29th, 2008.
13. Hutchings, K. (2008) 'Cognitive Shortcuts' in Parpart, J. and M. Zalewski (eds) *Rethinking the man question: sex, gender and violence in international relations*. pp. 25-38. London: Zed Books.
14. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, Directorate of Information and Communication (2007) 'Facts and figures about the armed forces'. 74 pp. www.defensie.nl. Accessed on May 25th, 2008.

15. Netherlands Institute for War Documentation (2002) 'Srebrenica. Reconstruction, background, consequences and analyses of the fall of a safe area Report', <http://193.173.80.81/srebrenica/>. Accessed May 30th, 2008.
16. Richardson, Rudy (2004) 'Multiculturalism in the Dutch Armed Forces'. Paper presented for the 'Leadership, Education and Multiculturalism in the Armed Forces: Challenges and Opportunities' conference in La Paz, Bolivia, 13-15 September. 13 p. http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/Bolivia/engraph/seminars/sep2004/papers/Richardson_sep_e.pdf
17. Said, E. W. (1978) *Orientalism*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul. xiv, 412 p.
18. Sion, L. (2006) "'Too Sweet and Innocent for War?': Dutch Peacekeepers and the Use of Violence". *Armed Forces & Society*; Vol. 32; no. 3. London: Sage publications. pp. 454-474.
19. Statistics Netherlands (2004) 'The Netherlands in figures'. 28 p. www.cbs.nl/NR/rdonlyres/1351F633-78C3-4339-AAA5-D377A8A6C8D7/0/thenetherlandsinfigures.pdf. Accessed on May 29th, 2008.
20. Tashakkori, A. and C. Teddlie (eds) (2003) *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioural research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. xv, 768 p.
21. Todorova, M. (1997) *Imagining the Balkans*. New York: Oxford University Press. xi, 257 p.
22. Veteranen Instituut (2008) 'Handboek Veteraan' (11th edn). Doorn.
23. Whitworth, S. (2008) 'Militarized Masculinity and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder' in Parpart, J. and M. Zalewski (eds) *Rethinking the man question: sex, gender and violence in international relations*. pp. 103-28. London: Zed Books.
24. Zarkov, D. (2002) 'Srebrenica Trauma: masculinity, military and national self-image in Dutch daily newspapers' in Cockburn, C. and D. Zarkov (eds) *The Postwar Moment: Militarities, Masculinities and International Peacekeeping: Bosnia and the Netherlands*. pp. 183-203. London: Lawrence & Wishart.
25. http://www.government.nl/Subjects/Dutch_military_mission_to_Iraq. Accessed September 12th, 2008.
26. <http://www.kit.nl/smartsite.shtml?id=6117>. Accessed September 14th, 2008.
27. http://www.mindef.nl/binaries/Communicatieplan%20Uruzgan_tcm15-65452.pdf. Accessed September 12th, 2008.
28. <http://www.nato.int/Ifor/un/un-resol.htm>. Accessed May 30th, 2008.
29. http://www.nato.int/ISAF/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf. Accessed September 12th, 2008.
30. <http://www.nato.int/SFOR/index.htm>. Accessed September 12th, 2008.
31. <http://www.un.int/korea/knun.html>. Accessed on May 27th 2008.
32. <http://wetten.overheid.nl/cgi-bin/deeplink/law1/title=KADERWET%20DIENSTPLICHT>. Accessed on May 30th, 2008.

Bibliography

1. Algra, G. E., M. Elands and J.R. Schoeman (2007) 'The Media and the Public Image of Dutch Veterans from World War II to Srebrenica'. *Armed Forces & Society*; Vol. 33; no. 3. London: Sage publications. pp. 396-413.
2. Ben-Ari E. and E. Elron (2001) 'Blue Helmets and White Armor: multi-nationalism and multi-culturalism among UN Peacekeeping forces'. *City & Society*; Vol. XIII; no. 2. American Anthropological Association. pp. 271-302.
3. Cleaver, F. (ed.) (2002) *Masculinities matter!: Men, Gender and Development*. London: Zed Books; David Philip. xiv, 242 p.
4. Dandeker, C. S. Wessely, A. Iversen and J. Ross (2006) 'What's in a Name? Defining and Caring for 'Veterans': The United Kingdom in International Perspective'. *Armed Forces & Society*; Vol. 32; no. 2. London: Sage publications. pp. 161–177.
5. Davis, K., M. Evans and J. Lorber (eds) (2006) *Handbook of Gender and Women's Studies*. London: Sage. xvi, 494 p.
6. Dijkzeul, D.T.G. (ed.) (2004) *Between force and mercy: military action and humanitarian aid*. Berlin: BWV, Berliner Wissenschafts-Verlag, 2004. 417 p.
7. Giles, W. And J. Hyndman (eds) (2004) *Sites of Violence. Gender and Conflict Zones*. London and Los Angeles: University of California Press. xii, 361 p.
8. Hansen, L. (2001) 'Gender, Nation, Rape. Bosnia and the construction of security'. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*. Vol. 3; no. 1. London: Routledge. pp. 55-75.
9. Higate, P. R. and M. Henry (2004) 'Engendering (In)security in Peace Support Operations'. *Armed Forces & Society*; Vol. 35; no.4. London: Sage publications. pp. 481–498.
10. Higate, P. And A. Cameron (2006) 'Reflexivity and Researching the Military'. *Armed Forces & Society*. Vol. 32; no. 2. London: Sage publications. pp. 219-33.
33. Hunt, K. and K. Rygiel (eds) (2006) *(En)gendering the War on Terror: War Stories and Camouflaged Politics*. Aldershot: Ashgate. xvi, 234 p.
34. Mjoset, L. and S. Van Holde (eds) (2002) *20: The comparative study of conscription in the armed forces*. Amsterdam: JAI Press 2002. xix, 424 p.
35. Nagel, J. (1998) 'Masculinity and nationalism: gender and sexuality in the making of nations'. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*. Vol. 21; no. 2. London: Routledge. pp. 242-269.
36. Oliver, K. (2007) *Women as Weapons of War: Iraq, Sex and the Media*. New York: Columbia University Press. xii, 208 p.
37. Picciano, N. (2007) 'Cross-cultural Challenges in Peace Operations: Notes on Bi-national and Multinational examples'. NATO Defence College. Academic Research Branch. Research Note No. 4.

