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Camouflage and Tandong:

**Identity Construction among Muslim Women in the Philippine Army
and Police**

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Final Report of an EADN Individual Research Grant Project

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“Camouflage and Tandong: Identity Construction among Muslim Women in the Philippine Army and Police”

Final Report

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In the mid 1990s, the Philippine army and police opened its doors much wider for females. For the first time, regular commission through the Philippine Military Academy, Officer Candidate School (OCS) and Reserves were opened to female applicants. Under the new legal mandate for the establishment of Women’s Desks (later renamed Women and Children’s Protection Desks), more females have also been actively recruited into the re-configured as commissioned and non-commissioned officers of the Philippine National Police.¹ Further, under the terms of the 1996 Philippine government-Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) agreement, 28 Muslim females were specially recruited as part of the army integration replacement batch. These developments came with groundbreaking institutional reforms as both the military and police have to change their existing rules, regulations and amenities in line with the mixed-gender composition of its trainees and personnel. The increased visibility of gun-toting females have also created enduring challenges to the overwhelming masculine organizational culture of these two institutions.

While women have been admitted to the state security forces previously, their entry has been in fewer numbers and their career paths limited within the organization. The military first admitted women in 1963 as members of the Women’s Auxiliary Corps (WAC) under Republic Act 3835. In this scheme, their recruitment and training are distinct from other major and technical services of the armed forces, but their promotion proceeds in the same manner as male commissioned officers. “Separate but unequal” best characterizes this arrangement as the WACs are confined to mostly administrative and technical positions (secretarial). The WACs were widely seen as “decorative,” supplying the workforce for what are deemed feminine tasks and for which their male bosses are ill-equipped. Under this system, female officers could be Generals (the highest ranking WAC in fact has been a nurse), but clearly in terms that do not place them in the same footing as male officers who are combat-seasoned. In the Philippine police, most women came into position as widows of slain policemen-husbands and were also confined to doing secretarial work/office bound tasks like their military sisters.

This paper presents the results of a research project funded by the East Asian Development Network (EADN) which was conducted from April 2010-March 2011. The report examines the structural changes (in terms of recruitment; training; unit placement; and task assignments) in the Philippine army and police and how they affect gender (male-female) dynamics within. It compares the institutional and cultural features of these uniquely male-dominated organizations that affect women’s/Muslim women’s choice in joining and remaining with the organizations. It also explores gender notions in the imageries of the two institutions. How notions of femininity and minority identity are articulated/muted/negotiated within these institutions are probed.

¹ PNP commission has two routes: through the Philippine National Police Academy and by rising up the ranks. Under the second route, non-commissioned officers can apply for commission-ship by taking an exam and by undergoing additional training. Those in technical positions (e.g. doctors, nurses, lawyers) may also apply directly for commission-ship.

Pretty or Tough? Gender, Ethnicity and the Armed Sector

While great strides have been made in pursuit of gender equality in business and in the civil bureaucracy, the security services remain one of those areas (the other being priesthood) where women face formidable institutional and cultural barriers to participation. Underlying these barriers is a gender ideology, which equates military service to war/violence and war being a man's business. Conducting war, in this view lie not in the domestic sphere where women ought to be confined (Cooke 2001; Herbert 1998; Sunindyo 1998). As a corollary, women need protection from war or as caring mothers whose task is to tend to the sick and wounded. A modern iteration of this gendered perspective is the argument that mixed units encourage fraternization, which compromise the ability of men to do their jobs as they will get distracted from the impulse to protect the women in their unit.

Throughout history, large numbers of women have been employed in the armed forces as a temporary measure to replace men who are otherwise engaged in combat. As was the case of Western women during the two World Wars, many volunteered to take up the deficit in male labor for technical and support services, only to be summarily removed once the conflict was over (Segal 1998). While many revolutionary movements have been recorded to accord more equal treatment among its male and female members, this principle of equality was also readily abandoned once the state security forces are organized, leaving women again to go back to their domestic roles (Cooke 2001). Thus, although many women have made substantial contributions to the frontline (in revolutionary, inter-state or World Wars), their presence have been devalued or rendered invisible with their designations as non-combatant and civilians, in contrast to men who have served alongside.

In recent years, efforts to "engender" the security forces have been argued on grounds of equal representation and enhanced effectivity. It is argued that the army and police promote the value of equality under a democratic order by openly admitting both sexes and all ethnic groups into its ranks. By reflecting the diverse composition of the broader society, the security forces attain wider public acceptance of their tasks. By recruiting more widely, the military and police can avail of a bigger, ready pool of skilled human labor. It will be able to do its job much better if it has members who can attend to tasks such as conducting searches and interrogation of subjects with whom they share common sex. Efforts towards this goal has proceeded in several complimentary directions: (1) increasing the number of women recruited as enlistees and officers; (2) ending sex and ethnic segregation in training, placement and promotion; (3) opening up previously restricted roles (e.g. ground combat) and unit postings (i.e. non-deployment in ethnic frontlines); (4) redefining requirements for advancement in the ranks (e.g. combat experience) that confer disadvantage to women.

Beyond numbers and representation, female presence undercuts the uncompromising cultural masculinity of the security forces as institutions. Cooke (2001) attributes this to the military's connection with war and the intimate ties between manhood and combat, the practice and skill necessary for which is essential in winning wars. War-fighting is a man's business, for which women are not suited. By contrast, women who's rightful place is in the domestic sphere, are excluded entirely from military service or if allowed, assigned tasks that replicate their gender prescribed roles as mothers and sisters.² While great progress has been made to achieve equal access to males and females in most occupations, remnants of this "gendered" thinking about the

² Armed resistance movements by contrast has shown to be more gender-neutral in that their women members also performed a variety of important roles, including combat. Coughlin (2000) notes that in the case of the Moro National Liberation Front (Philippines), the Muslim women members recruited, organized and conducted consciousness-raising sessions in rural areas; moved information across army checkpoints; trained and served in combat capacity and assumed key responsibility in the MNLF's organizational structure.

military persists. Most governments to this date have varying degrees of combat restrictions for female active-duty soldiers. In many cases, recruitment, training, placement and promotion still proceeds along sex-segregated lines. The ubiquitousness of Women's Corps in many armed services exemplifies this halfhearted attempt to include females in the organization but to confine them in socially-prescribed tasks (administrative, support or technical services). In Israel, the ban on women from combat positions and the priority for women to concentrate on family roles combined to produce very small numbers of women called for active service in the conscript-based armed forces. Those who do are assigned to Women's Corps and functional units but restricted from moving up because of the premium placed on combat experience, to which they are excluded. Like elsewhere, Israeli women soldiers work mostly in clerical positions and in that capacity serve akin to mothers/sisters of their unit (Israeli 2000). In the US armed forces, a policy restricting female soldiers from direct combat units, has nevertheless seen an increasing number of them (in combat support units) being drawn into situations which could easily be defined as "combat" (Harrell et al. 2007). The changing nature of conflict environments (e.g. Afghanistan) where US troops are deployed make such distinctions between combat and non-combat impossible. While many Indonesian women are members of their armed forces, the persistence of informal surrogacy motherhood implied in the practice of *ibuh asuh* (the wives of commanding officers becoming a source of directives on proper femininity amongst females in the unit) is another of example of domesticization of female roles inside the armed services (Sunindyo 1998).

The organizational culture of military organizations, given their predominantly male composition, also exhibit masculinity. In their study of the progress of gender mainstreaming in security services, SIPRI (2008) notes that in post-conflict cases such as Afghanistan, policy efforts at recruiting more women have met with resistance from male commanders whose attitude is to assign female soldiers in their unit to domestic tasks (e.g. cooking, doing clerical work). Izrael (2000) notes a parallel phenomenon among company commanders in the Israeli army whose predilection for treating female company clerks as "prizes" recruit the prettiest according to the hiring commander's seniority. Herbert's (1998) study of the American female soldiers illustrate parallel pressure to manage in a predominantly male environment. US servicewomen subdue their outward femininity, emphasize their skills rather than physical attribute, adopt more male mannerisms and suppress their sexuality in order to avoid perceived social penalties.

That said, the roles assigned to females inside the armed forces has not remained static throughout history. Changing security imperatives interact with shifting societal norms about gender appropriate roles (including the idea that women are not fit for combat; women are at greater risk as military than as civilians), creating various opportunities for a redefinition of women's roles inside the armed forces. Segal (1998) notes for instance that often the onset of a crisis compels increased recruitment of females into civilian or specialty-jobs (short of firing a weapon) in the military. However, their utility as reserved labor force is easily abandoned once the crisis is over or when the threat of ground combat is imminent. At the same time, the expansion of civilian jobs and the miniaturization of weapons will create more demand for women in the force. Devilbiss (1996, 201) makes a similar argument that the adoption of peacekeeping, state-building, humanitarian provision as new military missions is putting more emphasis on non-combat skills and therefore, opening doors for women in the military.

For women belonging to minority groups, being an outsider creates another invisible barrier to participation in the armed forces. Being a minority group in a society with an on-going or residual identity-based (ethnic, religious or linguistic) conflict does not create a favorable atmosphere for recruitment into the military. The Pakistan, Uganda and Fiji militaries are examples that are exclusivist and less tolerant of other groups. The military in these countries are intimately linked with particular ethnic groups (Punjabis, indigenous Fijians and northern tribes, respectively) and have been instrumental in the perpetuation of ethnic-based politics (Zirker, Danopoulos and Simpson 2008). In India, colonial legacies and entrenched distrust of Muslims following partition has created an ethnic imbalance inside the army, which favors Sikhs from Punjab and marginalizes

Muslims from other states (Khalidi 2002). Muslims are underrepresented among enlistees and the officers. The deployment of Indian soldiers for internal security to respond to ethnic-based conflict (e.g. Kashmir) militate against recruiting more Muslims for fear that they will become turncoats. There is also strong pressure from the Sikhs whose interest will likely be adversely affected in the event that an increased quota is given to Muslims. Because the armed services confer tangible economic and social benefits to its members, ethnic-based jostling for recruitment quotas are all the more politicized.

Methodology

The research entailed two types of data: primary and secondary. Secondary data from books, journal articles and unpublished manuscripts (thesis and dissertation) on Muslim identity, Muslim women and women in the police and armed forces were obtained through library research at the Institute for Islamic Studies, Center for Women's Studies Library and the Main Library of University of the Philippines Diliman; the libraries of the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Camp Aguinaldo and the Philippine National police at Camp Crame (Manila); and Alternate Forum for Research in Mindanao (AFRIM) in Davao City.

Primary data came from interviews and focus group discussions conducted from October 2010-January 2011. Sixteen (16) focus group discussions (FGD) with 43 female army officers/enlisted women/WAC (11 of which are Muslims) and 88 female police commissioned and non-commissioned officers (17 of which are Muslims) in 3 collocated army and police units in Cotabato (6th Infantry Division, Police Regional Office-Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao or ARMM, Cotabato City Police), Davao (10th Infantry Division, Police Regional Office X, Davao City Police) and Cagayan de Oro (4th Infantry Division, Police Regional Office XI, Cagayan de Oro City Police) (see complete list of FGD participants in Appendix 1). Separate focus group discussions were conducted among commissioned/non-commissioned officers (except for PNP-ARMM and for the Cagayan de Oro City Police); and between the army officers and enlisted women. The commanding officers/police chiefs supplied the FGD participants based on some parameters indicated in the letter of request (e.g. that all are females; some be Muslims; that they come from different offices/units; that they be distributed between office-based and combat-based units). The FGDs lasted for at least 2 and 1/2 hours each. Interviews with key informant interviews from the same units included 3 commanding army officers, 3 army officers in charge with operations and personnel, four chiefs of police for the region and city, the head of a city Women's and Children's Protection Desk, a Muslim female police chief, and 3 Muslim religious leaders (see list of key informants in Appendix 1). Copies of the relevant directives, orders and memoranda concerning female members of the AFP and PNP constituted a third set of primary data.

A common instrument was used for the police and army FGDs (see Appendix 2). The instrument is divided into two parts: socio-demographic data (age, education, marital status, rank, length of service, current and past unit locations/postings, province where they grew up and their language group); substantive questions regarding the nature of their employment (e.g. motivations in joining the force; how they were recruited; their personal training experiences; their tasks and work condition at their current or previous postings; career goals and advancement) and the nature of their gender and Muslim identity. The last set focuses on the specific challenges they encountered given their being female and belonging to a Muslim minority. No instrument was used for the key informants as they were intended only to be "courtesy calls." But the informants turned out very willing to chat about the army's and police's policies regarding their female members.

The following activities were made in preparation for the field visits:(1) hiring two research assistants (one for each location); (2) preparing the focus group discussion guide questions; and (3) obtaining (unsuccessfully) endorsements from the national commands to facilitate the local research; (4) tracking down the names of commanding officers/police chiefs and their respective contact information; and (5) sending official communication to commanding officers/police chiefs requesting for permission and assistance towards field data gathering. The field research was

completed in three stages: Cotabato/Maguindanao (July 18-25); Davao City (October 17-24) and Cagayan de Oro City (January 9-15). The field visits were completed with the help of three paid local research assistants (Tarjata Maglangit in Cotabato; Hazel Panugo in Davao City; Luzile Satur in Cagayan de Oro City) who liaised, arranged and followed up with the respective offices to make sure that the respondents/subjects are made available for the interviews and FGDs.

The proponent encountered some difficulties pertaining to the army/police bureaucracy. An inordinate amount of time was spent securing endorsements from the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (OJ3) and with the Chief of the PNP Women's and Children's Center supposedly to facilitate dealing with local commanders/police chiefs in Mindanao. Verbal (but no written) endorsements were secured but proved to be useless at the local level. The local commanders/police chiefs turned out to be highly receptive to the proponent's requests. In the field, there were very few Muslim police commissioned officers the PRO-ARMM, Region XI, Cotabato City, Davao City and Cagayan de Oro Police Offices. In fact, there are no female commissioned officers at all in the Cagayan de Oro Police Office. Although these areas have a substantial Muslim population, Muslim commissioned officers who are graduates of the Academy are rare while those who rose up the ranks are posted in distant provinces or localities. There are more Muslim non-commissioned officers as they are recruited locally. In the army, the only female Muslim members are the enlisted women who joined the force as part of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) integration program in 2008. This development make for a rather uneven set of respondents (few Muslims and more non-Muslims).

Inroads and Resistance to Feminine Spaces in Armed Forces: Policy and Practice

Progressive changes towards female integration into the military have been noted following the 1994 law which mandated the opening of military academic institutions to female applicants. Prior to this cutoff, many of the military's policy and practices governing Women Auxiliary Corps personnel were undoubtedly discriminatory and sexist. These include: (1) a 1974 directive discouraging WAC assignments in army infantry divisions, brigades, constabulary zones or in the field or combat zones, except in exceptional circumstances and only for 6 months. The same directive also bars WAC personnel from duties that require use of firearms or extensive physical exertion; (2) a biased career advancement criteria to senior grade which favors field experience and schooling denied of WAC officers; (2) physically invasive procedure (vaginal insertion) by insensitive male doctors to establish "singlehood" criteria (not having been married previously) for admission; (3) differential criteria for marriage or pregnancy with females having a longer marriage ban (10 years initially; reduced to 5 years in 1975 and in 1991, reduced further to 3 years) and being subject to punitive action if they get pregnant while in service (but not servicemen who impregnate women); (4) pressure for WAC to serve as entertainers, usherettes, receptionists and guides during army socials (only those assigned in hospitals and dispensaries are exempted); and (5) "beauty" as criteria for re-enlistment and posting, particularly when applicants exceed quota (Medina 1994; Baraquel 2001).

In succeeding years, various authors have noted that there remains gaps in the path towards female integration into the military. The Philippine military has been very slow in formulating concrete policies that set numerical criteria on the number of women to be recruited (unlike the police) (Baraquel 2001); lack clear guidelines in managing the assignment of females in the field (in combat, combat support or combat support service) (Gat-eb 2010); and directives on how commanders and soldiers should treat females in their unit. The AFP has digressed little from the earlier position under Republic Act 3835 which created the WAC: female officers have rotation postings as their male counterparts, which include field assignment but enlisted women are not downloaded at the same level as them; and they kept female recruitment at the same 1% of the force and 1 officer for 20 enlisted women ratio. Even with "Infantry" as their designated AFP Occupational Specialty, many female personnel still are performing administrative positions within their units. (Estrada-Nova 2005 as cited in Gat-eb 2000, 32). Most of the female line personnel

remained posted in headquarters (with discouragingly very low proportions being assigned to the field).³ There was an increasing acceptance of females in the rank and file but is contingent upon a restricted view of their confined role in headquarters, not in the field. He acknowledges the inherent difficulties in fulfilling physically strenuous tasks among women assigned in combat units but also point to their enhanced utility for non-combat tasks undertaken by the same units. He argues that the key issue is NOT female soldier assignment to combat units per se; but finding a “niche role” for them in the low-intensity conflict environment in which the unit operates. He suggests limiting assignment of female personnel in line infantry units that are exposed to physical danger and endurance but encouraging them towards units that do psy ops, special operations, or implement a variety of socio-economic programs (literacy, community organizing and the like). In turn, he argues that the military should consider these as “field experiences” worthy of advancement to senior grade.

A decade further, more changes were instituted within the armed forces shifting the contours of female participation inside the organization. Directives were issued setting more equal treatment in terms of recruitment, selection, training and personnel management, particularly with respect to marriage, maternity and family concerns. In a 2006 memorandum, female line personnel were given equal classification (AFP Occupational Specialty or Military Occupation Specialty) as the males; were allowed to be employed in administrative duties as well as combat, combat support, combat support service and security related activities; and to be assigned jobs in line with their chosen field of specialization including intelligence, CMO, psychological operations, information systems and other fields. However, the same memorandum categorically acknowledges the discretion of commanders in deciding how to employ their personnel; hence whether or not to assign the female under their commands to combat units or tasks. In the army, a buddy system for female personnel at the field unit is now standard; a tandem of female officer and an enlisted woman is assigned simultaneously to a field unit.⁴ Where two females enlistees are posted in the same unit, they are also deployed as buddies/ tandem for night guard or patrol duties. The same memorandum requires separate billeting and toilet/bath facilities for males and females where they are co-located and compels commanders to make a building/space available for their female personnel upon report for duty. During pregnancy, delivery and maternity leave, the female soldiers are to be relieved from combat or field, flight or ship duties; re-assigned to “secure and healthful working conditions” (e.g. headquarters or garrison) and given the option to return or not to original assignment after leave. Female members were given the same terms for maternity leave/benefits as civilian government employees in 1995. The 3-year marriage ban for women was rescinded in 2008 (Memorandum from Chief of Staff dated 26 March 2008). A directive (Personnel Directive Number 6 from GHQ-AFP dated 23 September 2008) set equal standards for pre-entry training (including physical fitness training or PFT), professional military education and all specialization courses to males and

³ In some ways, it did not depart from the empirics of Medina’s (1994) study wherein majority of the WAC personnel she surveyed were predominantly assigned to technical services or personnel administration units, performing mostly administrative duties (clerks, typists, secretaries, stenographer-recorders, etc.). In a similar study done by Carino (2010), there remains a differential distribution of female personnel across the three branches, with the army more skewed towards combat rather than combat support or combat service support (enlisted women present but no female officers in Special Forces); the reverse with the navy; and almost even distribution for the air force. Carino did not have quantitative data on designations but her informants revealed during interviews that those assigned in army combat units do mostly staff functions or supportive roles to the infantry.

⁴ This isn’t always observed. Among the FGD participants, one admitted being the lone female in her company. She used to have a female commanding officer but she has then taken a leave of absence.

females, with a caveat that female candidates undergo pregnancy test as a health precaution⁵; they be given separate billeting facilities (which are off limits to male classmates and trainers) and not exempted from any activity during menstrual period except in an emergency. Clothing allowances and issues were accordingly adjusted for female members who are given sex-appropriate shirts, uniforms and footwear.⁶ A provision that recruitment of female personnel into the major and technical and administrative services be not limited to 10% and based on unit needs was issued in 2008 (Personal Directive No 05 from GHQ-AFP dated 12 September 2008).

However, informal practices within the military continue to undercut policy intent. Because a great amount of discretion is left to commanders based on their unit needs, it remains a fact that female soldiers are “tracked” in a manner that follows traditional views about women and their appropriate roles.⁷ Zaide (2002) and Baraquel (2001) argue that cultural views that women ought to be protected or that Filipinos in general are not ready for female casualties inform decisions by commanders. Hidalgo (2007 as cited in Gat-eb 2010, 33) notes that female officers are denied or limited from being company/battalion commanders because early in their career they have been prevented from pursuing the required training or assigned field exposure necessary to advance to this level. Carino (2010) narrates of a female officer she interviewed whose earlier request for assignment in Mindanao was turned down because of her commander’s concern for her safety and those of her children.

Over the years, the perception military personnel regarding female integration has also shifted as more women joined as regulars, not as WACs. In Medina’s (1994) study when the female military personnel were all WACs, stereotypical perceptions regarding females was pervasive. Many male and female respondents in her survey thought female soldiers were physically weak and emotionally ill-equipped; and therefore should neither be exposed to combat training nor assigned to combat duty. Although female applicants have been required to undergo a rigorous 3-month Special Scout Ranger Course and equivalent physical fitness tests as requirement for admission since 1987, the policy directive banning WACS in the field was supported by a perception that doing so endangers the women. With the exception of combat unit posting and combat assignment, both respondents agree to the principle of equality between the sexes when it comes to personnel policy leadership, decision making and seniority-based supervision within the unit. In Baraquel’s (2001) study, there was an increasing “liberality” of both set of respondents towards female presence in the rank-and-file: many agree that women are not well-represented in the forces and that increasing their numbers and encouraging entry into previously closed domains are acceptable.⁸ Among the reasons cited for these are: (1) changing socio-political landscape wherein more women

⁵ The military’s conservative moral stance remains: female applicants who are discovered pregnant during training are deferred admission until the following year. But unmarried commissioned officers who were positively found to be pregnant, had an abortion or miscarriage are discharged from service. No such provision exists for men.

⁶ Interestingly, among those listed as clothing allowance in kind for enlisted women are a dress and a pair heeled shoes.

⁷ A great degree of flexibility was observed in the interpretation of Republic Act 3835, which restricted WACs to administrative duties. In fact some of them were assigned to perform combat service support duties (Gate-eb 2010, 43). Medina (1994) notes that she had WAC respondents who were assigned to Intelligence Service and in act underwent training on a variety of counterinsurgency strategies including CMO, psychological operations, intelligence, scout ranger, special operations and airborne.

⁸ This perception shift was not surprising given the changed demographics of the female soldiers during Baraquel’s study. In his sample, younger officers post 1994 commissioning outnumbered WAC officers 2 to 1; there were twice as many WAC enlistees as there were regular enlisted women. In Carino’s (2010) study, there were only 3 remaining WAC officers and 222 WAC enlistees (regular enlisted women outnumber them 3:1).

are increasingly visible in previously male-dominated professions; (2) the passe thinking that women should only be confined to do office works; (3) getting more women in improves the AFP image, strengthens the organization's commitment to gender equality and improves the quality of the workforce. In Carino's (2010) study, perception on female integration is found to be significantly correlated to social (Filipino families becoming less nuclear; women's primary role as mothers and homemakers) and military factors (increase in non-combat activities or military operations other than war; coordination between various branches). As such, shifting societal parameters and changes in the way the military is structured are fueling greater receptivity towards female involvement in military combat activities.

Equality or Ghettoization? Policewomen and the Women and Children's Protection Units

Unlike the military that needed an external impetus (in 1994) to start initiating reforms towards greater female participation in the force, the Philippine National Police admitted more women because of a reorganization imperative from a 1993 Presidential directive for the creation of Women's Desks in every police district. It was the function of the said unit (to investigate cases relating to sexual abuse of women) and the corresponding sensitivity of such endeavor that made it operationally logical to recruit and place women in running them. It is not equality of representation or justice that compelled the large-scale entry of women in the police force, but personnel necessity. As most victims of such crime are women, it is assumed that women also would be more capable than men in addressing them. Yet undoubtedly, the setting up of Women's Desks elevated the status of women; they are now assigned "real" police duties and command posts rather than confined to administrative tasks (Recasa, n.d.; Flores 1998, vii; Aviles 2006).

This staffing predilection was evident in the fact that from 1994-1998, most Women's Desk were run by policewomen. Within this period, it has become evident that the police had no sufficient women to staff the desks, prompting a series of directives that allowed trained policemen as staff complement (but only to handle non-sexual abuse cases) (Memorandum from the National Headquarters, PNP dated 17 June 1997); and as replacement where policewomen are yet to be recruited, trained and designated (Memorandum, National Police Commission dated 26 August 1998). The later memorandum also explicitly stated that the desks are not the monopoly of policewomen. Under Republic Act 8551 (1998), the recruitment and training of women to staff Women's and Children's Desk (so renamed in 1997) in every police station by 2003 became a priority, with an established quota of 10% of the total force. The same law explicitly provided for mandatory gender sensitivity training, equal opportunity in training and promotion, prohibited discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, and specific penalty (suspension without pay, dismissal) for violation of these rules. By 2001, further guidelines provided that WCD be preferably but not necessarily staffed by policewomen; that policemen in these desks handle only physical maltreatment and other non-sexual cases; and that policewomen can wear pants in their day-to-day duties and fieldwork. To address the staffing shortage, police chiefs were directed to train and assign policemen in Women and Children's Desks (gender sensitivity training mandatory prior to assignment). WCPDs have also been tasked to accompany anti-prostitution operations by other agencies. In the Focus Group Discussions with the policewomen, it was mentioned that until the late 1990s, new female recruits were automatically downloaded to police stations to serve the Women's and Children's Protection Desks; they were not allowed to be posted elsewhere for 3 years because of the demand from WCPD units. In subsequent years, they mentioned, that females were posted in the Region. Some also experiences being posted to the Regional Mobile Group for Scout training after completing their 6-month pre-entry. Because of the increasing number of females being recruited into the police, a Committee on Decorum and Ethics is set up at the National Police Commission where sexual harassment cases are directed to.

The proponent has not been able to access any prior literature examining the role of women in the police that examines their involvement beyond the Women's Desks. But inferring from the

review of policies, it appears that the 10% recruitment for women is insufficient even to staff the Women and Children's Desks; that there is a greater need for women's special skills in the police force than the quota can provide. Rather than increasing the quota, the national police simply moved people around, with policemen acting as stop gap measure for this staffing need. It is acknowledged that the police is generally understaffed compared to the military, and that the 10% quota of women are not necessarily translated equally across all police districts. Plus policewomen are also in great demand for technical and administrative duties in other units of the police establishment.

The Rules of the Game and Gender Score Card

Despite the presence of legal mandates to increase the number of females within their respective organizations, there remains significant barriers to entry in the Philippine army and police. There is a known and well-publicized quota (10%) for female recruits both for commissioned and non-commissioned officers for the Philippine police. There is NO set quota for female recruits in the army. Instead, the army follows the 1% quota (out of the total AFP strength) and the standard formula of 1 officer for every 20 enlisted personnel stipulated under a previous law, which created the Women's Auxiliary Corps or WAC in 1963. These quota/s serve as ceilings; in truth and fact, female personnel are distributed unevenly across units with some having none, others few, and so on and so forth.

Under existing armed forces guidelines, female soldiers (officers and enlisted women) can be assigned to administrative duties, combat support, combat service support, combat and security related duties. The same guidelines enumerate possible job assignments in intelligence, civil-military operations, psychological operations (psy ops) and information systems, among others to female personnel. In principle, there is no direct barrier for any female to choose her unit and assignment (as indicated in her Armed Forces Occupational Specialization or AFOS). However, in practice, female army personnel are "tracked" away from combat units by their commanding officers. The current policy allows enlisted army women (EW) only to be downloaded to the Infantry Division headquarters; their subsequent assignment to battalion level units depend on the division commander's discretion, then further on to the field (tactical units) by the battalion commander. With respect to female officers, this rule is "relaxed"; they may be downloaded to battalion level, but rarely do their male commanding officers assign them to lead companies (these are the army, frontline ground forces).⁹ The preminent reason behind this "conservative" stance with respect to posting is lack of sex-segregated billeting facilities, which is required under the guidelines. This is also a throwback of a 1974 policy governing the Women's Auxiliary Corps, which prevented them from being assigned to the field (exception allowed but only if the duration of posting is no more than 6 months, non-combat in nature and none in tactical units). Normatively-speaking, commanders are on the whole reluctant to assign female enlisted personnel and officers in units where they are likely to be involved in combat.

Under the police, priority disposition or posting of the female personnel remains to the Women's and Children's Protection Units (of which every police district is required by law to have).

⁹ That said, combat support units (CSUs) or units other than infantry offer more opportunities for female officers in terms of frontline experience. The armor division and the Philippine airforce has had battle-seasoned female officers including one respondent I interviewed, Major Virginia Ang who lead a tank company which saw action in South Cotabato during the conflicts fueled by the collapse of the government-MILF Memorandum of Agreement on Ancestral Domain in 2008.

The arbitrariness of female recruitment into the army and the persistence of the traditional views (that women are good only for administration and related secretarial work) that mitigate against combat unit posting are exhibited by these comments from a male personnel officer:

Since kami ang nagdedecide ng Kota ng babae, ang ginagawa namin ang signal mula sa iba- ibang unit kung ilan ang kakailanganin nila. [Sa HQ]...kina categorize namin sila by skill. Halimbawa, tatanungin namin ilan ang programmer na babae ang kailangan niyo? Pag sinabi ng unit na 50, 50 rin ang binibigay naming na kota. 50 na EW (enlisted women) for combat, eh wala kaming combat na women so sa admin personnel sa region sila malalagay kasi pinaka kailangan doon babae... kasi mas magaling ang babae when it comes to as personnel [...] kung iba ang perception ng Commanding officer nila and ask for women as a personnel why not... karamihan kasi sa personnel Secretary HBA eh E.W. kasi hindi yan lumalaban , administration resource sila.

[Because we decide the female quota, what we do ask various units first how many do they need. At headquarters, we categorize them by skill. For example, we ask how many female computer programmers they want. If they say 50, we give them 50. (if they say) 50 enlisted women for combat we can't. So what happens is this 50 would instead be assigned in the region because females are more needed there...because women are better in personnel matters. If the commander thinks differently and asked for 50 women as personnel, why not...many of the women are personnel secretary at the HBA. Enlisted women don't fight, they are an administration resource.]

Ang babae sa operation problema dahil sa hygiene and sanitation. Pag halimbawa 1 week ang operation siyempre hindi lahat ng lugar na mapuntahan eh may CR, hindi mo naman pwede kung saan saan lang ipaanu ang babae lalo na kung may menstruation, di problema din ng commander iyon. So ang deployment sa kanila kailangan may facilities.

[Females in operation is a problem because of hygiene and sanitation. If for example, the operations is one week, of course not all places you go to have a toilet..you can't just have women go wherever, specially if she has monthly period.. that's a problem for the commander. Hence, where they are deployed, they must have facilities.]

While there are no specific limitations to female personnel in both army and police to non-administrative duties (including combat or combat support), it remains a fact that MOST of female army personnel are exactly in administrative and technical positions while in the police, they are confined mostly to the “ghetto” of Women’s and Children’s Protection Units. The number of female officers and non-commissioned officers in Public Safety Companies (previously Special Action Forces or SAF), which is the PNP’s combat unit, are so few and if there, often consigned to do secretarial work). In the army, mixed gender composition in field/tactical units are VERY RARE because of selective posting. The women are so few at this level; 1 or 2 enlisted women and female officer per battalion. By contrast, there is a significant presence of female police personnel at the local units.

While both the army’s and police’s policy affirm equal treatment between male and female personnel when it comes to promotion, there remains significant barriers. The police has a better record when it comes to appointing female municipal/city police chiefs than the army appointing a female as squad/platoon leader or company commander. The female army personnel’s near absence of combat/field experience make them less competitive vis-a -vis their male counterparts in vying

for promotion. Compounding this are family concerns which limit female officers's mobility in posting (service rotation between Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao is valued by the army); often, their family situation does not make them amenable to postings away from their family. Male officers by contrast are generally more mobile; their families rarely move with them in the advent of re-posting to another island or province.

Both the police and army have modified their personnel policies regarding marriage, pregnancy and maternal leave to accommodate female members. In the army, regulations that conferred differential time-frames for male and female enlistees before getting married; that penalized female personnel for getting pregnant within 5 years of their enlistment were all scrapped. A standard maternity leave policy was made in keeping with those of other civilian agencies. Both police and army organizations mandate both male and female personnel to go through a gender sensitivity training. However, there is no explicit policy in the two organizations as to how male employees should relate to female employees.

Being Woman Inside a Male-Dominated Workplace

The following section describes the general experience of women (Muslims and non-Muslims) in the process of recruitment, selection, training, placement/posting and tasking inside the army and the police. This section is provided as an overview with the aim of providing a context to the specific experiences of the Muslim women who comprise a subset of the bigger group.

Police and army recruitment of females follow different trajectories. Generally, there were more female applicants for NCO police positions (a good number were repeat applicants) than there were for enlisted women in the army. Very few applied to both (armed forces and police). This is partly explained by a general perception that being in the police force is "better" for a woman because: (1) the training is easier; and (2) that the likelihood of being accepted is higher given the required 10% quota for females.

Many shared that their worse experience during the application process was the physical examination requiring full nudity and cavity (vaginal or anal) search. Some were attended by male doctors (assisted by female nurses); others were by female doctors.¹⁰ The procedure, what it entails and what was it for were never explained to them fully by the medical workers beforehand. As a result, the respondents were in various state of shock when they were told to strip and bend over.

Tahan: [P]inag jogging kami pagkatapos bigla pumasok ang male doctor pinaghuhubad kami. So lahat kami nabigla kasi hindi namin inaasahan, iyong nurse ang nangapa sa suso namin, [N]ung una akala namin bra lang pati pala panty tapos bigla kami pinatuwad nung duktur. Ang (babaeng) nurse ang lumalapit sa amin, ang duktur lang ang tumitingin, naka upo lang siya. Hindi ko inexpect may lalaki magpasok.