11. Razack, S. H. (2004) *Dark Threats and White Knights. The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press Incorporated. xii, 236 p.
12. Rohall, D. E., M. G. Ender and M. D. Matthews (2006) 'The Effects of Military Affiliation, Gender, and Political Ideology on Attitudes toward the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq'. *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 33; no. 1. London: Sage publications. pp. 59-77.
13. Thobani, S. (2007) "White wars Western feminisms and the 'War on Terror'". *Feminist Theory*; vol. 8; no. 2. London: Sage publications. pp. 169–185.
14. Triandafyllidou, A. (1998) "National identity and the 'other'". *Ethnic and Racial Studies*; vol. 21; no. 4. London: Sage publications. pp. 593-612.
15. Van Amelsfoort, D. J. C. and A. J. van Vliet 'The Relationship between Recruitment, Selection and Retention of Dutch Soldiers'. TNO Human Factors, Department of Team Solutions, Soesterberg, the Netherlands. 10 p.
16. Van Baarda, Th. A. and D. E. M. Verweij (eds) (2006) *Military Ethics. The Dutch Approach. A Practical Guide*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. xx, 395 p.
17. Van Der Meulen, J. and J. Soeters (2005) 'Dutch Courage: The Politics of Acceptable Risks'. *Armed Forces & Society*; Vol. 31, No. 4, Summer 2005, pp. 537–558.
18. Veterans Institute (2007) 'Veteran en hun missies'. Factsheet no.5, second version, http://www.veteraninstitute.nl/media/med_view.asp?med_id=265. Accessed on May 26th, 2008.

Annex I - Tables

Table 1. Profile of veterans interviewed

| Mission | No. of veterans | Age | Secondary education | Tertiary education | Currently serving in armed forces |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Bosnia | 9 | 35-42 (55)* | 4* | 4 | No |
| Afghanistan (Iraq) | 6 (2)+ | 29-39 (24)++ | 4 | 2 | 3/6 |

* One veteran is 55 years old.

** One veteran has not completed secondary education.

+ Two veterans have also been to Iraq.

++ One veteran is 24 years old.

Table 2. Overview of Dutch veteran population

| Number of deployed service personnel | | Prognosis (estimate) number of veterans | | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | | 2000 | 2002 | 2004 | 2006 |
| 1940-1962 | 482,400 | 139,700 | 115,600 | 98,400 | 81,100 |
| 1963-2004 | 61,900 | 31,100 | 35,500 | 41,100 | 44,400 |
| Total | 544,300 | 170,800 | 151,100 | 139,500 | 125,500 |

Source: Algra G. E., M. Elands and J.R. Schoeman (2003) *The times they are a-changin: Veterans and veterans policy in the Netherlands*. Doorn: Veterans Institute, Centre for Research and Expertise, p. 2. Own elaboration.

Table 3. Comparison of military and veterans divided by operation

| | Dutch military | Veterans in 2007 | Veterans in 2010 (estimate) |
|--------------------------------|----------------|------------------|-----------------------------|
| World War II | 380,000 | 14,500 | 5,000 |
| East Indies (Indonesia) | 170,000 | 52,500 | 35,000 |
| New Guinea | 30,000 | 18,000 | 15,000 |
| Peace Operations ²⁸ | 75,000 | 45,000 | 50,000 |
| Total | 655,000 | 130,000 | 105,000 |

Source: *Veteran en hun missies*. Factsheet no.5, second version, December 2007, Veterans Institute, http://www.veteraninstitute.nl/media/med_view.asp?med_id=265. Own elaboration.

²⁸ “When the Korean War broke out in June 1950, the United Nations intervened, under Security Council resolution 82, by sending armed forces to repel the Communists' aggression”, <http://www.un.int/korea/knun.html>. The Dutch participated in this mission, and it therefore falls under the peace operations.

Table 4. Military personnel currently in the Dutch armed forces

| Service | Number of military personnel |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Royal Netherlands Navy | 10,401 |
| Royal Netherlands Army | 22,498 |
| Royal Netherlands Air Force | 10,141 |
| Royal Netherlands Marechaussee | 6,048 |
| TOTAL | 49,088 |

Source: *Facts and figures about the armed forces*. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, Directorate of Information and Communication. October 2007, p. 61. www.defensie.nl.

Table 5. Percentage of military personnel by age group

| Service | 0-20 | 20-25 | 25-30 | 30-35 | 35-40 | 40-45 | 45-50 | 50-55 | 55-60 |
|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Royal Netherlands Navy | 6.3% | 22.2 | 17.1 | 12.3 | 10.0 | 13.2 | 14.6 | 4.2 | 0.2 |
| Royal Netherlands Army | 11.3% | 28.7 | 17.5 | 11.3 | 6.8 | 7.1 | 8.9 | 7.7 | 0.7 |
| Royal Netherlands Air Force | 2.0% | 16.2 | 17.6 | 13.1 | 1.5 | 13.5 | 14.4 | 10.7 | 1.1 |
| Royal Netherlands Marechaussee | 5.5% | 22.0 | 19.0 | 12.8 | 7.0 | 11.9 | 11.7 | 9.4 | 0.7 |
| TOTAL | 7.6% | 23.9 | 17.6 | 12.1 | 8.5 | 10.3 | 11.6 | 7.8 | 0.7 |

Source: *Facts and figures about the armed forces*. Ministry of Defence of the Netherlands, Directorate of Information and Communication. October 2007, p. 61. www.defensie.nl. Own Elaboration.

Table 6. Division of ethnic minorities over the ranks in the Dutch armed forces

| Rank | Total military | % of total military | Total military ethnic minority | % military ethnic minority |
|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| High | 1,995 | 3.9 | 179 | 8.9 |
| Middle | 7,651 | 15.1 | 452 | 5.9 |
| Low | 41,317 | 81.0 | 3,254 | 7.8 |
| Total | 50,963²⁹ | 100.0 | 3,885 | 7.6 |

Source: Richardson, Rudy. *Multiculturalism in the Dutch Armed Forces*. Paper presented for the 'Leadership, Education and Multiculturalism in the Armed Forces: Challenges and Opportunities' conference in La Paz, Bolivia, 13-15 September 2004. P. 5. http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/Bolivia/engraph/seminars/sep2004/papers/Richardson_sep_e.pdf

²⁹ Being data from 2004, the total numbers in the military do not coincide with table 4.