[They told us to jog then a doctor came in and told us to strip. All of us were surprised because we didn't expect the nurse to check our breast for mass. At first, we thought we are just taking of our bra, but actually even our panties. Then the doctor told us to bend over. It was the female nurse who

¹⁰ Among the WACs, the medical exam was administered by male physicians. This was one of the sensitive areas tackled by Medina (1994) in her thesis. She recounted how a male doctor bragged before his male colleagues over dinner about "who among the WAC applicants were virgins or not"; identifying them by names. In order to avoid this, the military for succeeding medical exams, only assigned female doctors to examine female applicants or female nurses to administer the IIE with a male doctor in attendance but at some distance.

came near us; the male doctor was just observing, sited on a nearby chair. I didn't expect that a male would come in [during this procedure].

PO3 Cordova: Wala akong idea jud ...kami na mga babae, 7 kami tapos pagpasok doon "sige, tuwad!" nashock kami... may period pa ako. Sabi ko, maghubad pa ako ng panty, may period man ako? Sabi nya hwg nah wag na makita man din yung pwet mo. Kahiya!

[I did not have any idea... we seven females went and immediately the doctor told us to bend over. We were shocked.. I had my monthly period then. I asked if I should remove my panty since I have a period. The doctor said no need since she can see my anus even if my panty was on. It was embarrassing!]

PO3 Singayan: Yung sa sa ECG isa-isa yun pagpasok. Biglang magganyan na, "Oh sige, hubad mo yung bra." "Ha?" sabi ko. Lalake kasi yung doctor na yun tapos biglang ganyanin ka, "Oy, madami na akong natingnan nyan ano, magaganda pa."

[For the ECG test, we went in one by one. Suddenly the doctor said, "ok take your bra off." I was shocked because the doctor was a male. Then he told me "I have seen other breasts, even prettier than yours."]

In the Philippine Military Academy, the medical exam generated the same level of shock among female applicants:

1LT SIAO:[N]angyayari talaga yun... actually kasi kung sasabihin mong ayaw mo, sige, hindi ka rin papasa. Tatagan lang namin ang loob...kasi requirement yun para naman malaman yun kung ikaw ba ay galing sa panganganak...so yun, (pahuhubarin lahat, parang kang kinatay na babae).

[That really happened...if you refuse, you will not pass the exam. You strengthen your will...because it is a requirement to know if you had previously given birth. So there, you have to strip like you were some slaughtered woman.]

MAJ ANG: nakaka-trauma...mga 1 week na pinag-iisipan ko. Bakit nangyari yun?

[It was so traumatic... I had to think about it for a week.. why did that happen?]

The women have varying and sometimes inaccurate explanations as to why the procedure was done to them. However, they all went through and endured the procedure because they are very concerned that if they don't, they will fail the application process.

Orteja:[p]ara daw mas malalaman daw kung nanganak na; hindi na virgin...doon na nalalaman. [P]ati yung breast namin tinignan kung may bukol bukol pero ang nurse ang nag nag sa ano sa breast sa amin. Naka nakatingin ang doctor.

[They said it was to know if you have already given birth; if you are still a virgin, that's how it's established. Even the breasts are examined to check if there are cysts. But it was the female nurse who examined our breast. The doctor was just looking through.]

SPO2 Alas: Ang purpose non kasi strenuous ang activities namin, so may hemorrhoid ka most commonly, yun yung disqualification...

[The purpose was to see if we had hemorrhoids given our strenuous activities. Having hemorrhoids is common and is a basis for disqualification.]

They also went through pregnancy tests before and during their training.¹¹ Most understood that it was necessary to avoid health risks and were aware that pregnancy is ground for deferment or dismissal.¹² Reproductive health, particularly in training is a key concern.

The recruitment process and training for both army and police feature gender elements. Both police and army training are credited for devising the same training regimen for males and females. All went through the requisite training (4 years in the Philippine Military Academy and in the Philippine National Police Academy; 6 months Basic Training for Enlisted Army Personnel and Officer Candidates, and also for Police Non-Commissioned Officers) featuring mixed gender batches.¹³ Except for billeting facilities which were separated, the males and females went through the same physical activities and hardships.

Both army and police have explicit rules regarding physical engagements between the male and female trainees and trainers. For instance, there were explicit rules against males touching the female trainees or even entering/inspecting the female quarters. Although there is a ban against open romantic liaisons, it is a fact that a good number in the training batches in which the FGD participants below produced couples who eventually married after completion.¹⁴ Many were illicit couples who "took life" actions-- meaning risked being caught.

Regardless, the dynamics between male and female members of the army and police reflect enduring biases and misperceptions. An obvious one pertains to sexual behavior: because of an existing rule meting discharge to a female found pregnant during training or out of wedlock, the military educational institutions are understandably worried about how such an occurrence will backfire on the image of the institution. Yet the obvious patriarchic nature of this differential treatment (singling out females but not males) is not readily seen. Says a male officer:

"Andun pa rin ang Filipino values... sa western pag nahuli ang babae na na caught intimately, slight lang demerit, dito pag na caught ka cadet sleeping with the cadette naku, patay ka! Pag may nahuli ka na nagsiping at report naku grabe ang anu ng media. Mayroon pang cadette na nakipag make love sa cadet, hindi nila ginawa sa loob ng camp pero nagbunga ang ginawa nila samantalang according to the rules bawal iyon. Sinikreto nya... nung sumali sya sa exercise nakunan sya. Sino

¹¹ There were differences on accounts of how many times the pregnancy tests were done. For some, it was twice: before oath-taking (before training commences) and before proceeding to Scout Training. Others said it was done only once; the others several times during the training.

¹² A few of the respondents mentioned that one of their batchmates was found pregnant during the training and subsequently was allowed to defer.

¹³ The only exception was the MNLF female army integrees which had an all-female, all-integree batch.

¹⁴ When queried about how many of their batchmates ended up as couples, invariably the numbers are higher for the police than in the army.

ang managot doon, di ang admin ng PMA. Sa lalaki okay lang basta hindi ka lang kasal at walang complain. Iba kasi ang kaso ng babae na dalaga na may anak. Simula nang mapasok ang babae sa army, naging masalimuot na ang buhay ng sundalo. Ang nagmamahalan kasi hindi pwedeng pagbawalan... pwede lang sa kanila magkasintahan pero hindi pwede ang magka anak.

[The Filipino values are still there...in Western societies, when a female cadet is caught in an intimate situation, there is only slight demerit. Here if a cadette is caught sleeping with another cadette, you're in serious trouble. If it was made known, the media will have a feast. There was a female cadette who made love to another cadette.. they didn't do it inside the camp but their liaison bore fruit. This is a violation of the rules. They kept it secret, but during an exercise she had a miscarriage. Who is responsible for this? Ultimately, it is the PMA. With male cadets, it's ok as long as he is not married and there's no complaint. It's a different case with a woman who has a child out of wedlock. Since females were allowed in the army, the lives of soldiers have become more complicated. You can't forbid people who love each other... they can be sweethearts but they can't be pregnant.]

When queried, none of the female soldiers have heard of a sexual harassment case, although they knew of some males who are harassers. Rather than pursuing official action, they instead talked about how not to attract sexual harassment and how to cope in those situations. In general, female army officers fare better than their police counterparts in leading organizations composed by males. Inside the army, the ethos of respecting officers gives females more leverage in their position. Inside the police, it is not always axiomatic. For female police officers, it takes a lot of effort to obtain the respect of male colleagues. They feel that their leadership are constantly "tested." One female officer who was a town chief of police (Boston, Davao Oriental) shared her experience:

PSI Ronquillo: Ako, medyo mahirap sa akin. [F]or example lalabas ako from Boston to Cateel, yung lalake di ba, pag mag-ihi sya kahit saan lang, yung babae syempre di ba mamili pa. Tapos, sa amin, syempre ako lang at dalawa kong policewomen. Pag may party kami syempre medyo mag-waive ako tsaka kami yung mga babae tatlo yung mga kasama namin puro mga lalake mga lasing na. [L]ast December na yang mga tropa ko, gusto ng magpasses tapos yun yong usapan namin na after two days na pagkatapos ng party na magpasses sila pero walang grant na sa Provincial Office namin na magpapasses. [T]apos noong magparty na kami, medyo lasing na nagagalit na kasi bakit ganyan... bakit hintayin pa namin yung dalawang araw so lasing na kasi... so ikaw nalang yong mag-waive para walang gulo. Tapos sa mga meetings din, halos mga lalake yung kasama mo tapos ikaw lang yung babae medyo mailang ka din.

[For me, it was difficult. For example, going from Boston to Cateel, if I was male, I could just urinate wherever, but if you're female, of course you have to be picky. In our unit, it's just me and two other policewomen. If there's a party, I hesitate because it's just three of us girls while the rest of the troops are males who inordinately get drunk. Last December, my troops want to have passes right away. We have previously agreed for them to have the pass 2 days after the party but the provincial office did not approve our request. When we had the Christmas party and they got drunk, they were angry, asking why was it like that, why wait two days after?... because they are drunk, I gave them the waiver in order to avoid trouble. Also in provincial meetings, most attendees are male and I am the only female, you get intimidated.]

[K]ung sa station ka, bigyan mo talaga ng gap kasi baka mabigyan malice, ganyan lalo na kung mag-usap-usap kayo, tapos ikaw lang yung babae. [P]ag may mga civilian na makakita, iba na naman ang isipin...so kailangan mo talagang magdelikadeza Maam. Tapos yung sa station kung red alert talaga, doon kami matulog, syempre maghahanap ka talaga ng lugar para di maharass.]

[If you are at the station you need to establish boundaries because it may create malice. It's like that particularly if you are having a conversation and you're the only woman. If seen by other civilians, they'd think differently, so you need to be cautious. At the station, if there's red alert, we all sleep there. Of course I have to find a separate space in order not to be harassed.]

[K]antayawan ka tapos ia-under ka ng mga PNCO, yun talaga. Strikta talaga ako doon. [H]indi talaga maiwasan may mga PNCO talaga na manliligaw talaga. Ang ginagawa ko pag ganyan, minsan pag text, nirereplyan ko hwag mong ganyanin pero pag makulit talaga during conference inaano ko talaga...yung binubulabog ko... tapos yun, mapahiya talaga. Sabi ko bago nyo isipin yan, isipin nyo muna kung pwede ba? (Laughing) [T]ingnan nyo muna yung sarili nyo kung ok ba? Tapos tingnan nyo kung type din kita kasi panay kulit mo tapos hindi kita type paano yan, mapahiya ka lang talaga. Kasi pag once pinapahiya mo sila, binubulabog mo yan sila sa maraming tao magstop na yan talaga. Maraming beses yan.

[They tease you and the male non-commissioned officers try to put you under their thumb. That's why I was very strict. Having NCOs who will court you can't be avoided. What I do is... if he sends a text message, I reply back to tell him "don't you dare do this to me"... if he is persistent, during conferences I rattle him in front of the others so he'll get embarrassed. I told him, think first if asking me on a date is possible. Look at yourself and think if it's ok. Then see if I like you too. I'm annoyed because you keep on pestering me but I don't fancy you, you'll just be embarrassed. I do this because once he gets embarrassed in front of others, he will stop. I had to do this many times.]

It appears the single women (officers or non-officers) have been the object of unwelcome sexual advances by males (whether they outrank them or not). This perceived "availability" often mitigates untoward advances by male colleagues, which some female respondents said must be met with strong will in order not to be construed as "welcome."

Cameros: [D]epende rin yan sa babae,. [A]ng sabi ng superior ko dati sinusubukan ka daw. Halimbawa hinawakan ka ng superior mo tapos hindi ka nagreact, uulit- ulitin nila iyon. Kailangan ipakita mo talaga na ayaw mo.

[It depends on the female. My superior said before that males are just testing us. For instance, your superior touches you and you don't react. He'll likely repeat it again. It's very important that you must show that their touching is not welcome.]

The traditional view of women persists within the organization. This is reflected in conservative decisions of male commanders/chiefs to assign the women in non-combat units (away from harm), which usually means office works in the regional/provincial or infantry division/battalion headquarters. Where there's a call for "operations", the women get ready as ordered but they know they wouldn't be joining. Even in supposed combat units like the police Mobile Group (renamed Public Safety Battalion/Company), the women are "last" to be deployed

(that is when all the men are gone and more warm bodies are needed).¹⁵ In local police stations, where women are deployed alongside men for raid or arrests, they also remain at the back, to be called in only after the danger has passed:

Gertos: [Sa raid], reserve ka, sa huli uli talaga.

[In raids, you are a reserve, you're at the back.]

Siba: [A]ng babae sa search team pumapasok lang pag nag declare na ang raiding team na clear na ang area.

[The female member of the search team enters the premises only after the raiding team declares the area clear.]

Hasan: [A]ng kadalasang trabaho po ng babae ay taga dokumento ng mga bagay at ebidensya na nakita at nahahanap o di kaya pag may babae na kailangang kapkapan.

[The usual tasks of female police officers is to document things and evidence materials found or discovered, or if a female suspect needs to be frisked.]

But women also are detailed as augmentation to provide security by patrolling and increasing police visibility during holidays and special events in the locality (e.g. fiestas). Usually, however, the younger recruits are the ones tapped for these operations.

For the arms deficient police force, that females do not get to be deployed anyway becomes a reason not to further issue arms to them. Counterintuitively, the policewomen have misgivings about having a firearm issue:

Police Inspector Blas: [P]arang liabilities lang din po ng babae yan (firearm). Hindi rin naman po ginagamit unlike sa mga male police officer na kasama nya hanggang sa pagtulog.

[Having a firearm is a liability to policewomen. We don't use them unlike the male police officers who keep them even in bed.]

SPO1 Bikso: [P]problema pa kasi pag wala akong pera baka maisangla ko pa. Pero actually kailangan talaga iyon...Minsan may uniform kami wala kaming baril. Gusto man din naming kasi paano kung may gulo sa market di pati kami mag takbo.

¹⁵ Not all policemen are issued firearms, let alone long firearms. While it was common practice for newly-commissioned officers to be posted at the Mobile Group from 6 months- 1 year, again they are rarely utilized for things other than administrative matters. One FGD participant, however, shared her experience as a member of the Lady Platoon Civil Disturbance Management in the Southern Police District (Manila). She participated in patrolling, demolitions and also crowd control during the Oakwood Mutiny.

[Having a firearm is a problem because I might put it on loan if I was short of cash. But you actually might need it. Sometimes, we are in uniform but no gun. Even if we wanted to act on a commotion at the market, we can't. We end up running away ourselves.]

Alfonso: Personally, ayaw ko, accountable ka at saka ang mag anak ko curious sa mga bagay-bagay kahit saan mo ilagay nahahanap nila.

[Personally, I don't want to have a firearm issue. You are accountable for it and they're dangerous. I have curious children at the house who can find things even you hide them.]

While many recognize that having a firearm is necessary for their job and in fact is part of their uniform, they hesitate in accepting one because of safety concerns for their family. Curiously, no such misgivings were reflected by the female army respondents.

Both sets of female officers also complain of not being given challenging duties compared to their male colleagues. They attribute this trend to their bosses' gender bias.

Police Inspector Blas: [N]ilalagay po talaga sa office ang mga babae. Noong election nga po, lahat po ng mga babae naiwan po sa region. [H]indi ka nabibigyan ng chance na patunayan ang sarili mo sa mga gawain na madalas male officer ang gumagawa dahil babae ka kahit alam mo sa sarili mo kaya mo.

[Female police officers are really posted in the office. During elections, all the females were left the regional headquarters. You are not given a chance to prove yourself on tasks that male officers most commonly do, just because you are a female even though you believe that you can do it.]

Kuda: [N]ung andun ako sa Davao, escort lang po ako ng babae.

[When I was in Davao, I was just an escort for a female.]

Abdulkarim: [O]ffice lang pero always kami pinapaready in case na may ipadala.

[I work only in the office but we are told to get ready in case we get deployed.]

Bidsuk: [A]ko more on sa office ako, nag e-encode. Pero nung mapunta ako sa Misamis pag may tawag na aksidente, sumasama ako so medyo naeexercise doon ang career ko.

[I work more in the office as encoder. But when I was posted in Misamis, if there were accidents, I join the troops. There, I get to exercise my career.]

The female army personnel are treated “special” by their male commanding officers if they are posted in the field. Many of the women find the practice irritating and patronizing. They do not appreciate being the “apple of the eye” of their male officers:

PFC Durado: [P]ag mawala lang kami kahit konti, hinahanap na kami ng CO namin...kahit sa kainan, pagkaupo nya dapat kaming dalawang babae andon. Lalo pa ngayong dalawa na lang kaming babae basta yung dalawang officers, nagschooling sila. ..Tapos kung nagfo-form kami sa umaga, kakain na sila, kain nalang daw muna kami, hindi nalang daw kami magsali sa formation. Pero iba yung kwarto nya, nandoon din yung CR nya sa loob. Yung CR namin sa labas pero kami lang din yung gumagamit. Pag may mga bisita, doon pa nagsi-CR sa CR namin... bali yung kwarto namin; katabi po ng kwarto ng CO namin.