Annex II – Information on veterans from Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq

Information on veterans from Bosnia

| | Current age and when last deployed | | Race / ethnicity | Religious affiliation | Education | Place of deployment | Source | Rank during mission | Job description during mission | Current rank / current job |
|-------|------------------------------------|----|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|---|---|
| 1 P* | 55 | 42 | Caucasian | None | Secondary | Kuwait, Albania, Bosnia | Veteran Institute | Adjutant / Warrant Officer II | Producing documentaries for the MoD | No job |
| 2 P | 42 | 29 | Caucasian | None | Tertiary | Bosnia | www.veteranen.org | Temporary sergeant major | Traffic control officer | Managing Director of a US-based medium size Logistics company |
| 3 C** | 35 | 21 | Caucasian | None | Tertiary education | Bosnia | www.veteranen.org | Corporal | Ambulance driver | No job W.A.O. (Invalidity insurance) |
| 4 C | 39 | 26 | Caucasian | None | Secondary | Bosnia | www.veteranen.org | Corporal | Ambulance driver / medic | Systems design engineer |
| 5 C | 36 | 24 | Caucasian | None | Tertiary | Bosnia | www.veteranen.org | Soldier | Chauffeur of humanitarian convoys | Manager of legal events of a company |
| 6 P | 36 | 23 | Caucasian | Protestant | Secondary | Bosnia (Dutchbat III Srebrenica) | Veteran Institute | Medic | Medic | Ambulance paramedic |
| 7 C | 36 | 23 | Caucasian | Christian | Tertiary | Bosnia | Personal website | Corporal | Administrator for the company/battalion | IT Network Supervisor |
| 8 C | 39 | 26 | Caucasian | Christian | Unfinished secondary | Bosnia | www.veteranen.org | Soldaat | Truck driver of humanitarian convoys | IT senior infrastructure specialist as contractor |
| 9 P | 35 | 28 | Caucasian | Protestant | Secondary | Bosnia | www.veteranen.org | Corporal | Recovery specialist (driver of tow-truck) | Administrator of day-care centre |

* P = Professional soldier; ** C = Conscript

Information on veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq

| | Current age and when last deployed | | Religious affiliation | Race / ethnicity | Education | Place of deployment | Source | Rank during mission | Job description during mission | Current rank / current job |
|------|------------------------------------|----|---------------------------------|------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---|--|
| 10a* | 29 | 26 | None | Caucasian | Secondary | Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan | Veteran Institute | Corporal | Sniper - driver | Police force |
| 11a | 24 | 23 | Christian | Caucasian | Secondary | Afghanistan | www.veteranen.org | Corporal | Searching IEDs (explosive devices) for freedom of movement for troops | Industrial worker |
| 12a | 37 | 36 | Roman Catholic – not practising | Caucasian | Tertiary Higher Professional Business Education | Albania; Ethiopia; Iraq; Afghanistan | Netherlands Defence College | Captain | Trainer of Afghan National Army (OMLT) | Major; Company Commander |
| 13a | 39 | 36 | None | Caucasian | Secondary | Turkey; Afghanistan | Netherlands Defence College | Major | Commander Military Observation and Liaison Team | Captain; Head Office for Mission Exercise and Planning RNLDAF MSL GRP; KAP Air Force |
| 14a | 35 | 34 | Christian | Caucasian | Secondary | Afghanistan | Netherlands Defence College | Captain | Company commander of Air Assault Company | Captain; Company commander Anti Tank Company KAP Army |
| 15a | 33 | 32 | n.a. | Caucasian | Tertiary | Bosnia; Afghanistan | Veteran Institute | Reservist officer | Researcher | Cultural anthropologist |

*a = Afghanistan

Annex III – Questionnaire

1. Year of birth:

2. Place / country of birth:

3. Place / country of birth of parents:

- Mother:

- Father:

4. Sex:

- Female

- Male

5. Race / Ethnicity: (specify)

6. Religious affiliation:

- (specify)
- No religious affiliation / agnostic / atheist

7. Religious affiliation of parents

- Mother
- Father

8. Sexual orientation

9. Places of residence before and after deployment:

- Before:
- After:

10. Education (including year of graduation):

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

11. Education of parents:

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

12. Parents' occupation / job:

Mother:

- Farming
- Industrial worker
- Administrative worker
- Unemployed
- Not seeking employment
- Military (rank)
- Politics (local, national...)
- Other

Father:

- Farming
- Industrial worker
- Administrative worker
- Unemployed
- Not seeking employment
- Military (rank)
- Politics (local, national...)
- Other

13. Marital status:

- Single
- In-between co-habitation / marriage
- Co-habitation – 1st, 2nd, ...

- Married – 1st marriage, 2nd marriage, ...
- Divorced – 1st, 2nd, ...
- Other

14. Education of current partner:

- Primary
- Secondary
- Tertiary

15. Occupation/Job of current partner:

- Farming
- Industrial worker
- Administrative worker
- Unemployed
- Not seeking employment
- Military (rank)
- Politics (local, national...)
- Other

16. Places of deployment (cities and countries):

1.

2.

3.

.....

17. Duration of deployments (From month/year to month/year):

1.

2.

3.

.....

18. Rank during the missions:

1.

2.

3.

....

19. Task descriptions in the missions:

1.

2.

3.

.....

20. Current rank:

21. Current occupation/ job:

Annex IV – Guide questions for interview

- 1) How has the training prepared you for Iraq, Afghanistan or Bosnia?
- 2) What did you learn about these places before you went there?
- 3) Did you learn it through training, or did you do any research yourself? If so, in what way?
- 4) What did you learn about the country's culture, history and traditions?
- 5) What did you learn about the local population? Did you learn anything about the condition of women and men?
- 6) What did you as a soldier expect to see and do in the field, before you went there?
- 7) What were your expectations about the local people and local situation?
- 8) And about the fellow soldiers and officers from your unit or other units, and life in the field in general?
- 9) How close were your expectations to the actual situation?
- 10) Did you interact with local population?
- 11) Were they civilians or soldiers? Women and men? Only women/men? How many local people did you meet? What did you talk about?
- 12) Was the idea you had about the local population correspondent to the people you met in the field? If so, how? Or in what did it not correspond?
- 13) What were your best and worst experiences?
- 14) Did you think about how different the local context was from the Netherlands, and from where you live? If so, what did you see was different?
- 15) Was the local population different from the people you know, and see, in the Netherlands? If so, in what way were they different?

- 16) Did it make you change your way of seeing your country?
- 17) Did it make you change your way of seeing the people you identify with in your home country? Were you surprised, disappointed, angry?
- 18) How has being deployed abroad changed you? Do you feel different from before you left? In what way?
- 19) Did this change the way you see the Netherlands?
- 20) Did it change the way you see the army?
- 21) Did it change the way you see peace-keeping/enforcing operations?

Annex V – Examples of quotes of veterans

Veterans from Bosnia – Sentences in italics are direct quotes from veterans. Other sentences are paraphrased.

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 1 | <p><i>'You're a military, and your actions are with other militaries'.</i></p> <p><i>'I thought for a moment they couldn't touch me'.</i></p> | <p><i>'Typical Dutch rule, it's all about the money'.</i></p> | <p><i>'We are good'.</i></p> <p>Dutch approach: <i>'try to be on an equal base, talk on an equal base... make people part of your effort'.</i></p> <p>Military are formed of Dutch boys (but women are also present – answer only after question on women).</p> | <p><i>'It's a difficult job, I think we have to do it'.</i></p> | <p>(Their) <i>'body language is different'.</i></p> <p><i>'A lot of people waiting for?'</i></p> <p><i>'it's always a small minority who start things like this, stories are several and I heard them all, so... it's not fair to say that only the Muslims are victims, we all are victims, even the military who tried to make peace over there'.</i></p> <p><i>'The Muslims, Serbs, all the people who are in the war, it's always, in my experience, another world, and there are 2 worlds at that moment, it's the peace corps, if I can call it like that, and the people who are in war'.</i></p> | <p><i>'Still living in the '60s'.</i></p> <p>The war is close; only 2000kms away; short flight.</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|--|---|---|---|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 2 | <p><i>'My initial opinion was that we would be welcomed by the local people as helpers in need'.</i></p> | <p><i>'The Netherlands is very open and we are a mix of cultures, and everybody understands and everything goes'.</i></p> <p><i>'I think we are more self-supporting, independent'.</i></p> <p><i>I don't think people (civilians and government) really care (about peace operations and soldiers).</i></p> | <p><i>'We cannot make a difference'.</i></p> <p><i>'I have also seen what little, really the army, especially the Dutch army, which is very small, can do, or even if you're out there, what you can and cannot do there, it's very tight. It did change my opinion about the army, it opened my eyes, it's been a very good experience, but I don't want to work for this employer anymore'.</i></p> | <p><i>'It was difficult to understand why we were there... Why are these people fighting each other?'</i></p> | <p><i>'People would cling to us for help'.</i></p> <p><i>'People shot at us'.</i></p> <p><i>'People are very close, very family like; these people they cling to families and family ties and blood'.</i></p> <p><i>'Why are these people fighting each other?'</i></p> | <p><i>'It's like stepping 30 years back.. central Bosnia at the time wasn't really a modern place to be, without the war... Bosnia has a very different kind of culture than we have here in the Netherlands.. especially the Muslim culture; In Bosnia the Muslim culture is like, it is maybe even today, it is very strict, very religious'.</i></p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|--|---|--|--|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 3 | <p>Volunteered.</p> <p>Idealistic, motivated to help people in distress.</p> <p>Self changes; not motivated to help anymore; frustrated. Started hating local population (civilians and military).</p> <p>Has PTSD, but looks healthy (to the eyes of fellow Dutch).</p> <p>Could be living in any country, is not interested in fellow Dutch.</p> | <p>People do not know about the conflict. They are not interested in the conflict or in soldiers; typical Western problem.</p> <p>Is a peaceful country.</p> <p>Is compared to Germany and Belgium.</p> <p>People question things.</p> <p>People worry about little things.</p> <p>Dutch society thinks men should work (and not like him, who has PTSD and stays at home with invalidity pension/insurance).</p> <p>Bosnia is unknown, compared to the known; it is seen as a country <i>'where only goats can live'</i>.</p> | <p>Is an instrument and used by politics.</p> <p>Is a good organisation.</p> <p>Dutch army is doing a good job.</p> <p>Has the best communication with the people.</p> <p>Is small and cannot tackle more conflicts at the same time.</p> | <p>Impartial</p> <p>Difficult to accomplish.</p> <p>Armed soldiers but can only shoot in self-defence.</p> <p>UN is a political dinosaur.</p> <p>Seen as real soldiers by civilians but then mandates do not let them operate.</p> | <p>Seeing UN as partial.</p> <p>Had aggressive culture; Partisan culture.</p> <p>Had weapons and used them (<i>crazy</i> civilians).</p> <p>Easily influenced by politicians and their ideas; do not question things.</p> <p>Live together for years and then kill each other.</p> <p>Good at making life difficult for Dutch.</p> <p>Are selfish; egocentric behaviour.</p> <p>Use their children to work.</p> <p>Aim at basic survival.</p> <p>Each with their own speciality for making life difficult.</p> <p><i>'Did it all.'</i></p> | <p>Tito and partisan culture (WWII)</p> <p>Is poor (compared to Serbia and Croatia, but also to the Netherlands).</p> <p>The religion is complicated; three religions.</p> <p>Was historically a part of Turkey (Ottoman empire).</p> <p>Is physically close (1400kms).</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|---|---|---|--|-----------------------|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 4 | <p>Volunteered to go to Bosnia; wanted to do something useful, try to help other people, thought he meant good.</p> <p>Creates bond with his father who has been very close to the infantry in WWII. His father is proud of him.</p> <p>Has sweet and dear memories: <i>'You're driving in a very remote small road in the middle of nowhere, and you're passing a little house and there's this little girl with this heart-shaped sign and it says UNPROFOR on the sign. And that's so unreal, of course you immediately slam the brakes and give the girl everything you have in your car'.</i></p> | <p><i>'I see the Dutch society as a group of people who want to portray the best in the world, we have always the best intentions, we know the best, but when for some reason they got in a situation that we didn't have control over, they immediately start pointing fingers at a certain group. At least the general public can't be responsible for anything. So they have this scapegoat, the Dutch forces didn't do enough, they let these people to be massacred, they didn't do anything. It's almost all the Dutch soldiers that went to Bosnia, and especially in the first few years, no one really knew what was going on, and people were just voicing things not based on anything'.</i></p> | <p><i>iOwn group of people and those are the people we deal with and the locals are of less importance'.</i></p> <p>Comradeship.</p> <p><i>'You try to do your best but get the stigma of Dutch society'.</i></p> | <p><i>'The whole purpose is to .. do your thing for your colleagues'.</i></p> <p>Mandate is always dictated by politics</p> | <p>Locals are an outside factor.</p> <p><i>'People also threaten to shoot at you'.</i></p> <p>Locals don't care about their country.</p> | |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|---|---|--|--|--|-----------------------------|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 5 | <p>Can do good if deployed as peace-keeper.</p> <p><i>'I didn't want to go in army which was war-like, it doesn't fit in my idea of a world and how we deal with each other'.</i></p> | <p><i>'I have friends from different backgrounds, Muslims friends, negro friends, Chinese friends and a lot of Caucasian friends.. Here it's much more mingled.. I don't think it's a difference per se what you wear, in Holland all kinds of people wear scarves, not only Muslims, here in the Netherlands it doesn't matter what you wear'.</i></p> | <p>Has good sense of comradeship.