[You’re gone for a second and our commanding officer starts looking for us...even at meal times, once he sits down, the two of us (enlisted women) must be there with him. Even worse now that the two female officers have gone on schooling. During morning formation and the officers are about to eat, they ask for us to go ahead and eat first and not to join the formation (for enlisted personnel). Our CO’s quarter is different from ours, he has his own toilet/bath. Our toilet/bath is outside the building, and we are the only ones who uses it. If there are guests, they use our toilet. Our room is beside our CO’s room.]

PFC Cua: [M]insan nga kahit 5 mins ka lang mawala doon, pinapa-paging ka na kaagad. Lalo na ako ngayon ... kailangan kahit sa text lang sabihin ko kung saan ako pupunta. [K]akaiba kasi kami...andyan na nga yung sasakyan sa labas, naghihintay...kami lang hinihintay...wala akong magawa, uuwi nalang kami... minsan masabi mo ring “bakit ba?” lalo na sa akin. Naano ko na kahit wala naming ipapagawa sa akin, wala naman hinahanap ka lang ng walang kwenta, gusto ka lang makita na andito ka lagi...parang naiisip ko rin ba...ano ba ako dito?

[Sometimes, you’re gone 5 minutes and immediately you’re paged. Worse so now...I have to text my CO to tell him where I am going. We are treat differently... the car is outside waiting for us...it’s waiting just for us... I can’t do anything...I’ll just go back to the camp. Sometimes, I have the urge to ask, “Why?” specially in my case. I sense that even though he is not giving me orders or making me do senseless errands, my CO just wants to see me there all the time. I often think to myself, “what am I in this organization?”

Many of the female non-officer respondents did not initially plan to nor intend to have a long career in the army or police. Most view it as a “job,” with tentative plans on quitting at least upon reaching pension eligibility or upon marriage. All sets (officers and non officers) lament about the inherent costs of working for the police and the army to their family life. Many married army enlisted women and officers are not cohabiting with their husbands or have their children being taken cared of by relatives. The non-officer policewomen are slightly better off in that they have their families in the same area where are assigned (as such assignments tend to be long-term); but they nevertheless lament about the night and emergency shifts that prevent them from spending quality time with their children:

Moreno: [M]ahirap maging pulis at the same time magpaka ina at asawa. Kasi ako minsan inaabot ako ng midnight tapos ang anak ko sa bahay umiiyak hinahanap ako. Hindi naman ako makaalis kasi call of duty.

[It's tough being a policewoman at the same time being a mother and wife. Sometimes I go until midnight on duty and my child is back at home crying, looking for me. I can't take off and go to him because I am on duty.]

Evangelista: [N]ahihirapan kang paghiwalayin ang upisina at sa bahay. Kasi minsan nadadala ko ang pagiging pulis ko sa bahay at hindi mo hawak ang oras mo.

[It's difficult to separate the office from the home. Sometimes, I bring my police work at home and I can't control my time.]

PO3 Ludgate: [P]ag magred-alert, hindi kami makauwi. Tapos sya lang maiwan sa bahay tapos yung anak namin, siya pa ang mag-alaga tapos may work pa siya early sa morning. Magduty ng 24 hours...maliit pa ang mga anak tapos malayo pa yung bahay namin. As a mother syempre yung mga anak mo maiwanan mo, mag-aalala ka palaging text, tawag ganyan nalang, magmonitor.

[If there's red alert, I am unable to go home. My husband is left at home, takes care of the children, and he himself has to work early in the morning. To be on duty 24 hours is tough... my children are still small and our house is far. As a mother, I leave my children behind, I always worry and resort to sending text messages to monitor their condition.]

1LT CONEJOS: [A]ko talaga masasabi ko sa sarili ko, siguro mga 20 years in the service siguro enough na kasi if ever magkapamilya man o whatever mas maenjoy mo yung ba yung magstay doon sa pamilya. Siguro at the age of 42, siguro 20 years na ako, 42, medyo hindi ka pa masyadong matanda nyan to be with your family. [Y]ung naobserve ko lang sa mga married na mga officers lalo na sa babae, medyo malayo talaga sa pamilya. Paano kaya pag may anak ka na di ba, hindi mo sila maalagaan personally maghahire ka pa ng maid just to take care of it.

[I can tell myself that 20 years in service is enough because if I ever have a family, I can enjoy staying with them. By the age of 42, I'd have served 20 years which is not too old to be with your family. I observe that with married female officers, they often are away from their family. How does that work if you have a child, you can't take care of them personally and have to hire a maid just to take care of the baby.

1LT LIMBO: [N]ag-usap na kami [ng asawa ko.]...mas mahalaga sa amin yung mga anak namin habang maliliit pa sila. [P]ero may time talaga na magkasama kami pag pasko kasi na-understand din nya yung gusto kong mangyari sa career ko, career path. Pero mahirap talaga as a mother, mahirap talaga yung ganito yung gusto mo sa career mo, anong mangyayari sa mga anak mo? [c]onsideration mo naman sa family mo...so ang ginagawa, magastos lang sa load... [C]ommunication talaga yung pinaka importante...ganon yung sa amin, pero mahirap parin talaga. [F]irst time ko na adjustment, first baby, dinala ko talaga sa Batallion, so during that time yung battalion namin, nasa Pampanga na so whatever na kailangan ng anak ko, andyan lang yung SM...Pero what if nanganak ako na hindi ganito kaorganize yung area...lagot tayo...

I have talked to my husband...our children our more important to us now that they're still little. We do have time together during Christmas, for he understands that I want something to happen with my career path. But it's really difficult as a mother, it's really difficult to want a career... what will happen to the children? In consideration of your family, you spend money on [prepaid mobile phone] load...communication is most important.. that's how it works for us but it's really tough. The first adjustment was with my first baby...I had to bring her to the battalion, which was at Pampanga at that time...so whatever my baby need, SM [department] store is nearby. But what if I give birth to another child and I'm posted in a an area that's not as organized?

MAJ ANG: [A]ko ang gusto ko pag nagka-asawa na ako, aalis na ako sa serbisyo, ang gusto ko doon nalang ako sa bahay. Kaso noong mag-asawa na kami, sya yong umalis sa serbisyo ako yung naiwan, so ang nangyari, naging baliktad ngayon yung ano namin, sya ngayon yung nag-aalaga ng anak namin tapos ako yung nasa serbisyo...[M]as malapit sya sa mga anak namin kaysa sa akin kasi pag nanganak ako, after a month aalis na ako tapos sya na yong mag-aalaga tapos ang isa pa. [P]alagi naming pinag-uusapan na "ano, aalis na ba ako sa serbisyo?" pero sabi nya, huwag muna kasi businessman kasi sya so nag-aano pa sya pagka daw stable na yung buiness saka daw sabihan nya ako na alis na ako sa serbisyo. Pero ngayon nagbago na yung gusto ko. [T]apusin ko na magretire kasi andito na man ako, malapit na man kasi Davao-based din naman siya... [n]gayon, parang ngayon pa lang kami naging mag-asawa...

[T]apos may instance na nag-operate kami. [A]ng ginagawa nya usually sya yung pumupunta sa unit namin tapos nag-iispend sila doon ng 2 days ganon to 1 week tapos aalis na. Tapos may time na hindi talaga kami nagkacommunicate ng 1 month kasi nag-operate kami. [Y]un, nagalit sya sa akin kasi bakit daw hindi ako tumawag eh nagkasakit na yung mga anak namin ganon hindi ko nalang inexplain sa kanya kasi basta sa operation, dapat secret kasi , tapos nalaman nya rin kasi kinausap nya yong mga sundalo tapos sabi ganon pala. Hindi na sya nagalit noon...[p]arang sya yung nakipagbati sa akin kasi alam na nya kung anong nangyari, pero hindi ko sinabi kasi as soon as possible ayoko na yung magkaroon ng halo yung trabaho sa family ko.

[At first I though when I get married, I will quit my job and stay at home. But when I did, my husband went out of the military service instead and I stayed in my job. We reversed roles, he is the one taking care of my children and I am the one working. He is closer to my children that they are to me, because I leave one month after I give birth. He ends up taking care of the baby and the other toddler. We often discuss whether I should, but he often says not yet. He's a businessman; he often says to wait until his business becomes stable. But now, I had a change of heart. I want to push on until retirement because I am already here. We are in close proximity because's he now Davao-based like me. It's like we're just starting to be husband-and-wife.

There was once instance when my unit was in operations. What he usually does is he comes to where the unit is based and spends 2 days to a week, then he leaves. But there are also times we couldn't communicate for a month because we're in operations. He was angry with me because I haven't called when our child was sick; I couldn't explain to to him because our operation was supposed to be a secret. He knew of it eventually when he talked to the soldiers. He calmed down. He reconciled with me after he knew what happened, but I refrained from telling him about the mission because as much as possible I do not wish to mix my job with my family.]

Even single women face formidable relationship challenges given their choice of occupation. Often, they don't get any suitors because men are intimidated with them.

De Ocampo: mahirap yung single ka kasi mahirapan ka mag hanap ng lalaki.

[It's difficult being single because you'll have a hard time finding a boyfriend.]

Hasan: Kasi minsan ang tingin nila sa babae na pulis tomboy, naiilang sila at natatakot.

[Sometimes they think of us female soldiers as lesbians, they are uneasy and afraid.]

When non-commissioned officer and enlisted women were queried whether they'd aspire to become officers, many expressed lukewarm interest. The primary concern about family obligations and greater work demands that officership entails discourages them from pursuing this path. For those in the health profession, there remains the lure of going abroad to find greener pastures.

PO1 Talib: [P]ag commissioned officer ka na, the higher the rank the more responsibility. Pag officer ka na kung saan saan ka i-assign. Parang papalit-palit ng assignment kasi pag PCO, wala ka nang time for your family. Yung commissioned officer pang single, aspirant lang nyan mga single siguro. Mahirap kasi pag married lalo na pag may anak.

[If you are a commissioned officer, the higher the rank the more responsibility. If you are an officer, you are assigned to many places. Your assignments change and if you're a police commissioned officer, you'll have no time for your family. Only single females can aspire too be commissioned officers, you'll have no time for family.]

PO1 Valdez: Kailangan kasi natin sometimes magsi-look ng greener pasture or career advancement na sinasabi para at least kasi yung family natin lumalaki or hindi natin alam kung ano yung mangyayari in the future...we wanted our family to be intact so therefore sige ganito nalang muna as of the moment. Pero pag given the opportunity maybe magsi-look din talaga kami. Maski may qualifications bago ka maging commissioned officer hindi lang ganon ka-easy... kailangan mo pang mag-undergo ng mga studies para ma-cope mo yung qualification para maging commissioned officer ka.

[We need to seek greener pastures or career advancement for the betterment of the family, as we don't know what will happen in the future. We wanted our family intact, so we remain in our current job. But if given the opportunity, maybe I will go seek greener pastures. It's not that easy to become a commissioned officer...you need to study more to cope with the qualifications.]

Femininity Re-defined

Part of the efforts to equalize standards for admission for males and females is to do to females what the organizations has been doing to its male candidates. As such, males and females undergo the same type of tests, including for physical fitness and go through the same levels of physical strength and endurance training as the males. There is only a slight difference, for example, on how long are the runs, how many push ups, and so on and so forth. But as was relayed

by the FGD participants and also explicitly stated in the policy, females are not exempted from these physical exercises during their menstruation period, except on emergency cases. That they have completed this training, particularly the so-called Scout Training (where among other things, they go on a mock anti-guerilla operations mission in the field for a week in full battle gear and with their provision in their backpacks) is a source of immense pride for the women.¹⁶ In this reckoning, that they have survived the physical rigors for 6 months is a strong indication that “what men can do, they can also do.”

This requirement for rigorous physical activities transforms the female applicants’ notion of femininity. Contrary to the notion that women who apply for this job are men-like in disposition (lesbians or t-birds), most of the FGD participants in fact admitted to being “ladylike” or “kikay” (female who is conscious with her looks) before they entered the service. Going through the pre-entry training changed their behavioral disposition and physical appearance radically. First, there is the regulation haircut and the standard issue. The female applicants’ hair had to be cut short like the men; as to how short it will be (few inches above the ear or close crop) varied considerably. Standard issues (white shirt, battle gear, combat boots, socks) are the same, except that women are given sanitary napkins. Some FGD participants said their trainers gave them bright red lipstick (to be worn during formation), perfumed body spray or a bandana for their right sleeve to distinguish them from the males. Because the training often requires some physical “manhandling” (e.g. a heavy blow on the front breast), the trainers expressed the need to accurately identify the females from the males to avoid this (which they say is quite difficult to do since in line formation, they all pretty much look the same).

The training process as explained to them is designed to eliminate their “civilian” disposition. But the transformation in their physical appearance and the seeming loss of their feminine aspects were very difficult for many. Here are some comments by female police officers:

PSI Magistrado: Sa akin, yung haircut. Kasi hindi ko alam na gugupitin pala yung buhok mo. Sa PNCO’s haircut na 7cut lang... [S]a Officers, naiyak talaga ako doon kasi kinalbo kami. Oo, naiyak ako kasi sabi ko nga “Bakit ngayon ako kinalbo na officership na itong pinasukan ko? Bakit noong time tuloy na PNCO pa hindi kami kinalbo?”

[In my case, it was the haircut. I didn’t know that they were going to cut my hair. At the non-commissioned officer training, it was down to 7 inches. For the officership, I cried because they shaved our heads. Yes, I cried and told myself, “Why was I being made a bald now that I am entering the officership? Why not when I entered PNCO?”]

PSI Almaden: [N]ong time na nagtraining ako, halos hindi na ako lumalabas ng bahay, nagtago po ako sa loob. [N]ahihiya akong lumabas kasi magtatanong yung mga tao sa iyo na “Anong nangyari sayo?” “Anong ginagawa mo, eh ba’t ganyan yung itsura mo?” Eh para kang...Alam mo yong cockroach? Yung parang makintab na maitim? Eh siyempre pag kaharap mo yung mga kaibigan mo na ang ganda-ganda nong kutis nila... siyempre andon yung insecurities mo na hindi ka magreason-out...hindi ka nalang magpapakita. Kaya sa bahay minsan hindi mapakinabangan kasi kahit minsan ayaw lumabas ng bahay.

¹⁶ It is noted that the 6 months training for non-commissioned police officers and for enlisted women in the army is divided further into periods where the rules are strict enforced then relaxed. Both sets refer to an “closed collar versus open collar period.” In the first, the candidates stay at the training facility 24/7 for 3 months, without contact from their family and friends. Upon recognition, 3 months of “open collar period” follows where they are given weekend passes that they can choose to spend outside the camp or to go home to their families. In the military academy, the same “isolation” rule applies during their first year. Subsequently, they are allowed as well passes and family visits.

[When I was going training (during the open collar period) , I didn't venture out of my home, I hid inside. I was very embarrassed to go out because I am afraid people will ask me, "What happened to you? what did you do looking like that?" I looked like a cockroach...dark and shiny. If I were in front of my friends and you see how nice their skin is, I would feel insecure and unable to explain myself; hence I'd much rather not see them. That's why at our home, they couldn't make use of me because I refuse to go out of the house.]

PFC Sinsuat: Yung sa pagkababae winawala na yun. [K]ailangan parang lalake ka na gumalaw.

[Femininity, that is done away with. You must act like a man.]

Erika: [P]ag itabi, hindi na makilala, naka camouflage.

[When males and females are placed side by side, they are indistinguishable in camouflage.]

Garcia: [S]kin head para talaga kaming lalaki...tapos maitim talagang mabuti tapos pumayat ...Magkakamukha, pare-parehong lalaki.

[We had skin head like males...also very dark-skinned and thin...everyone looks the same...like males.]

Baculio: Naging lalaki kaming lahat. Every 15 days, kalbo. Maitim lahat yung kulay namin at naging maskulado.

[We all became men. Every 15 days, skin head. We were very dark-skinned and muscular.]

PO3 Singayan: Kasi pag sa labas ka yun may pagka feminine ka sa sa sarili mo... pagpasok mo, hindi mo alam kong babae ka o lalake ka. Lahat parang gayahin mo yung ginagawa ng lalake.

[If you were outside, you still have a feminine sense. Once you enter, you're no longer sure if you're a man or a woman. You need to copy all that men do, it seems.]

PO3 Hernandez: Kung sa loob ng training center ok lang. Pang ang haba-haba nga ng hair namin Maam kasi sa batch namin Maam 300, 30 lang kami na babae so parang ang atensyon ng lahat na mga boys, andon sa 30 ka girls. Pero pag nasa labas ka parang mafifeel mo talaga. It's so awkward ba na magsakay ka ng jeep sabihan ka ng konduktor, "dong, saan ka magbaba?"

[If you are inside the training center it's ok. We feel so special because of the 300 trainees, there are only 30 of us females so all the boys' attention are on us girls. But outside, you really feel the lost of femininity. It's so awkward to ride a jeepney and the conductor says, "Boy, where are you getting off?"]