</p> <p><i>'(The army).. gave me an opportunity to drive these humanitarian convoys then it was ok for me to be drafted and do my best. It's great they are trying to be much more nowadays an army which goes to people in conflict areas. And people for instance in Africa, with them they are being much more humanitarian. And I think for the army, for the Ministry, they really have to define what they are, they have to think about, ok, we have to pay a lot of money for our F-16s, and for our tanks, and I think they really have to invest much more in personnel and personnel who can do much more. For instance in the UNMIC in Kosovo, do much for reconstructing countries, it would be great if they deployed them in a better way, because they have the personnel'.</i></p> | <p><i>'It's difficult to deploy soldiers in Darfur, because of what happened in Srebrenica, that these obligations between states to help each other, but politically there really isn't the will to help the people'.</i></p> | <p>Initial thought is that people are hostile.</p> <p><i>'Over there I noticed now we're in Muslim territory, people are wearing these head.. headscarves, it was much more fragmented, so I didn't see any Chinese or negro people there, that's a big difference. It was easy to see we were in Muslim territory for instance, because the men were always wearing jackets, colberts, and it wasn't like Croatia, or like the Serbians.. and over there it's more their own identity'.</i></p> <p><i>'For me it's still a bit of a wonder how it went so far, because all I heard afterwards, ok, these were people for instance in the case of the bridge in Mostar, all I hear is ok, now we play football together, and our children play together, and before it was also, ok, neighbours that play football together, and then there was this conflict so they started murdering each other, and five years later, they play football tougher again, so for me it's still a bit of a mystery how it started'.</i></p> | <p>Nature is beautiful.</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|--|----------|--|---|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 6 | <p>Neutral.</p> <p>Expected to help people.</p> <p>Thankful of life.</p> | <p>Differentiation between 'our people' and local people.</p> <p>Convenient way of life.</p> <p>Free country.</p> <p>Democratic.</p> <p>Free of choice.</p> <p>Netherlands was freed by other countries in WWII (so Dutch should do the same in Bosnia).</p> | | <p>It is a duty.</p> <p><i>'It is good to help other countries'.</i></p> <p>Needs stronger mandate <i>'to make a fist'.</i></p> <p>Should be better equipped.</p> <p>Support should be given when asked.</p> | <p><i>'I haven't heard many times a day the shouting on the mosques... We called them Muslims, but if they were really Muslims, I wouldn't tell. It wasn't really, the women were not dressed like real Muslims you always see on television. No, no, they were all open-dressed.'</i></p> <p>Had different hand signs (example of peace sign).</p> | <p>Bosnia</p> <p>No mosques or calling to prayer</p> <p>Different from the Netherlands because no work, no business (so is the Netherlands seen as a productive country?)</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 7 | <p>(When I joined the army) 'I wanted to do something, and not be lazy for 9 months'.</p> | <p>'I think sometimes Europeans in general are a little bit soft, when it comes to war. They like to talk all the time, and try to solve it up, but it doesn't work all the time'.</p> <p>'people there are different from here, if you have a problem here you can talk to each other, and you can work it out, and I think there it's different, they're more, I think it's something that's inside the people, that changes from talk to each other to kill each other. That's different here, here you can talk to each other, and if you're angry at each other, you just don't see each other anymore'.</p> <p>'I think they're (Dutch society) right to question it (mission in</p> | <p>'I think that's a nice thing about going to Bosnia, or every war zone, is that everything changes as soon as you're there, when you join the army, you have the higher ranks and you have to salute, it's very important, but as soon as you're there, everything drops, and everyone calls each other by their first name. At least that's how it works in the Dutch army I've seen other armies, Canadian, there it's totally different'.</p> <p>'My colleagues, you start with them for the same reason, all were there because they knew they were going to Bosnia, and you have the same training, and it was</p> | <p>'We need to do something about it, and what we did wasn't enough. Just giving some food is not enough to help people. I think they should have done something like they're doing in Afghanistan. Not only the Netherlands, in general Europe'.</p> <p>'I think that p-k missions are very useful. Peace-enforcing, it depends, in a country like Afghanistan, I think it's very difficult to do a job like they're doing now, because Russia tried it a lot of times, to get rid of the Talibans, I think the country is a difficult country to fight, because of the mountains, it's big, it's difficult. And I think they have the same situation in Iraq, it's already taken too long. It's also because they are fighting each other, it's not just one</p> | <p>'Sometimes when we went on a transport they stopped us and we had to wait for hours, or.. a day... and you had to be very careful not to angry them, you never knew what they were going to do'.</p> <p>'There was not a lot of anger, at the road blocks, sometimes they were angry, I don't know if that was personal, it's the situation, I can understand that situation, people get killed every day, even though I don't understand how people can be so angry at each other'.</p> <p>'I think you're life is over when that (a member of your family killed) happens, and for kids that's also a bad thing that the anger is not going away, it will always burn somewhere, how can you live with someone next to you, one day you're in a war, and next day you're living next to each other again, or before the war you're living next door and now you're in a war with the same person. So kids were friends, and from one day to another they're not friends anymore, because you're Croatian, or you're Muslim, you're a Serb'.</p> <p>'With people like Karadzic, there is no way to talk to them, the only talk they have is a gun, it's all that works, and even though you know that civilians will be killed, you see it in Iraq and Afghanistan, I think that.. I mean, the war started in 1992, there are still UN military people over there, so it's lasted already for more than a decade, and I don't</p> | <p>'The problems started in 1980 when Tito died, even though he was a dictator, everything was in place, so when he died, everything changed'.</p> <p>'Like you have the mafia in Italy, they have the same thing in Bosnia. There are always parties involved that can force you to do things. There is also a difference between Croatia and Bosnia, I think Bosnia is in a difficult situation, in the middle of, there are a lot of countries around it, you have Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, it's all around them, and they were in the middle of a war with different countries. And I guess for centuries it's all little fires, that sometimes are burning up, and sometimes burning down a little. It's quiet now, but maybe in 30-40 years, maybe a little bit longer, I don't know, I guess it will start again, somehow. I'm afraid of that'.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | <p>Afghanistan) every time, it was not their objective, it's different from the Americans because they went there to fight.</p> | <p>fun, real good guys'. 'they are more professional now, also because there are only professionals now in the army and no longer guys like me'.</p> | <p>group against another, or one big group against the Americans or the Allies, it's a lot of groups against each other, and that makes it more difficult, it's easier to fight just one enemy than a lot of enemies. We know they tried, I don't know if it's ever going to work, it's difficult.</p> | <p>know, if they had fought a little bit more, it should have stopped already, before 1995. I'm sure'. 'I think it (the anger) will never go. It's something that, maybe it's in the culture, I don't know what it is, it's not only that you see it in Bosnia, you see it in Iraq, people inside the country always fight with each other, I guess that as Western Europeans, or Americans, or wherever you're from, you don't understand that. You try to live peacefully, but in countries like that, I don't know, it just doesn't work. And they need someone like Tito to keep everyone happy, it's not really happy, but...'</p> | |
|--|--|---|---|--|--|--|