Among trainees in the Philippine Military Academy, the same pressure to be manly is present.

1LT CORNEJOS: sa amin, kahit babae ka feeling nila lalaki ka.

[In our case, even if you're a female, they treat you as if you're a male.]

CPT TALIDANO: [P]arang sa analysis ko lang ba, let's say for example sa field, kung magshow ka ng side mo na female ka, hindi buo yung boses mo, kakantyanan ka. Weakness yan siya kaya sa akin, nagchange yung boses ko before ako pumasok. Sabi ng mga classmate ko sa College, iba yung boses ko kaysa nong pumasok na ako...kasi pangit din naman "harap pasulong!" ...isa yan sa nag-change. May isa akong comrade nagtanong "tomboy ka ba? Ano ba yung sexual preference mo, lalake o babae?" Hindi naman ako nao-offend doon kasi may pagkapakipot,. Isa rin po kasi yun sa pag-ano ng respect kasi pag palamya-lamya ka... yung ano, may tendency kasi na "ah, kaya ko yan." Personally, nag-transform ako kasi part po yan ng respect, kumbaga, masculine ang labas.

[In my analysis, for example in the field, you can't risk to show you're female side. If you're voice is not whole, you are going to be teased; it's a sign of weakness. That's why I tried to change my voice even before going into PMA. My classmates in College even remarked my voice has changed. It's rather unpleasant to shout "forward march." A classmate inquired if I was a tomboy or lesbian. I wasn't offended by the question because I did not mingle freely with the males. But it's a question of respect if you appear lame. Personally, I had to transform because that's part of gaining respect, to transform into a male.]

CPT Talidano: [A]kala ko yung pinaka-bias na organization, ito yung PMA. Pero later on pa nalaman ko na yung PMA tsaka yung Army, yan yung nakita ko particularly na pina-practice nya yung gender equality. It will come to a point na sa mga babae, nararamdaman na namin na insulto siya pag halimbawa naglakad kayo sa special road, insulto siya pag sabihin sayo ng mistah mo na "bok, hwag ka dyan" then lilipat siya sa danger zone. So magiging insulto na siya sa akin, so dalawa yung nararamdaman, flattered din kasi hindi pala mukhang basura yung sarili ko. So tinitingnan din yun pero nananaig yung insulto, you feel insulted kasi anong akala mo, hindi ko kayang ipagtanggol yung sarili ko? [I]ba kasi yung expectation eh pag andon sa loob ng training kasi andon yung napakalakas ng pressure niya na i-prove na so what kung babae ka, so what... so it will not matter na ganon. Paglabas mo sa training, nagbabago din yung thinking...medyo na-culture shock nga kasi iba din yung sa Army, yung difference nya... ah karamihan sa Army, hindi pa ganon ka gender sensitive, aware. Yung iba, iba yung expectation sa babae. Tini-treat siya as dapat protektahan, eh dun ah sinasalang ka, "ikaw, babae ka. Sige, doon ka" parang ganon. Pero pagdating sa Army, medyo nagulat ako kasi andon pa rin yung sense of kino-cultivate yung helplessness ng babae kasi yun nga prevalent pa rin siya. Prevalent pa rin yung expectation nga na babae ka dapat palagi kang ganyan.

[I previously thought the PMA is the most gender-biased organization. Later, I realized that both the PMA and army both practice gender equality. It will come to a point that as a woman, I feel insulted if say, walking on a special road, my male classmate tells me not to proceed to one area and gets himself into the danger zone in my stead. It's insulting to me and the same time flattering because here is a male colleague appreciating me as a woman even if I look like trash. But my feeling insulted overpowers the other emotion; I feel insulted because my classmates thinks I can't defend myself. It is so different when you're in training. There the expectation is so strong for you to prove yourself that you can do it even if you're a female. When you are out of training, you change your perspective. I had a culture shock in learning that it's different in the army. Most army units are not that gender-sensitive yet. Others treat women special, as needing protection; in PMA, you're a woman, so go. I was surprised being in the army because they cultivate the female's sense of helplessness. The expectation that you are a female therefore you're always be like that.]

Alongside the transformation of their physical bodies (losing weight, more toned or muscular in places), many women also open admitted changes in their menstrual cycle. Many experienced their monthly flow stopped or heavily reduced throughout the training. Their bowel movement also became irregular. The women hesitated in bringing up their concerns about their

missed menstruation or any gynecological ailment to their trainers because they fear retaliatory action (“pahihirapan ka”) or embarrassment. Most common are UTI, which they get because part of their Scout Training requires immersion in kitchen muck and not being able to change or bathe afterwards.

Sahibuddin: [N]oong training namin, 7 months kami hindi kami dinugo.

[When we were in training, I did not have my period for 7 months.]

Cardona: [L]umiit yung mga suso namin. Tapos hindi rin kami dinugo ng 3 months. Tapos yung dumi namin parang kambing.

[Our breasts shrank. No period for 3 months. Our bowel movement highly irregular; like those of goats.]

Alanis: [T]umigil ang menstruation ko. Pumasok ako ng training December, March pa ako dinatnan uli.

[My menstruation stopped. I went in for training in December and my period didn’t come back until March.]

PO3 Rentuza: Sa case ko, hindi na sya naging regular. Kung ngayon na buwan mayron, sa sunod na buwan, wala na naman, next mayron next wala na naman...paiba-iba. Naging irregular yung mens ko since pagtraining ko po.

[In my case, my period has become irregular. I had it one month, not in the next, and so on. It has become irregular since I went through the training.]

Gertos: [N]a feel ko talaga na bumaba ang matris ko. So pinahilot kami para tumaas ang matris namin. Kasama ko yung may mga naramdamang bumababa ang matris kasi nagreklamo kami ng masakit. Pagkatapos ng hilot balik training uli.

[I really felt that my uterus went down. So, I had a massage procedure to bring my uterus up. Other women also felt their uterus came down that’s why we all complained of pain. After the massage procedure, we all went back to training.]

Orteja: [N]ahospital ako gawa nong sumakit masyado yung tiyan ko sa training. Sabi ng doctora, kailan ba yong last menstruation mo? Hindi ko naman matandaan kasi hindi pala ako nagkamens sa duration ng training, mga 2 months siguro. Sabi pa nga ng doctora, baka buntis ka. Ha? Bakit naman ako magkabuntis eh wala namang gumalaw sa akin, kasi puro naman kami babae sa sa barracks. Yung sa akin UTI pala.

I was hospitalized because I had a terrible stomach cramp. The female doctor asked me when my last menstruation was. I couldn’t remember because it appears I haven’t had it for 2 months during my training. The doctor also asked me if I was pregnant, to which I replied “why would I be when I haven’t had sex with anyone? we’re all females in the barracks.” It turned out to urinary tract infection.]

Mercado: [A]fter sa Scout, kasi nilublob sa swimming pool na hugaw gyud kayo. Ma dayon to, nagka-UTI sila. Pagkatapos may na feel na masakit talaga 'yung puson...nagka-UTI na pala.
Grande: Masakit umihi.

[I had pain after the Scout training because we were made to waddle in a dirty pool. So, I had UTI. I really had painful stomach cramps; it was UTI.]

Sexuality is de-emphasized in the training environment given the physical unattractiveness of the trainees and the tight regimen they are put through, leaving hardly any time for socialization. But despite these, the close quarters inside the training camp and the numerical rarity of the females generate femininity-affirming dynamics:

PCI Chavez: Napansin ko lang po dahil kokonti yung babae, nakafocus yung pansin ng mga lalake doon sa babae. Kung sa grupo naman kung minsan sa isang team isang babae lang tapos yung 7 lalake or ano mas naaalagan din po yung babae. So may special na treatment or may special na; special yung attention na ibibigay sayo doon sa mga kasamahan mong lalake kay napansin mo pa rin na babae ka kahit ganon yung hitsura at that time. Feeling mo parin may hitsura ka kahit papano, kahit kalbo pero long hair pa rin, assuming! At least maexperience mo pa rin na apple of the eye ka pa rin don.

[I noticed that because there were so few of us females, the males' attention are all on us. Say in a group there are 7 males and a lone female, the female is really taken cared of. You get special treatment from your male companions; you feel special because they actually pay attention to you even if you are ugly at that time. You feel pretty somehow, even if you're bald. At least I get to experience how to be the apple of the eye.]

PO3 Hernandez: Nafeel ko na parang na nale-less yung burden ko kasi pag doon sa training center syempre maraming boys, konti lang kami na girls. Yung attention nila napupunta sa amin. Syempre ang dami mong pagkain, ang dami mong take-life, ang daming magbigay sa iyo, ang daming parang mag-offer sayo ng comfort.

[I felt less burdened because at the training center, there are many boys, and few of us girls. Their attention is on us. You get a lot of food, a lot will take-life with you, many will give things to you and many will offer you comfort.]

Palahudin: [P]ag jogging, hilahin ka nila, kasi sa sampu isa ng babae, so! Alagang alaga kanila, pag group grade paupuin ka na lang nila.

[When jogging, they pull us because there is one female for every 10 males. You are really taken cared of. If there's group grade, they just allow me to sit it out.]

Flirtation and courtship transpired inside the training camp, albeit discreetly as such was not allowed. Staying close together in public or going out on an illicit rendezvous were subject to clear sanctions. It was not uncommon for some trainees to end up as couples during or after the training period. The females in particular were aware of the danger of engaging in sex, getting pregnant and how that will strike out their chance to finish the training program.

PO1 Pido: Bawal 'yung may relationship, sekreto lang. Ok lang na s'ya na mag-uyab mo sa lalaki nga naa ka sa training basta kay di lang gyud mo masapnan ug wala pu'y magbunga-bunga. Magbunga ug kadaotan sa imo ug sa lalaki.

[Romantic relationships are not allowed, but if secret it's ok. It's alright to have a boyfriend during the training as long as you don't engage in sex and get pregnant. That will be disastrous to you and to the male.]

PI Sinato: Tapos pag gabi pa pala, kasi magkatabi yung barracks ng babae at tsaka lalake mayroon nagla-light signal ba.

[At night, where the male and female barracks are close by, you can see someone doing light signals.]

Moreno: Pag malapit na matapos ang training, kasi hindi rigid ang training bale doon na napapansin ang beauty ng babae, pag lecture na doon na magsisimula ang courtship. After 5 days ng graduation namin, pinapa report na kami. Doon na kami unti- unti pumuti. Pag may passes ka na, doon na partner partner lumalabas.

[Close to the end of the training, when things are not as rigid, that's when the female's beauty is noticed. It's during lectures when courtships begin. At that point, we begin becoming fairer (staying indoors). When you have passes, then you can observe partners going out together.]

It was not uncommon for some members of the batch to end up as couples towards the end of their training.¹⁷ Given the dearth of available females, even those who are married are not spared:

SPO1 Pasuquin: [I]yon (being married) ang hindi swerte kasi mag alangan sila (males) magtulong. Mag alangan sila kasi baka anuhin daw sila ng mga may asawa. Sabi ko "Siguro kung wala lang akong asawa tulungan nila ako, ihatid pa sa barracks." Iba rin kasi ang trato nila sa dalaga.

[The married females are unlucky; the males would hesitate approaching them. They hesitate because they're afraid the husbands might get back to them. I told them, "maybe if I were single, you'd help me too even take me all the way to the barracks." They really treat single women differently.]

PI Sinato: Sa case namin...kasi lahat mostly civilian, from civilian pumasok, hindi talaga maiwasan kahit married ka, liligawan ka... married din ang nanliligaw sa yo so depende na yan sayo kung papatol ka o hindi.

[Given that we were all civilians when we went in, it can't be avoided that if one is married, the males will court you nevertheless...even your suitor is married so it depends whether you'll respond or not.]

PO3 Condez: Sa isang room so ilan kayong babae, siguro, dalawa tatlo. So ang mga lalake...kanya-kanyang diskarte sa mga babae. Kunyari sa mga babae "Hi, classmate!" "Taga-saan ka?" "Ai, Bisaya ka pala?" Yung mga ganyan-ganyan ba... hanggang magiging close kayo. Tapos kung sino yung maganda, yun talaga ang focus, tsaka yung sino ang single. Pero mayron pa ring nangyayari na kahit double (married) na sya.

¹⁷ There are about 10 FGD participants whose spouses were actually their co-trainees/batchmates. They met during the training, became steady and wed thereafter.

[In a classroom, there are only 2 or 3 girls. So the boys come up with their own ways of flirting with the girls. They'd say "Hi classmate", "Where are you from?", "You are a Visayan." Just like that until such time you grow close. Whoever is pretty becomes the focus of attention and those who are single. But there are also those involving married persons.]

As active duty personnel, the uniform of policewomen allow for expressions of femininity: light makeup, wedding ring, stud earrings, wearing perfume. Their uniform, consisting of close fitting, tucked in blouse; pencil skirt, black stockings and heeled shoes also evoke femininity. They are only required to wear pants when they go on the field. They are allowed to keep their hair at any length, provided it is kept on a bun, not touching the collar).¹⁸ By contrast, the army women (officers and enlistees alike) wear battle gear/camouflage and boots on a regular basis; wear no make up or perfume and by regulation, tasked to keep their hair at nape length. This stark difference in appearance is not lost to some army officers who lament that seem to have forgotten what's it like to be feminine in the course of their job.

On the job, female-segregated space where one can be "woman" is not available. Beyond female bathrooms/toilets, women do not have private rooms where they can change into or out of their uniforms. For the policewomen in the region, this is a key concern (since they are told NOT to wear their uniform when commuting off hours; in Mindanao, this is not prudent to do). Often they just do so at the office by simply asking their male colleagues to turn their backs or close their eyes.

Being a Muslim Female in the Army

If 1% of the military and 10% of the police forces are women, the proportion of these women in the service who are Muslims and belong to the various ethno-linguistic tribes in Mindanao is lower than the general population ratio. This is not surprising given the fairly conservative outlook among Muslims regarding the appropriate roles of women (in the home). The decades of conflict in Mindanao also meant that Muslim women (and men) are also least likely to have reached or finished tertiary-level education (which is required for entry as non-commissioned police officer or army enlisted women). Between the two services, the police force is generally seen as a more attractive option for Muslim women as it is perceived as "easier to get into (less rigorous)." In fact, many of the Muslim women included in the FGD admitted choosing to join the integration program in the police first, rather than the army. Also the police follows the norm of posting new non-commissioned officers in places where they were recruited; thus the possibility of staying local is much higher than being in the army where you move with your unit.

Eleven (11) enlisted women among the 43 FGD participants from the army were Muslims.¹⁹ When asked about their motivation and why considered applying for the profession, many revealed the undue influence of their adult male family members (fathers, uncles) in pressuring them to apply. The "male influence" is expected given that they recruited through a special commission--that is, they were recommended as "proxies" for ex-combatant male relatives who were given "slots" as part of the peace agreement package between the Moro National Liberation Front and the Philippine government.²⁰ Some got in through male relatives who are "insiders" into the process but were not necessarily given a slot.

¹⁸ Their bosses are somewhat lax when it comes to haircut regulation. One FGD participant says she only gets the haircut when there's an upcoming inspection.

¹⁹ Nine (9) of the 11 identified their tribe/ethnicity as "Maguindanawon." All 9 also indicated that they grew up in Maguindanao, Cotabato City or South Cotabato.

²⁰ There were 28 of these "special Muslim enlisted women or female integrees" evenly divided between the four Infantry Divisions in Mindanao. There was a parallel integration project for Muslim women among the police non-commissioned officers. However, the researcher was not able

Although many have been cadets/officers in school military organizations (like Citizen Army/Military Training; Reserve Officer Training Corps), they have not been raised in conservative families. Four (Cua, Kamarudin, Lakibol and Sahibuddin) admitted to wearing *tandong* (veil) pre-entry and even after they started working as soldiers; three (Durado, Daya and Kali) said they wear *tandong* sometimes (during family gatherings) but always donned long pants and long-sleeved blouses; some (Amputuan) admitted wearing regular clothes (short and short-sleeved t-shirts). But as many were recruited in their late teens or early 20s, the opinion of their parents appear critical in their final decision to push through with their application. Some parents were opposed; others encourage them to apply as having family member in the army is a source of prestige.

Kamarudin: [K]agagaling ko lang po ng abroad. Dapat kasi para sa kuya ko ito, pa alis na sila that time nang ma stroke siya... bali ako na lang ang ipinalit nila. Ni -recommend ako ni Diocolano po, dating deputy chief ng MNLF.

[I just came back from working abroad. Actually, the slot was supposedly for my brother; he was about to go but he had a stroke...so I was put in as replacement. I was recommended by Diocolano, the deputy MNLF chief.]

Lakibol: Yung nag encourage sa akin na pumasok ng sundalo, yung papa ko...sundalo kasi yung kuya ko. Tapos yung pagkagraduate ko ng high school, mag-aaral sana ako.[K]ulang yung financial namin tapos sabi nang mama ko kung ayaw mo mag-aral, magtrabaho ka na lang. [T]iming naman na may first batch babae sa integration. [S]abi ng papa ko na magsundalo ka na lang tapos kung gusto mo mag-aral pwede ka rin namang mag-aral doon.

[My father encouraged me to enter the army. My brother is a soldier. When I graduated from high school, I wished to study. But our family finances was insufficient so my mother suggested for me to find a job. The timing was good because there was the first batch of female for the integration program. My father told me to just become a soldier and that I could go to school once I am already inside.]

Amputuan: [A]ng sabi ng tatay ko bakit pa daw ako magsusundalo eh, mabubuhay din naman daw ako kahit hindi ako mag sundalo. Doon na lang daw ako sa Provincial Capitol total board member din daw siya doon. Siguro mga 1 week akong hindi umuwi. Doon na umiyak ang mother ko. Ang sabi niya sa father ko ibigay na lang daw niya dahil baka ano pa daw ang hindi magandang mangyari sa akin. Gusto ko talagang magsundalo kasi ang kuya ko sundalo rin at iba ko pong mga kamag- anak.

[My father remarked “why should I become a soldier when I could very well earn a living without being one?” He suggested I work in the Provincial Capitol instead since he is already a board member. I didn’t go home for one week. After that, my mother cried. She told my father to just give me what I want because she’s worried about what might happen to me. I really wanted to be a soldier because my brother is also one and also some other relatives.]

Of the 11 subjects, only two categorically expressed that they wanted to be soldiers. For many, they applied because they wanted a job or consider being a soldier (a government) job far more secure. Others were lukewarm at the idea and simply tried their “luck.” These responses are

to tap these female Muslim police integrees as they were posted in areas not covered by the research.

indicators that as a career option, being a soldier is not that attractive to Muslim females, except as a paid and stable occupation.

Sahibuddin: Yung pag recruit sa akin na sundalo, fresh graduate ako doon. [W]ala man mapasukang trabaho so sinubukan na lang akong ipasok ng uncle ko as MNLF integree. [Y]ung quota ko, sa uncle ko man yun. [N]agustuhan ko kasi wala namang mahanap na trabaho.

[How I was recruited, I was still a fresh college graduate. I couldn't get a job so my uncle tried to get me in as an MNLF integree. My slot was my Uncle's quota. I liked it because I couldn't find another job.]

The integration slots were just “tickets”; the first of a series of physical endurance, neuropsychiatric and medical tests, and a final panel interview, which will qualify them as candidates.²¹ A lot of young Muslim females exercised their own initiative in seeing to it that the required papers are accomplished and submitted. As was the experience of many Muslims with the integration project (there were 3 previous batches; all male recruits), having your name in the list is never a guarantee that you can get in. Many turned up at the recruiting stations in Maguindanao, far more than the quota of 7 females (out of 109 total recruits) per Division that they were told.²² Below are examples of such recruitment narratives:

PFC Nur: [N]abisto ng nanay ko na magpupulis ako...hinalungkat niya yung bag ko na may nakafolder na papers sabi yung purpose for PNP. [D]oon nila nalaman na lumapit ako sa tatay ko . Hindi man kami papuntahin ng mama ko sa tatay ko kasi may galit, separated kasi. [A]ndoon din yung birth certificate ko. [B]ali quota ako ni Ampatuan; kaisa-isang quota nya na babae. Siya [my father] yung nagbigay ng pera para pprocess ang papers ko. [K]inuha ng mama ko, yung papers, pinaprocess ulit kasi yung nakasulat na purpose “for PNP”. [A]yon pinalitan po ng AFP, nakuha ako ulit.

[My mother discovered that I wanted to join the police... she went through my bag and found my papers in a folder which said PNP. That's when she learned I went to my father. My mother won't send me to my father because hey are separated. In my bag also is my birth certificate. I was in Ampatuan's quota; the lone slot for a female. My father gave me money to process my papers. My mother took the papers, had it processed again to replace the PNP with AFP. That's how I got in.]

PFC Durado: Ako rin po yung kumuha ng NBI Clearance...lahat ng papers pero yung uncle ko lang ang nagpapasok sa akin, nagrecommend ng pangalan ko. Pero hindi ko agad nakuha yung sa akin kasi ang dami kung kaparehong pangalan.

[I was the one who got my NBI clearance... all my papers but it was my uncle who got me in, he recommended my name. But I didn;t get mine right away because there were so many others with the same name as mine.]

²¹ The physical endurance test required completing 3 continuous runs around a 1kilometer oval within the prescribed time.

²² The Muslim enlistee FGD participants estimated that there were about 70-80 female applicants for the 7 slots available per Infantry Division. It was highly competitive.

PFC Sinsuat: Ako, yung asawa ng auntie ko, member sya ng processing team sa MNLF...[p]ero wala na syang quota na pwedeng ibigay sa kanya. [S]abi nya, try mo lang, ilista ko yung pangalan mo dito..try mo lang kung makapasok ka. Yung iba, ready na yung papers nila. [A]ko noon wala pa ni isa, birth certificate ko lang yung hawak ko that time...di ko pa napa-NSO...ako yung pinakahuli doon. Tapos yun na, pinalad minadali ko na lang yung papers ko.

[My auntie's husband was a member of the MNLF processing team but he did not have a quota himself. He told me he'll put my name in the list and that I should try to get in. Others already had their papers ready; me, I only had my birth certificate but it wasn't NSO-certified... I was the last. So I rushed my papers.]

PFC Ampatuan: [M]ay kota kasi dati ang MNLF integrees...mayroon para sa tatay ko pero ayaw akong pag-sundaluhin ng tatay ko... ako talaga nag pursige.

[The former MNLF had a quota...there was one for my father but he didn't want me to become a soldier..I was the one who insisted.]

The 28 female Muslim soldier-candidates (14 Tausug and 14 Maguindanawons) were trained in two separate batches (one all-female; and another mixed) and featured mixed (male and female) trainors. They were made to wear shorts and shirts (for athletics) that displayed their aurat.²³ As narrated, their training process observed policy-prescribed restricted male-female interaction, with male trainors prohibited from physically touching them (although they could be “paddled” or hit with a stick); are off limits to their barracks except during announced inspection during which he must be accompanied by a female trainor. The Muslim female trainees were billeted at the top floor of the building while the male recruits occupied the first three. They acknowledged that the male trainors treated them more lightly than the female trainors.²⁴ There were informal “hazing” practices committed which strongly challenged these Muslim women's view about their bodies. Even inside their barracks, they were not treated to any privacy: bathrooms and toilets are common, which at any rate they couldn't use regularly nor leisurely because they are always subjected to strict time counts (e.g. 10 counts to use the toilet or bathe) or given only a small amount of water:

PFC Durado: [P]ag mahuli ka sa CR, patay ka talaga. Pa-scrub ka ng sahig ng hubad kaya kami natatakot ng magtowel.

[When they catch you in the toilet/bathroom, you're in trouble. They'll make you scrub the floor while you're naked. [That's why] I don't wear towel when I am in the bathroom.]

PFC Sinsuat: [L]ahat po doon binibilangan. [P]ag naligo ka maubos yung oras mo.

[Everything is counter. If you bathe, you'll run out of time.]

²³ To some of the more conservative applicants, they wore long cycling pants underneath the shorts.

²⁴ The Muslim female enlistees described “mase-mase”, a common practice whereby they are made to do physically strenuous things inside their barracks (rolling over like logs).

PFC Cua: tapos minsan, bibigyan kami ng isang tabo lang para pampaligo.

[Sometimes, they give us only one scoop of water for bathing.]

But the training also accommodated their religious specificities by serving only halal food for their meals and giving them one hour prayer time during Fridays (sambayang).²⁵ There was no separate mosque for Muslim women at the camp during that period; hence a private worship space was made available for them in another building. During their scout and jungle training, the food for 2 Tausug females were also separated because they are not allowed to eat fresh water fish.

Six (6) of the 11 female Muslim integrees are posted in companies, battalions or task forces out in the field where their billeting is makeshift. They are either built a separate hut to share with other female buddies or assigned separate quarters and bath/toilet in the same building as their commanding officers. Being the lone or few females in this environment generates a certain level of anxiety for the women:

Ampatuan: [P]ag mag isa ka sa battalion gaya ko ang pinaka problema ko CR. Bago ako maligo nililibot ko muna ang area para maka sigurado ako a walang lalaking naninilip.

[When you're the lone female in the battalion like me, my main problem is the toilet/bath. Before I bathe, I inspect the area to make sure no male is peering on me.]

Kali: Okay lang ang lakad pag day time pero mahirap pag inabot ka ng gabi. Gaya nung na assign kami sa Camp Abubakar... kasi wala namang pinipili sa disgrasya [violence] ke integree ka o hindi kasi pareho lang ng uniform.

[It's ok to walkabout during daytime but it's hard at night. Like when I was assigned at Camp Abubakar... accidents don't choose whether you're integree or just because you are in uniform.]

While they did not mind wherever they are posted, they do have a preference for Division or Brigade headquarter posting. They have no aversion to being posted in a combat area for they believe it is part of their job; in fact, most of them are currently "downloaded" in the battalion level and many of them have been in conflict situations or have done field security detail where the threat level is high.²⁶

For the Muslim women, there are more defined boundaries in their relations with their male colleagues and superiors, including physical proximity and conversations that are tinged with lewdness. Their dynamics with male cohorts therefore depend so much in conveying themselves as "respectable" Muslim women observing these behavioral boundaries:

²⁵ The female integree candidates were allowed to bring a prayer shawl and mat for this purpose. The training did not coincide with Ramadan period.

²⁶ PFC Nur, who's assigned in the 60th Infantry Battalion is unique; she is downloaded further into the company level. PFC Ampatuan was formerly stationed at Task Force North Cotabato. Her convoy was hit by a landmine in one of their medcap sorties. As member of the 57th IB, she goes on regular patrol duties.

PFC Cua: Halimbawa sa lalake kailangan na ipakita mo rin na karespe-respeto ka kasi kung makita nila sa yo yung easy-easy ka lang parang kakayanin ka lang nila...kasi nanggagaling din sa yo yung pagrespeto o gawin mo lang ng tama kasi mahirap yung makihalubilo sa lalake. [S]a isang organisasyon, mayron talaga iba-iba yung ugali... kumbaga, hindi nila maiwasan yung ganong joke... Ako, ayokong gina-joke ako ng ganon...ayokong nilalabas nila yung feeling nila sa iyo.

[You need to show a man that you are a respectable person because if you they see that you are an easy girl, they'll just overpower you...respect comes from you or you need to do the right thing because it's tough to mingle with me. In an organization, people have different attitudes...green jokes can't be avoided. Me, I don't like being at the receiving end of those kinds of jokes... I don't like it when they make their feelings known to me.]

Mohamad: [I]yong green jokes kasi pag nag joke ang EP at kinagat mo totohanin nila yan eh.

[If an enlisted personnel makes jokes and you go along, they're going to really do it on you.]

PFC Sinsuat: [G]anoon talaga pag nagkakasama na yung mga lalakeng sundalo at babae, hindi talaga maiwasan kaya nasa sa amin na kung paano kami hindi masali sa mga ganoon nila.

[It's really like that when male and female soldiers get together, it can't be avoided; hence it's really up to us to figure out a way not to be in that situation.]

PFC Mohamad: [H]indi po sila [mga enlisted men] lumalapit sa amin ng basta- basta at malapitan kasi alam po nila na bawal sa amin.

[Enlisted men couldn't just come near us or be in close proximity; they know it's taboo for us.]

PFC Ampatuan: [S]a akin tumatabi sila pero hindi ganun kalapit parang barkadahan lang kasi alam nila na Muslim ako, bawal sa akin.

[In my case, they come near but only as friends because they know I am a Muslim and it's taboo for me.]

PFC Daya: [H]indi kami pinipilit na uminom at sumasayaw kung socials kasi alam nila na Muslim kami. Optional kung gusto mo lang.

[They don't force us to drink or dance during socials because they know we are Muslims. Optional only, if you like it.]

Four FGD respondents who earlier said they were brought up conservative Muslims before joining the army point to important changes in their lifestyle. They have adapted to the clothing and demeanor demanded by their job. Still some point to the inherent tension between how they're behaving as soldiers and the requirements of their Muslim faith:

Lakibol: [N]awala na yung kombong tapos yung everyday 5 times prayer noong sundalo na... hindi na nagagawa yun kasi nga sa duty.

[The veil was gone as well as the 5-times a day prayer when I became a soldier...I couldn't do those anymore because I'm on duty.]

Sahibuddin: [M]insan dinedetail kami ng mga usherette, yung nag seserve sa mga Christian. Tapos kasi kami pwedeng magdamit ng talaga yung sa amin. Inaadopt na rin namin kasi sa training pa lang, pinapagawa na sa amin.

[Sometimes, we are detailed as usherettes, serving Christians. We are not allowed to dress up according to our customs. We adopt their customary dress because that's how we are trained.]

It was very evident that the Muslim women had more trouble adjusting to army life than the other set of FGD participants. Only a few expressed a strong desire to cross ranks and become an officer. When queried whether they'll stay put in this career, many said they'll quit: (a) upon marriage; (b) upon completion of salary loan payments; (c) or when they acquire license to practice another profession (e.g. teaching).

Kali: 13 years from now retired na ako. [Thirteen years from now, I will retire.] I don't see myself as an officer.

Ampatuan: [M]agtatagal pa ako dito, pero ayaw ko mag officer.

[I will stay longer, but I don't want to be an officer.]

In sum, the Muslim female soldiers have come into the profession because they come from families who already have male members in the armed services (police or army) or have sufficient family connections to enable them to get coveted slots for entry. They come from relatively less strict backgrounds of upbringing in the Muslim faith (not surprising given that they are Maguindanawons and Tausugs) but whose male kins (fathers, brothers, uncles) bore influence into their decision to enter the forces. Regardless, their entry spelled fundamental changes in their outward appearance; many totally abandoning conservative clothing (and the ubiquitous veil or *tandong*). Like other female soldiers, many were motivated by the prospect of having a secure job and salary, yet somehow do not see themselves remaining in the organization for the long haul. Because of their numerical rarity, they face serious challenges being posted at the field (battalion level). As often the lone female in the troop, there is pressure to establish boundaries between themselves and the enlisted male soldiers. However, some find it more difficult to assert themselves vis-a-vis their male officers who may take on a more patronizing stance towards their presence.

The Muslim Policewomen in Mindanao

Seventeen (17) of the 88 FGD participants in this study were Muslims. Four (4) identify themselves as Tausug ; three (3) as Maguindanawon and eight (8) Maranao. Because the Muslim policewomen entered the job during varying periods, there is greater variation in their motivations, training and work experiences as well as adjustments inside the police institution. For instance, in the early 1990s, high school diploma is sufficient to apply; this was amended to 72 college units; and further amended to 4-year course beginning 1998.²⁷ There was also a height requirement, which was 5 feet and 2 inches for women. The education, age and height requirement were waived for MNLF integrees. During the time of the Philippine Constabulary (antecedent to PNP) and under President Ramos, widows of slain policemen had exclusive slots during recruitment.

The predominant reason for choosing this occupation is job security.

Abdulkarim: Gusto ko magkaroon ng magandang trabaho para sa pamilya. Makatulong sa kapwa. For experience at saka maka serve sa community.

[I want to have good job for my family. Help my fellowmen. For experience and also to serve the community.]

Singcang: [N]ag work din po ko sa gov't pero contractual lang ba ARMM. Before namatay ang daddy ko pangarap niya na maging pulis ako. So nung namatay ang daddy ko sabi ko anyway contractual lang ako, walang security so nag pulis na lang ako.

[I also worked for the government but only contractual at ARMM. Before my father dies, it as his dream for me to be a policewoman. So when he passed away, anyway my job was only contractual; hence I decided to enter the police force.]

PO3 Mamalinta: [P]arang sa akin giconsider yung security of tenure.

[For me, I consider the security of tenure.]

SPO4 Grande: Ayoko sana sa pulis. Ang plano ko mag-PMA para naman makatapos ako sa pag-aaral. Ayaw ng mga magulang ko, gusto nila pulis. Pumayag ako para matanggap ng parents ko tapos masuportahan ko sila. Yun, to support my family. Sila pa ang nagsabi sa akin na cige na mag-apply ka na. Iba na ngayon ang police hindi na local kasi national na... cheke na ang sahod.

[I don't want to be in the police. My plan was to enter the Philippine Military Academy so that I could finish schooling. But my parents didn't like that; they want me to become a policewoman. I agreed because it's what my parents wanted, so that I could support them. They were the ones who encouraged me to apply. They say the police now is national not local.. the salary comes in checks.]

But there were also some who really wanted to become policewomen, despite their families' objections:

²⁷ Those who came through the police MNLF integration program had this educational requirement waived; they immediately went for schooling upon entry.

PO1 Talib: [G]usto ko lang pong magpulis. Pero hindi Criminology yung kinuha ko kundi Education po ako kasi ayaw ng mother ko na magpulis ako pati yung father ko. Kahit na nung nag-apply ako, ayaw talaga nila. Noong nakapasok na talaga ako, wala na silang magawa. Bali naghingi lang po ako sa kuya ko ng financial support para sa mga papers ko then napasok po ako.

[I really wanted to be in the police. But i didn;t take Criminology in college but Education because my parents didn't want me to be in the police. Even when I was applying, they really objected. But when I got in, there's nothing they could do. I asked financial support from the brother to process papers, that's how I got in.]