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|---|---|---|--|---|--|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 8 | <p>Feeling of helping.</p> <p>Feeling of making a difference.</p> <p>Not part of conflict.</p> <p>Identified with being a UN soldier.</p> | <p>People make a fuss over nothing.</p> <p>Government cannot be trusted.</p> <p>Dutch played stupid to accept Srebrenica mandate?</p> <p>Showed goodwill?</p> | <p>Cannot be trusted.</p> <p>Do not live up to their promises.</p> <p>Difference between conscripts and professional soldiers.</p> <p>Differences among conscripts (those who volunteered to Bosnia for ex.).</p> <p>Differences with British soldiers.</p> | <p>Should be better organised.</p> <p>Is a good thing.</p> <p>Stops fighting.</p> <p>Is doing something.</p> <p>Mandate fell short.</p> <p>Any action to stop is good.</p> | <p>Have '<i>Mediterranean culture</i>'</p> <p>Want to stop soldiers doing good.</p> <p>Live more intensely (joyful and sorrowful moments).</p> <p>Live outside and are more communicative.</p> <p>Are harder.</p> <p>Civilians as victims of minority who takes up arms.</p> <p>Don't appreciate UN soldiers.</p> | <p>Has always been a region of conflict.</p> <p>Influence of Tito and partisan culture.</p> <p>Beautiful country.</p> <p>Life is hard, more rural, with more of '<i>not so nice</i>' aspects of life (death of animals for example).</p> <p>Less luxurious.</p> <p><i>'Each village grabbed their weapons and had local warlords, to use a big word, and you have many small places of power.'</i></p> <p>(Is in an) ethnic/racial and religious conflict; civil war; civil war is real.</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 9 | <p><i>'Frustration of, you can't do anything for the people, seeing things happen, you have no grip on it, you're not allowed to have a grip on it.'</i></p> <p><i>'In Mostar, they shot mortar grenades, we had 12 or 13 grenades around the truck, it was completely shaking, and in the evening when I was in my bed I was shaking also. In the moment itself, not, I was 19, even a little bit brave, saying it was close, and doing tough to my buddy, but in the evening, maybe it would have landed on my truck and I would be killed, you're not thinking about that in that moment. That's the situation you're prepared for in a war zone, you expect to have bullets, grenades and all that stuff. But not the things around it, which you don't expect.'</i></p> <p><i>'And in our compound (there was) a girl, (name), working there. She had a tooth pain.. So I drove back to the village, and these things I shouldn't tell if I was still in the army, otherwise they kick me out, I asked her if there was a dentist, a local one, and there was. ..So we went to the local dentist, I gave him 60 German marks, and he pulled the tooth out... So I really had the feeling I do something'.</i></p> <p><i>'We bought from the local pastor fake birth certificates and on that certificate it was saying that they were baptised. They were</i></p> | <p><i>'When I see what happened in Srebrenica, and how the Dutch government reacted, and to the soldiers who were there, and I think the government had to stand behind the soldiers, as one man. Nobody could blame that soldiers of anything, they only did their mission, they didn't allow to bring heavy weapons, they didn't have any air support, all that kind of things, and then the people looking at the soldiers, 300 soldiers, if they're to blame what happened in Srebrenica. So there's what I changed about the Netherlands'.</i></p> | <p><i>'I'm proud of it, of what we managed, of what he boys are doing now in Afghanistan. One of the girls working here, her husband is there now, and we daily follow the news. My brother in law was there, he fought the battle for Chora. We were searching all the news how it went there. What we do as an army, I'm very proud of it'.</i></p> | <p><i>'It's a nice thought, but it has to work. I'm more for peace-enforcing, not peace-keeping. I'm more for NATO missions than UN missions. In UN missions you're sending a group of sitting ducks. And if the people are shot or chased, you're also to blame, so that's not good, look at the boys from Dutchbat, they couldn't do anything, because they were UN soldiers. So I'm more for peace-enforcing and not peace-keeping'.</i></p> | <p><i>'There are 3 fighting parties, .. A little bit can separate them, it was hard to see. And there are a lot of groups, more bandits than real soldiers'.</i></p> <p><i>(In the training I was told that) 'things like don't wave with your left hand, because they wipe their ass with it.'</i></p> <p><i>'And a lot of stories you've heard about a school teacher who slaughtered people and little children, I didn't see it, but there are stories that other people tell you there, then these things that's an example from the frustration, you can't understand people are like that. And I notice that that is the biggest frustration on a mission'.</i></p> <p><i>'only the idea that the mother came and offered her daughter in exchange for food, it's something I can't place'.</i></p> <p><i>'They are different, but that's not the reason of a war, it's a culture difference'.</i></p> | <p><i>'Tito held the country in an iron fist, and when he died, the country got divided.. and in 1991 the problem really started'.</i></p> |

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| <p><i>Muslims, but we bought fake certificates for 600 German marks for the whole family, and we gave them to them. And with that they went, her mother, grandmother, brother and a few other people, I believe 6, because we paid 600 German marks. She went to Sweden with her whole family, in 1994.</i></p> <p><i>'My best experience was the story of (name of girl), helping her'.</i></p> <p><i>'I think every soldier is a different person when they came back. I think it's in a positive way. . I appreciate life a lot more... and I am grateful, and everything in your life you experience, makes you the person you are now. So my 3 tours, my wife who left me, heavy things, but on the other hand, if they don't happen I wasn't the person I am now'.</i></p> | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|

Veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | | | |
|---------|--|--|---|--|---|---|---|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Orientalist discourse | | Balkanist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment | People | Country of deployment |
| 10a | <p>Had motivation to help in Iraq.</p> <p>Has learnt that women are equal but <i>'men do heavy stuff'</i>.</p> <p>Became a soldier for the adventure and the experience, and for the interest in seeing how it is to live only with your colleagues.</p> | <p><i>'Over here'</i>.</p> <p>Men and women can talk and women are equal.</p> <p>When it is about getting something, Dutch people are like people in countries of deployment (but the Netherlands are compared to England when giving an example, and not to Afghanistan).</p> | <p>Good comradeship.</p> <p>Army is a family.</p> <p>His heart is there.</p> <p>Iraq was a tough job for him, he was the commander of the group, <i>'and that's a weird situation, because you're first standing in the group and you stand also for your men but for your commander, and if you're commander, you're standing alone, you must make the decisions, some decisions your group don't like, and that's tough'</i>.</p> | <p>Proud of cooperation with forces of other nationalities (Americans which came to pick up a wounded Dutch soldier in a military operation in Iraq).</p> <p>It is a war in Afghanistan.</p> | <p>People are poor; the poorer they are, the more they believe in religion; Too attached to it; primitive way of life due to religion.</p> <p>(Afghans are) <i>'tough people that you can't control and that beat everyone'</i>.</p> <p><i>'Girls take water from the well (i.e. they work); boys sit around'</i>.</p> <p>Not supportive.</p> <p>Difference between man & woman, for his feeling, is strange and not right.</p> | <p><i>'Over there'</i>.</p> <p>Not much difference between cultures in Iraq and Afghanistan.</p> <p>Afghanistan is very tough (rocks, mountains). It's hard to begin a civilization over there.</p> | <p>Bosnian society has elements of <i>'blood revenge'</i> which can make the war explode again.</p> <p>People are brutal.</p> | <p>Bosnia is a beautiful country; <i>'you can make something over there'</i>.</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|--|--|---|--|--|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Orientalist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 11a | <p>(I became a soldier) 'because I wanted to... help people who have difficulties'</p> <p>'My brother in law (went to and) talks about Bosnia, I wanted to experience that and talk about it.'</p> | <p>'We are all equal (women and men).'</p> <p>'We are very rich here and we are not standing still.'</p> <p>'We have higher expectations'.</p> | <p>(It's like) 'a bond with your brothers; brothers in arms, like in the movie'.</p> <p>Young people have to go to the army to be more mature.</p> <p>'We are the good fellows'.</p> <p>'We have to train them (Afghan National Army, ANA) to be a good army'.</p> | <p>(I became a soldier) 'because I wanted to see things about the world'.</p> <p>It is to rebuild the country, to build schools, clean water.</p> | <p>'Women are the lowest of the low; almost nothing more than animals; the women don't count'.</p> <p>It is strange that women are 'low... they are almost objects'.</p> <p>They all believe.</p> <p>They go back to the past; people live in poor conditions.</p> <p>They do everything for money.</p> <p>'you can't (trust them), because they do everything for money, if you shake their hands everything is ok, but if you turn your back, they may stab you, because they get money from Taliban. They are not reliable'.</p> <p>Their expectations are very low.</p> <p>'They don't know anything about the rest of the world, they think that Afghanistan, and that's it, but they don't know how it is in the Western countries, because they have no TV, and if you have a TV the Taleban will kill you. They are very very dumb, the Taleban kept them dumb'.</p> <p>'The Afghan soldiers are trigger happy, so they have to learn. They think if they shoot, Allah will send the bullet to the bad guy'.</p> | <p>The Russians stayed there for 10-15 years, and nothing changed.</p> |