PO1 Colalo: [B]ata palang ako, pangarap ko na maging police. Every time na nakikita ko si Ma'am Grande, siya talaga ang idol ko...sana some day maging katulad ako sa kanya. Tapos gusto ko talaga makatulong sa mga kapatid at pamangkin ko kasi wala na kasi akong tatay . Kung buhay siguro yung tatay ko, hindi siguro ako magpopolice kasi hindi papayag yung tatay ko.

[Even when I was young, it was my dream to be a police officer. Every time I see Ma'amGrande (an older policewoman in her town), she's really my idol... I thought someday I'll be like her. And I also wanted to help my siblings and nephews/nieces since our father has since passed away. If my father were alive, I probably won't be in the police because he won't allow it.]

Most of the women also have male relatives (husband, father, brothers and cousins) who are already in the force. Often, it is these male relatives who have prompted or supported their application bids.

Binasing: sa akin ma'am retired police ang tatay ko, then ang kuya nag pulis din kaya pinag pulis na lang din ako.

[My father was a retired police officer, also my brother so I also ended up the same.]

Palahudin: sa totoo lang po ayaw ko po talaga mag pulis kaya lang nag retire yung father ko as police kaya pinag pulis ako para daw may pumalit sa kanya.

[Actually, I didn't want to be a policewoman; however since my father retired a s a policeman, I was told to replace him.]

Manampan: Ako parang influence ng uncle ko, dati siyang police, Dati po akong empleyado ng provincial government ng maguindanao, eh contractual lang po. Sabi po ng uncle ko na mas mabuti dawn a mag pulis ako kasi permanent, may sahod na agad.

[It's my uncle's influence, he's a former police officer. I used to be a provincial government employee but contractual. My uncle told me it's better for me to in the police because it's a permanent and paid job.]

PO1 Pido: [Y]ung pagiging police ay mission to ng aking papa...ambition to ng papa ko. Tinry ko, wala lang. Ngayon, mas naeengganyo na ako.

[Becoming a police officer is my father's ambition. I tried it, just because. Now, I am enjoying it.]

PO1 Tabao: [A]ctually, talagang di ko gusto kasi yung papa ko nasa serbisyo ng PNP. Pero wala sigurong susunod sa yapak niya kaya ako nalang. Nung sa time ng mga Maranao masyadong girly, parang wala sa harapan and magpulis. Siguro masunurin ako. Atsaka pumasok na ako married na ako, naging practical. Very supportive ang mga in-laws ko sa aking pagpasok. Masyado kasi silang devoted sa mga Maranao.

[Actually, I didn't like this but my father is in the police force. Nobody will follow after his footstep except me. Before that, I was very feminine, you wouldn't expect me to become a policewoman. But I am an obedient child. When I entered, I was already married, I was practical. My in-laws were very supportive of my decision to get in. They are very devoted to the Maranao tribe.]

For Muslim women unused to baring their bodies, the medical exam requiring an internal examination through the vagina or anus was most shocking and uneasy:

PO1 Diragon: [P]inahubad kami sa medical..hindi yan ordinary sa amin. Meron kaming mga kasamahan na nakikita namin yung underwear. At first nahihya po ako mag ganun, nakita ko yung mga classmates ko mga kabatch ko hindi sila nahiya so hubad din ako.

[We were told to strip during the medical exam...that's not ordinary in our culture. We had batchmates whose underwear we saw. At first, we were really shy to strip down, but when I saw my classmates do so, I followed suit.]

Kamarudin: Lahat po ng pinagdaanan namin lalo na po iyong titignan ang puwet, kasi sa aming mga Muslim bawal po talaga yon.

[Everything that we went through, especially when they looked at our anus because among Muslims, that's not allowed.]

Mohamad: Parang may pinapasok pa.

[They even inserted something into our anus.]

Ampatuan: May naka sabay pa ako na tibo, ang kuya niya asawa ng ate ko, ayaw niya mag hubad. Wala siya magawa iyon ang patakaran. Paghuhubarin ka, ang breast mo pipisilin, I IE [internal examination] ka, titignan ang puwet mo...[p]aglabas nung nauna sa amin, maghubad na lang daw kami, maluha- luha pa nga iyong nauna sa amin.

[I also had a fellow applicant who's a lesbian. Her brother and my sister are married. She did not want to strip, but she couldn't refuse because it's the regulation. They make you strip, they press your breast, they subject you to an internal examination, they peer at your anus...[o]nce the person

before me came out, I went and I was told to strip. The person before me came out and she was on the verge of tears.]

Hasan: [N]akakabigla bilang isang dalaga kasi titignan ang pwet mo. May flash light pa, tignan lang. Ang (babaeng) nurse ang maglapit sa iyo. [Ang lalaking doktor] nakaupo lang siya sa harap pero kitang- kita nya.

[For a young lady, it was shocking that they look at your anus. They even use flashlight to peer. The female nurse was the one who did it and the male doctor just sat there, but he can see the whole thing.]

During their training, many of the women's usual accoutrements are banned/disallowed (perfume, make up, jewelry, nail polish). Their hair were cut short (one inch; must not touch their collar). For athletics, they were required to wear a white shirt with a camisole ("sando") and jogging pants for the Muslim female trainees (the rest wore shorts).²⁸

Female recruits in the PNP experienced the same physical strength and endurance regimen as the males throughout their training. Their training lasted for six months and another 6 months field training where they are posted in police stations. Their pre-entry included rigorous physical activities, running in their full gear and 10 kilogram rucksack for their daily exercises. It was a particularly strenuous regimen.

The police appears to be more considerate of female trainees than their army counterpart, particularly when it comes to physical activities and especially when the female has her period.

Alfonso: [P]ag hindi kaya ng babae hindi na lang pinatutuloy. Halimbawa, sa jogging. Pag hinihinal na ang babae, sasabihin na lang niya "oh! Tama na yan" maglakad na.

[When the female appears unable, she is allowed to discontinue. For instance, during jogging. If the female starts running out of breath, the trainor will just say "Stop it, you can walk."

Manampan: [P]ag may period ang babae, may consideration.

[When the female has her period, there is consideration.]

Alfonso: Sinasabihan ka ng tactical officer mo na manatili ka sa barracks, lalo na kung rigid ang activities kawawa ang babae na may period kung pasalihin pa.

[The tactical officer orders us to stay in the barracks, particularly if the exercises are rigid...the female suffers if she has period and still made to join.]

²⁸ The jogging pants started with the female MNLF integreees in 1996. Afterwards, they have become standard athletic uniform for all females.

De Ocampo: Exempted ka during the first 2 days ng menstruation. Pero depende po sa AI, may AI naman po kasi na very considerate may showdown po ng napkin pero pag babae na AI hindi na po tumitingin.

[You are exempted during the first 2 days of menstruation. But it also depends on the instructor; there are some who are very considerate...they make us show the napkin, but it's a female instructor, there's no need.]

They were segregated into all male and all female platoons; their billeting separate but their training activities (including meals) are joint. When they were allowed to go out (during open collar) or even to walk around the training center, they do so in same-sex tandems. The Muslim trainees in particular were given separate halal food and provisions for worship. During Ramadan, the Muslim trainees were exempted for morning jogs. They were given their meals early in the morning and early in the evening. Both institutions started with one set of uniforms (for Physical Education, shorts and a t-shirt). In due course, the police decided to switch to a pair of sweat pants (instead of shorts) in deference to the Muslim female sensitivity to show their "aurat" (womanly shape). There was cognizance of the dietary requirement of Muslims. Either their food is separated from the group, or in the case of training centers in Mindanao, meals are strictly non-pork to accommodate Muslim trainees. They were also given time for prayers and special dispensation during Muslim holidays, particularly when a mosque was inside or nearby the training school.

Blas: [Sa police academy], pag kumakain ng haram, inihihiwalay po ang mga Muslim. Doon po nalalaman ang mga Muslim. Inoobserved din pati yung five times a prayer.

[In the academy. if we eat haram food, the Muslims are separated during mealtime. That's how we know they are Muslims. They also observe 5-times a day prayer.]

Hasan: [S]eparate atsaka halal man ang inihahanda. Pwede sa lahat, bulad, pastil, sardinas.

[Separate and also only halal food is prepared. Good for all, like dried fish, pastil and sardines.]

De Ocampo: Sa batch ko 14 kami na Muslim, 2 babae. Every Friday inaallow kami lumabas para mag sambayang, then during Ramadan hindi kami pinapasali sa mga exercises lalo na between tanghal. Tapos sa pagkain pag may pork inihihiwalay nila yung pagkain ng mga Muslim. Andun yung respeto.

[In my batch, there were 14 Muslims total, 2 were females. Every Friday, we were allowed to go out for worship, then during Ramadan we were excused from doing exercises particularly in the morning. If the food serves has pork, they separate our food. There's respect.]

PO1 Talib: Sampu kaming Muslim sa among batch. 22 lahat-lahat. Isa lang akong babae. [B]ali sa pag nasa mess hall na po kasi pag magkain na po kami lalo na po yung pork yung ulam, separate po kami. Pero kung hindi pork, sabay-sabay. Para sa prayer, binigay isang room po, magtipon tipon po kami 11 po. Pag magfellowship po yung iba yung mga kasamahan ko na Christian, doon man sila sa

Chapel tapos kami may room po na para sa amin. Hindi po Friday kasi yung nakaschedule po kasi na fellowship na mga kasama kung Christian, sabay kami. Ako lang nagdala sarili kong pandong.

[Of the 22 in our batch, 10 were Muslims and I was the lone female. They gave us one room for prayer so that we all could gather together. During fellowship, the Christians stay at the chapel, we have a separate room. We don't do worship on Friday but on the same day as the Christians.]

Pamalinta: [S]a aming case po, depende kasi sa Regional Training Director namin. Yun, every Friday po bibigyan po kami ng from 12 noon to 2 o'clock. Pinapalabas po kami para magsambayang.

[It depended on the Regional Director. Every Friday, we were given from noon to 2pm. We were allowed to go out for worship.]

Kuda: May mosque po sa loob ng training school, naga puasa rin po kami. Halimbawa pag gay ongoing ang exercises at Asar/ maghrib na pala pwede ka umalis basta magpaalam lang. Tinatanong muna talaga kung sino ang nag oobserve.

[There's a mosque inside the training school where we go for worship. If there are on-going exercises and it's already prayer time, we can go but we must first seek permission. They ask who among us observe the prayers.]

Accounts of the special dispensation she and other Muslims were given during Ramadan, which coincided with their training period. Note that there is also reciprocity; Christians were given parallel treatment during December.

Alfonso: Inabot kami ng Ramadan, nagcacater sila ng pagkain sa gabi at madaling araw, kukunin lang ng training center kung ilan ang mag puasa, ganun din ang mga Christian pinapa samba rin sila. [P]ag regular days madaling araw ang exercise. Pero pag inabot ng Ramadan, ang exercise pagkatapos kumain sa gabi. Ganun din pag December sila (Christians) ang gigising ng maaga. Pag Friday I sesegregate ang mga Muslim para mag sambayang. Pag break ng puasa palabasin kami, ganun din pag December...[I]ahat, Christian at Muslim. Wala man din gagawin sa loob, iyong iba nga ilang araw, halimbawa Zamboanga o di kay Jolo, 1 week, pag Ramadhan break. [P]ero kailangang mag request ng approval kasi pag may mangyari sa iyo, I turn over kayo ng CO nyo kasi siya ang magiging responsible.

[Ramadan happened during our training, they catered food for us at night and early in the morning, the training center just asks who among us will go for prayers, and also ask the Christians the same. During regular days, exercises are early in the morning. But during Ramadan, we do the exercises after we finish dinner. It's like that too for Christians during December when they wake up very early in the morning. On Fridays, the Muslims are segregated for worship. When the fast ended, we were allowed to go out, it's also like this in December.. for all Christians and Muslims. There's nothing to do inside anyhow, some go to Zamboanga or Jolo for a few days during Ramadan break. But you need to request for an approval because if something happens to you, you'll be turned over to the Commanding Officer and he'll be responsible.]

Macabangon: Inabutan kami ng Ramadan sa training. Sa simula, kaya pa sa fasting. Una lang kami kain pag 6pm. Kalaunan hindi na na kaya ang fasting habang nagti training, kaya itinigil. Pero pinayagan kami lumabas sa masjid tuwing Friday. Yung bukna, hindi kami binigyan. Dala-dala kada isa.

[Raman also happened during our training. At first, I went on fasting. We just eat ahead at 6am. However, later, I couldn't continue fasting while training, so I stopped. But they allowed us to go out to the mosque for worship on Fridays. They didn't give us a religious cover (bukna). We brought them with us from our homes.]

Posting in a non-Muslim province or region presents serious challenges to the Muslim policewomen. First, their commanding officers and cohorts may not be as sensitive to their needs.

Singang: [N]ung na assign nga po ako noon sa Misamis Oriental, nahirapan ang CO ko kasi isda lang ang kainin ko. Pumayat talaga ako doon tapos ako din ang nagluluto ng pagkain, sariling kitchen utensils kasi bawal na iisang lutuan lang kahit pa po nahugasan pa po iyong gamit...pati po iyong isang kutsara lang gamit pero ginamit din doon sa haram.

[When I was assigned in Misamis Oriental, it was hard for my commanding officer because I only ate fish. I really lost weight when I was there, I was cooking for myself, using my own kitchen utensils because it is not allowed to share cooking implements with them even if they were washed...even the spoon used to scoop the haram food.]

Because the police are recruited locally to fill in personnel needs of the region, they can be expected to also be posted upon completion of their training close to home. There has been some changes over the years in the manner of deployment for new entrants. Previously, female newbies were automatically downloaded to province and town/city Women and Children's Protection Desks. Recently, they are allowed to be posted in the region, even with the Public Safety Battalion (PSB). However, the female MNLF integreees are restricted to posting in these PSBs, province and town.

Because the police force is "national," exigent circumstances like the 2009 Maguindanao massacre compels re-assignment to areas other than the region where one was recruited. This was what happened to the female policewomen of ARMM-- many were reassigned to various Mindanao regions for 4 months. This directive generated a lot of grief among the women who had to leave their families behind. A timely intercession from the Chief Director of the Women's and Children's Protection Division as Camp Crame allowed them to return sooner than their their male colleagues.

Inside the police, the inherent tension between living as a Muslim and the requirements of the job is evident. This is particularly so in the case of wearing a veil. Many of the Muslim FGD participants (Singang, Pasuquin, Abdulkarim, Palahuddin, Binasing, Manampang) admitted having grown up wearing one, but subsequently quit wearing it altogether or only occasion demands wearing one (e.g. prayer time).

Singang: [L]umaki ako Christian area sa Pagadian tapos nag aral ako sa Catholic School. Nag aral din ako ng Sharia law ng OMA kaya alam ko pong bawal makita ang buhok ng babaeng Muslim. Ang gusto po ko pag nagtandong po ako, hindi ko po siya tatanggalin. Kaya lang po hindi po siya

masuot kasi ito ang uniporme ko at ito ang source of income ko. Atsaka napag aralan ko po na ang pagsusuot ng mga maluluwang na damit, tandong etc. ay hindi po dapat sapilitan andun iyong willingness bukal sa loob. Pag off duty ko, hindi na ako nagsusuot ng tandong. [M]edyo hindi ka maka focus sa maga obligation mo sa religion mo.

[I grew up in a Christian area in Pagadian and I went to a Catholic school. I also studies Shari'a law under an imam that's why I know that a Muslim woman's hair shouldn't be visible in public. When I wear a veil, i don;t want to take it off as often. But I can't wear it because I am in uniform, this is my source of income. I also learned that wearing loose clothes and a veil shouldn't be compelled, rather one should be willing and open. If I'm off duty, I no longer wear a veil. (I realize) I can't concentrate on my religious obligations.]

Abdulkarim: Dati akong nagsusuot ng hijab. Walang sinabi na tanggalin noong nag-aaply pa lang ako. Pero ng mag-agility test, tinanggal ko na. Hindi na ako nagsusuot ng hijab mula noon.

[I used to wear a veil. They didn't tell us to remove it when I was applying. But when I did the agility test, I took it off. Since then, I no longer wear a veil.

Palahudin: [H]indi na ako nagsusuot ing tandong. Kasi ang gusto ko, pag nagsuot ako ng tandong iyong hindi na inaalís.

[I no longer wear a veil. It's because when I wear one, I like to keep it on.]

Binasing: [I] wore tandong noong high school po ako. Ngayon I only wear tandong occasionally and pag nag pray. I did not exactly grew up with a Muslim family, ang mother ko Catholic, ang sisters ko nag Catholic na rin. Ako lang natira. My father is a full Muslim and as well as my husband.

[I wore a veil beginning in high school. Now, I only wear it occasionally and when I pray. I did not exactly grow up with a Muslim family because my mother was Catholic, my sisters also became Catholic. I am the only one left. My father is a full Muslim as well as my husband.]

Among the policewomen stationed in Maranao (where more conservative Muslims reside), the reverse is true. They often wear kombong (veil) when outside doing their work. In fact, they also do so inside their office (with their uniform), provided there's no inspection.

PO1 Tabao: Kung nasa office minsan hindi naming suot yung combong pero kung nasa ibang lugar syempre hindi mawawala sa amin ang pagiging maranao name kaya nagsusuot kami. Kung nandoon ako sa station namin at wala naming inspection, syempre nagcocombong rin ako.

[We don't usually wear a veil inside the office but when we are in other places, it's unavoidable since we are Maranaos. If I am at the station and there's no inspection, I wear the veil (along with my uniform).]

Because the skirt is part of their uniform (an outfit which many conservative Muslim females would not find acceptable), the Muslim women have also mixed feelings about wearing it.²⁹ Some are uncomfortable, others do not mind.

Palahudin: [A]ko naiilang ako.

[I feel awkward.]

Binasing: [A]ko okay lang kasi nakasanayan ko na rin. Kaya palda kasi para ma identify kung sino ang babae at sino ang lalaki kasi pareho ng iksi ng buhok.

[I am ok because I'm used to it. It's through the skirt that clients are able to identify who is male and female since we all have short hair.]

Manampan: Sa akin okay lang kasi nakasanayan ko na rin, noon kasing nag- aral ako sa USM Kabacan, ang uniform doon pencil cut.

[I am used to it since when I was in college at University of Southern Mindanao, our uniform was a pencil-cut skirt.]

How they were viewed by men was also altered once they joined the police force. Some found themselves more respected; simultaneously as a potential spouse given that they have a steady job but also as non-partner because their status is higher than the males.

Colalo: [P]ananaw din sa amin ng mga lalaki ba ngayon hindi na nila kaya maabot kasi police man kami. Nung hindi pa ako police, mga 150 ngayon baka magabot na nag milyon milyon. Hindi na kaya ng mga lalaki. Mahal naman ka pagpolice ... palangga naka. Sabi nila, "hindi natin yan kaya baka barilin tayo." May nagpaparamdam ba eh wala namang trabaho. Baka ang habol lang sa akin eh ang sweldo o pang load.

[Men think we are unreachable because we are policewomen. When I was not one, maybe I was worth 150 pesos, but now I am worth millions. Men can't afford me. It's expensive to be a police... you are sought after. They say "can't outdo her, she might shoot us." There are some who are trying to court me but they don't have jobs. I am suspicious that they are only after my salary.]

Grande: Oo aloof sila sa akin kasi ang liit ng tingin nila sa kanilang sarili tingin nila sa akin eh mataas kasi.

[The men are aloof towards us because they think they are so little; they think I am too high.]

²⁹ Female police officers are allowed to wear pants when out in the field.

The role reversal brought about by their being policewomen was not lost to them. Breaking Muslim cultural norms regarding their choice of occupation is also something that they acknowledge.

Omar: Dapat kasi mga babae hindi na nagtatrabaho nasa bahay lang palagi mag alaga ng mga anak nila. Ganun kasi kami sa Maranao. Pero ngayun iba na yung mga babae na yung naghahanap ng trabaho parehas sa amin.

[Women ought not to work but rather just stay at home and take care of the kids. That's how we are in Maranao. But now, women are different because they seek jobs, like us.]

Tabao: Mahirap kasi kine-question nila yung pagiging babaeng police namin in terms sa mga devoted. Masasabi nila naa police ka?

[It's hard because many devotees question our being policewomen. They ask why are we in the force?]

Grande: Nuon hindi nila tanggap yung police na babae. Dapat matanggap nila. Ipakita nila sa mga pamilya na sila police. Ganun din ako sa mga anak ko gusto ko sila lahat police para pagatake ganun may laban sila. Tatlo ang anak kong babae; gusto ko maging police sila

[Before they cant accept Muslim women in the force. But they should. They should show their families that they are policewomen. I am like that to my kids, I would like them to be all policewomen so that they can fight. I have three girls; I want them all to be policewomen.]

Unlike the Muslim enlisted women in the army, surprisingly, the Muslim non-commissioned officers are motivated to move up in the organization. Many say they will stay on until retirement; others wish to try crossing ranks.

Pido: Ako may planong magtake ng officer exam kasi licensed criminologist ako.

[I plan to take the officer exam because I am a licensed criminologist.]

Grande: Ako nagtry pero hind pumasa. Piling pili lang talaga ang may eligibility. Nuong 2007, nakuha ko na and SPO3. Pero gusto ko sanang maging officer.

[I tried but I did not pass. The eligibility is really tough. In 2007, I had a chance to be a senior police officer 3 . I really want to be a commissioned officer.]

Colalo: Gusto ko kaya lang hindi pa ako nakapasa ng licensure sa criminology.

[I want to but I did not pass the criminology licensure exam.]

Regardless of varying modalities of entry into the police force, a steady employment and educational benefits are key factors among the women. Often these motivations are articulated not as personal desire for advancement but as a way to help their families and communities. Being a policewomen is a source of societal upward mobility and is recognized as a plus/hindrance in terms of finding suitable mates. Like the army enlisted women, the female police officers have male family members who inspired or pushed them to pursue a similar career. Many came from conservative family backgrounds and were used to wearing a veil, and find tension between this religious requirement for chastity and the secular, but definitely feminine look of their uniform. Some have altogether quit or limit wearing the veil to special family occasions. The Maranaos in the group are an exception; as their working communities are composed of conservative Islam, adherents, it is imperative that they continue to wear the veil (sometimes even with their uniform) in deference to custom. Unlike their army counterpart, they see more long-term career prospects inside the police.

By Way of Conclusion

To be a female inside the armed forces and the police presents unique challenges both to them as personnel and to their male cohorts and commanders. While the military and the police have made changes in their rules to accommodate the entry of female personnel, the pervasive masculine-based culture of the organizations foster enduring biases against females, which prevents the females from truly achieving equality in terms of tasks and posting. Yet this very same masculine-based culture perpetuates outmoded and traditional notions of femininity inside the organization (assigning women to administrative tasks; requiring them to attend socials, etc.).

For the females, the seeming loss of femininity in the course of training is regained once they become “regulars”. The masculinization was deemed important to break their civilian character and to learn (by heart) the virtue of obedience and militaristic life. In the PMA and PNPA, the quest for females to be treated seriously (i.e. be more masculine) and equally with male cadets is intense. Yet even within this confine, there are spaces of “femininity” in the elicited and flirtatious engagements between the males and females. Even when deemed dark, ugly and smelly, the women by their numerical rarity were treated as special by their male co-trainees. Inside the organization, there is a palpable shift to the traditional gender mode of treating females as helpless. In the police, more so than in army, the substantial number of women in the regional office (with the exception of those in line duty, i.e. municipal/city police office) create a more conducive environment for femininity to flourish. Where the women are fewer in number, the more they feel isolated and defensive of their feminine attributes.

It is tough to be a gun-carrying woman. The job exacts a heavy toll in terms of family life, perhaps more so than any other occupation. The out-of-area posting, required geographical mobility, long periods of separation, 24-hour on call-- all these exact a heavy price on their spouses and children. This is one major concern that makes the armed service unattractive to women as a profession. Even if the doors have been opened for their entry, it remains a fact that few women would be attracted towards this occupation precisely because of the difficulty of balancing work and family.

For Muslim women, choosing the army and the police for employment sets them apart from many of their cohorts. However, this choice of profession does not appear unusual given their predominantly armed service family background. They were mostly police and army brats who have a level of familiarity with the kind of this job and who understand the potential for upwards social mobility in this kind of employment (more so than civilian jobs which in Mindanao tend to change depending on the political dispensation). Not surprisingly, more initially preferred to be in

the police (given the combination of assured quota/slots and the impression that it is less tough to get in and the prospect of local posting). The accommodation for their special dietary needs, allowing them to worship and giving them special dispensation during Ramadan (in the case of the police trainees, having jogging pants instead of shorts for their physical fitness outfits) during training undoubtedly eased their transition into the organization. Because they are posted in Mindanao-based units, their male colleagues and officers are more attuned to Muslim customs which gives the women greater “breathing space” when it comes to expectations in male-female relationships. But being in a Muslim community that has set expectations about the appropriate roles for women also create tension among the female police and soldiers; because they run against this community and family expectations about their public appearance and conduct, they devise various ways to negotiate this tension.

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List of FGD Participants

FGD Participants Cotabato City

PNP-Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM)

Mixed Commissioned and Non-Commissioned Officers

SPO3 Monique Bikso

SPO1. Marylin Singkun (Muslim)

SPO1. Soraida Kuda

SPO1.Amina Pasuki

SPO3. Nor-aina Abdulkarim (Muslim)

PIInsp. Bernie Alsid

PO3 Melanie Binasing (Muslim)

PO3 Rosalyn Apat

SPO1 Juliet Dadios

PO1 Akrima Palahudin

PO3 Salma Alfonso

PO3 Merlin Manampan (Muslim)

PNP-Cotabato City

Commissioned Officers

Insp. Mary Jane Kulanat

Fegi Cayang

Silvia Cahayagan

Non-Commissioned Officers

PO1 Amina Hasan (Muslim)

PO3 Gwen Siva

PO3 Rochelle Evangelista (Muslim convert)

SPO2 Annie Basilio

PO1 Jaime Gertos

PO3 Ruby Moreno

PO1 Meriam De Ocampo (Muslim convert)

PO1 Tajan

PO1 Alanis

6th Infantry Division

Women Officers

Fe Agaton

Muddasil

Veracion

Ribosura

Layno

Juan

Enlisted Women

PFC Gonzales

Cameros

Erica

Mulat

Ampatuan (Muslim; MNLF integree)

Camarudin (Muslim; MNLF integree)

Muhamad (Muslim; MNLF integree)

Kali (Muslim; MNLF integree)

Dayu (Muslim; MNLF integree)

FGD Participants Davao City

PNP-PRO XI

Non-Commissioned Officers

PO2 Eva Marie Hernandez Mamalinta – 11th RPSB (Muslim)

PO1 Sarah Mae Aba Talib – 11TH RPSB (Muslim)

PO3 Arleen Arellano Cordova - RHQ

PO3 Lailah Alconcel Rentuza - RHQ

PO3 Christine Palma Hernandez - RHQ

PO1 Irish May Ynion Valdez - RHQ

PO3 Nadial

Ludgate

Condez

Singayan

PO2 Alon Alas

Commissioned Officers

PSINSP Lennie Lim Ronquillo - RHQ

PINSP Sinato

PINSP Rusia

PINSP Villanueva

PSInsp Bernasor

PINSP Almaden

PINSP Alvarado

PINSP Majistrado

Chief Insp Chavez

PNP-Davao City

Commissioned Officers

Insp. Sharon Saliana

Grace Dimaali

Birondo
Antero
Ramirez
Bornea
Marilen Apa
Superintendent Ana Maria Baladad

Non-Commissioned Officers

PO3 Martinez
SPO3 Dumular
Rebeso
Nuri Paliota
Medina
Bargayo
Lorino
Gaspan
Paer

10th Infantry Division

Women Officers

Capt. Lidano
1Lt. Davy Siao
1Lt Baloyan
Major Virginia Ang
2Lt Daphne Jane Giagona
1Lt Florivic Limbo
1Lt Salvacion Conejos

Enlisted Women

PFC Johana Nur (Muslim; MNLF integree)
PFC Bai Johana Durado (Muslim; MNLF integree)
PFC Noraida Cua (Muslim; MNLF integree)
PFC Bai Alissa Sinsuat (Muslim; MNLF integree)
PFC Gadardo

FGD Participants Cagayan de Oro City

PRO X Police

Commissioned Officers
Datiles
Pebojot
Daganato
Darroca
Loquies-Vergara

Non-commissioned officers

Diragon (Muslim)

Macabangon (Muslim)

Grande (Muslim)

Omar (Muslim)

Baculio

Tabao (Muslim)

Pido (Muslim)

Colalo (Muslim)

Mercado

Sabugaa

Cavillan

Cagayan de Oro City Police

Non-commissioned officer

PO3 Orita

PO3 Cabatingan

PO3 Sagario

SPO2 Sasil

PO1 Ubanan

SPO2 Figueras

PO3 Agad

4th Infantry Division

Officers

1LT Penera

2LT Pamplona

Resurreccion

Major Suarez

Capt Selga

Capt. de la Cruz

Major Paler

Enlisted Women

Sgt. Garcia

MSgt. Corbeta

MSgt. Mortejo

PFC Lakibal

PFC Sahibuddin

Corporal Cadorna

Interviews:

General Bernardo. July 22, 2010. Camp Siongco, Awang, Maguindanao.

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Major General Segovia. October 19, 2010. Camp. Evangelista, Panacan, Davao City.

Chief Inspector Carmelita Pauya. Head, Women's and Children's Protection Desk. July 21, 2010. PNP-Cotabato City

Police Inspector Grace Jamila de Castro. Police Chief, Awang, Maguindanao. July 23, 2010.

Chief Inspector Restituto Gatera. October 18, 2010. PNP-PROX. Catitipan, Davao City.

Professor Zubaide Meneses. Public Protection and Safety College. October 18, 2010. Mintal, Davao City

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Major General Victor Felix. January 9, 2011. Camp Evangelista. 4th Infantry Division. Cagayan de Oro City

Police Superintendent Benedicto Lopez. January 11, 2011. Cagayan de Oro City Police Office.

Colonel Rasay. January 11, 2011. Camp Evangelista. 4th Infantry Division. Cagayan de Oro City

Imam Amerodin Guro. January 14, 2011. Cagayan de Oro City

Ammar Maravillas. January 14, 2011. Cagayan de Oro City

Sheik Aliasa Alinog. January 14, 2011. Cagayan de Oro City

Appendix 1

Focus Group Discussions Questions (5/25/10)

“Camouflage and Pandong: Identity Construction among Muslim Women in the Philippine Army and Police”

Infantry Division: 3 sets (Muslim WAC- officers or non-officers; Muslim regular- enlisted women and female officers; non-Muslim WAC or regular enlisted women)

Basic socio-demographic information needed (form to be filled up during the focus group discussion)

Rank, length of service, specialty

Current unit, previous units posted at since joining the army

Age

Highest educational attainment

Marital status

Province where you grew up

Languages spoken

1. In what year did you decide to join the army? How old were you then?
2. What made you interested in joining the army (instead of pursuing another profession?)
3. Do you have family or friends who are/were in the armed service (military or police)? If so, who are they? Which service are/were they in? How long are/were they in the armed service?
4. Did you participate in Citizen’s Military Training (CMT) in high school or in college? If so, where and for how long?

5. On recruitment:
 - a. How were you recruited to join the army? Was it a recruitment for females only or mixed (male and female) recruitment?
 - b. Where were you recruited at?
 - c. Who recruited you?
 - d. Were there many other applicants during this process? If so, about how many applicants were there?
 - e. What tests (physical, written, mental) tests did you have to undergo as an applicant? Please describe these tests in detail.
 - f. How did you find the tests? Were they unexpected, easy or difficult?
 - g. How many successful applicants were there?

6. On training:
 - a. When did you start your training? How long did the training last?
 - b. Where was the training conducted?
 - c. Was your batch an all-female or mixed group? About how many were you?
 - d. What physical transformation were you required to undergo during the training (e.g. cutting hair, remove nail polish, wear uniform)
 - e. What type of training did you undergo? Please describe in detail.
 - f. Was your training the same as or different from those given to males?
 - g. How were you billeted (housed) during the training? Please describe accommodations, toilet/bathing facilities and food arrangements.
 - h. In terms of food or worship, were there any special dispensation accorded to you as Muslim or to Muslim members of your group during the training?

- i. How did you find the training? Was unexpected, easy or difficult?
 - j. How many in your batch completed the training; how many did not?
7. On your current and previous postings:
- a. Which office(s)/unit(s) have you been assigned since joining the army?
 - b. Were you ordered to this post(s) or did you request for it?
 - c. What tasks were you assigned with in these office(s)/unit(s)?
 - d. In these tasks, do you work with fellow soldiers who are males or females?
 - e. Who do you deal with mostly in the conduct of your tasks? Identify whether officers, enlisted personnel, civilians, etc.
 - f. Do you think your training is commensurate to the tasks assigned to you? Why or why not?
 - g. If it were possible, would you wish to be assigned to a combat function? Why or why not?
 - h. If it were possible, would you wish to be re-assigned elsewhere? Why or why not?
8. On advancement
- a. How many times have you been promoted since joining the army?
 - b. Are you satisfied with these promotions? Why or why not?
 - c. What is your career end goal in the army?
9. On identity:
- a. What was your religion's standards of femininity (i.e. how should a Muslim/Christian woman behave)?
 - b. How observant were you of your religion's physical and behavioral requirements before joining the army (i.e. did you observe strict dietary, clothing and worship requirements?)
 - c. What of these "feminine standards" do you continue to observe after joining the army?
 - d. Are you able to practice your faith inside the army (worship; food and food preparation; observe holy days/feasts)?
 - e. As a female, what difficulties did you encounter being in the army?
 - f. As a Muslim, what difficulties did you encounter being in the army?
 - g. What suggestions do you have, if any, for the army to improve the welfare of its female Muslim members?