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|---|---|----------|---|---|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Orientalist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 12a | <p>'You're equal' (with women).</p> <p>'A party is not a party for me if not together with, well let's say, not that I really go for every girl, but it's more like, you're equal, it was strange for me, let's say it that way'.</p> | <p>Marriage is not necessary in Holland; people can live together.</p> <p>'We are more what is really said, and the facts and figures'.</p> <p>'Over here, you always hear the extreme stuff (about Islam).</p> <p>'The government is the welfare state .. before that, that was also quite religious' (like in Afghanistan).</p> | | <p>'I think it depends on the situation at that moment. Over in Afghanistan, it's .. about rebuilding a region, & you can't rebuild only one thing, only an army, but also the government, justice system, police.. & that's the difficulty over here. I believe it can work, but then you have to stay there, not only the Dutch, but as an organisation like it's now, 20 years, .. you have to build a generation, because I believe that's the only way to build a country like that. Start with education, basic school, & then good primary school, & then some guys go to work, some to university.. & that's the way I think you create a new generation. That's also what some of those guys</p> | <p>'Culture is marry early and have children'.</p> <p>'Some stuff is wrong, like the differences between men and women, but for the rest, it's not as extreme as it looks like'.</p> <p>'Over there it's much much more non-verbal communication'.</p> <p>'Men and women don't really do stuff together expect live together, but not in the social life, that's quite separate. And that's quite rigid.. really totally separate. And I didn't, probably not consciously, expect it to be true, because they also said we have a party, you can also come, and the women? No the women stay home, and when there's a party, the men party, and the women stay home. .. but they're all male. Also dancing with each other, all male, and that's, well, in my opinion, a party is not a party for me if not together with, well let's say, not that I really go for every girl, but it's more like, you're equal, it was strange for me, let's say it that way'.</p> <p>Open-minded to other cultures and religions.</p> <p>Iraqis are passive and used to secrecy; Afghans are proud.</p> <p>'Trying to get some stuff from me in a way that it's not good, through a diverted way'.</p> | <p>'The history before that (Russian invasion and Taleban), it was actually only that it was quite a wealthy country, Western oriented'.</p> <p>Difference between Kabul and Uruzgan: 'in Kabul it was more Western, you saw women in more or less normal clothes, you also saw the burqa, but also normal western clothes. Uruzgan is the countryside of Afghanistan, the hard-core Islam'.</p> <p>'The tribe, they take care of its people, and that's also why it's so difficult to establish a government, the government hasn't proven itself, the tribes proved themselves, and if you get local police part of on tribe, and there's a conflict with the government, it's almost always the tribe that's going to win'.</p> <p>'Afghan government is not strong enough.. to keep the country running in a democratic way'.</p> <p>Local police have own agendas and are corrupt.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | <i>more or less say for themselves, the new people have to do it themselves, you can help them.. That's the way I see it, then it has a chance, but I don't even say it will work, there's a chance. If we go out now, then I don't see that .</i> | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Orientalist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 13a | <i>'.. embracing and kissing each other on the cheek, that's normal for Afghan males to do, but not for us, but it's part of the culture, and to be greeted like that you're considered a friend'.</i> | | <i>'They sometimes refer to the Dutch approach, well you can see it as a compliment, that the Dutch did something and it turned out to be the right thing. Being very sensible guys, we're doing something, giving it a good thought, and that was considered also in the PRT as the Dutch approach. The Germans would go there, and they were just giving away money, like hey, and it's not our problem anymore, and then the Dutch come over, and they are going to give away some money, but they want to know why, and is it money well spent. So go to talk to people, see what interests them, that was a big plus, we were just trying something out, and it turned out to be a</i> | <p>Seen as an adventure; opportunity to see another culture.</p> <p><i>'Is it a reconstruction mission right now in Uruzgan, or is it a peace-keeping or peace-enforcing operation? How can you do some reconstruction if you're still fighting over there? So I don't know if reconstruction is a good word for the work we're doing over there. I think we're doing more for stability, and if you have reached a level of security and safety, then you can go to reconstruction'.</i></p> | <p><i>'They don't care if you show your feet because they know you're not from there, you're not Islam. They're not stupid, they know how you live as well.</i></p> <p>(We knew that in Afghanistan) <i>'they (the women) were playing a minor role. We knew that we were not going to see them, we were going to talk to some of the authorities, and they would not be there, only men'.</i></p> <p><i>"You're talking to a guy who really speaks foolish, who is ignorant, or has no picture, no concept on how to act as a mayor, what to do. You expect from an authority to talk to you on the same level. That was misinterpretation. (The authority was talking) as a peasant. Being an ignorant farmer, not even able to read sometimes, but really masking it, because he had people around him, who covered his non-ability to read for instance'.</i></p> <p><i>'The (younger) people were very happy and they all wanted to go to school, and they all wanted to be safe, and they all knew that they had fought a long time against that Russians, and the war should be over. They wanted peace and security, and that was basically it'.</i></p> | <p>Warlords are still controlling the population. Government authorities which should preach central government's issues are not doing it.</p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | <i>good solution</i> . The army is a nice place to work and it fits like a suit; it feels good. | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

| Veteran | SELF | | | | OTHER | |
|---------|--|---|---|-----------|---|---|
| | Masculinity | Dutchness and vision of the Netherlands | Military | Operation | Orientalist discourse | |
| | | | | | People | Country of deployment |
| 14a | <p><i>'My best experience actually was with my own unit we did a very great operation last year, in October, it was an attack in the Baluchi valley. And it was the first time that we are really going into an attack that big and that large. You've trained a year for that, but you never do it for real. And now it was the first time we did it for real.'</i></p> | <p><i>'For us it's very normal to do business with women, to talk, like this, while we are here talking.. it's very normal to go to a woman, to talk to her'.</i></p> <p><i>'Here in West Europe is that you speak to everyone more on the same level and of course you've got someone who has more power or something like that'.</i></p> <p><i>'.. that's (the tribal relations) very difficult for us as a European, a Dutch guy, I think it's very difficult for the Western people to learn in such a short time, what the culture really is, what the problems really are, between the different Afghans'.</i></p> <p><i>'It's good for</i></p> | <p><i>'and I said after the preparation (for an attack), ok guys, I guarantee you there will be some people killed in action, some of our colleagues, and then they said, ok, but that's part of the job and we will go for it. And that operation, and especially that, the confidence in each other, to do the job, that was for me the best experience'.</i></p> | | <p><i>'The men are taking care of everything and we are not allowed to see or do business with the women, always with the men. I think in my eyes the position of the women at least is very strange for me, comparing with our standards and the position of our women in the Western countries'.</i></p> <p><i>'They have all their own agenda and they will work with us when it's good for them, but a week later, they can work together with the enemy, because it's better for them, they can get more money, so there's a lot of corruption, everyone has their own agenda, so that was very difficult. There are a lot of tribes over there, each with his own values, relations, here are a lot of them (Afghans) of course and that's very difficult. That makes the problem, the cooperation with the people over there, makes it very difficult because every Afghan has got his own agenda, every tribe'.</i></p> <p><i>'For them it's very important that you earn respect by doing'.</i></p> <p><i>'I was invited with some Afghan tribal leaders and also the chief district, it was a party, they've also got 2 boys who were dancing for us, and after dancing, they were taken apart, and you know they were abused. At that time, in Afghanistan, it seems, of course, not normal, but because you think, ok, it's normal for there, so don't say anything about it, it's ok, and when you see the movie (The Kite Runner).. then I say,</i></p> | <p><i>'In Afghanistan it's very important on which level you are, what kind of position you have between the local people'.</i></p> |

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | <p><i>everyone (in the Netherlands) that they are just for one week, go to a country like Afghanistan, see how life really is in these kind of countries'.</i></p> | | | <p><i>I saw the same, and in the movie, for me it was, then you realise what really happened in Afghanistan. It's terrible... for there it's very normal you heard about it also on police posts, that they have some young boys over there, and they just have them there for fun, for abusing, and that's very normal, for them. It's very strange'.</i></p> | |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

* a is for veterans from Afghanistan (or Iraq, in two cases).