



Stand Up and Be a Real Man: Patriarchal Patriotism in Songs About the USA's War in Vietnam and South Africa's Apartheid Border War

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This paper focuses on popular music and gender constructs in relation to two wars on different sides of the Atlantic, both of which began in the 1960s: The USA's war in Vietnam which was fought in the 1960s and 1970s and South Africa's border war which spanned three decades, from the 1960s to the 1980s. The fierce contest over the legitimacy of these two wars has been well documented. Both wars were justified primarily in terms of cold war logic according to which citizens were expected to fight to protect the way of life of their country. In the South African context the threat was much closer to home, and the cold war argument for the most part obscured the fact that it was a civil war, contesting white minority rule. In both instances men were expected to demonstrate their patriotism by fighting for their countries (in the Vietnam War only men who were drafted were expected to fight, whereas in South Africa all white men were conscripted). However, a secondary form of persuasion was the argument that real men went to war, only cowards stayed behind. In other words, war was a test of men's patriarchal patriotism.

The focus of this paper is on how the struggle surrounding patriarchal patriotism in both contexts was reflected in (commercial) popular songs by musicians from the two countries in question at the time. As Terry Anderson (1986: 62) has observed, "popular music often reflects sentiments held by society, and certainly this was true during the Vietnam War." H. Ben Auslander (1981: 112) agrees, suggesting that "the songs and their lyrics do chronicle many of the ideals and attitudes held by America's youth during the Vietnam

War years, and as such should be included in popular culture studies of the decade.” Popular songs about the USA war in Vietnam and the South African border war are important reflectors of beliefs, values, attitudes and ideals of those who sang them, regardless of how many copies they sold or how many people got to hear them. Indeed, Ray Pratt (1998: 170) asserts that “Popular music reflects the diversity of human experiences and views about the (Vietnam) war ... Some reached the upper levels or very top of the pop charts. But even if a song did not register on the charts, it does not mean it was not meaningful. That it was heard and remembered is significant enough.” This paper is concerned with views about gender and the military which were circulating in society, marking what Jeffrey C. Livingston (1992: 41) referred to as “musical battle lines” which “reflected the divisions within American society at large.” And these views do not only relate to the USA, as I have previously argued similar battle lines were evoked by musicians singing about the South African border war, including gender battle lines, whereby “gender binaries indeed mapped out a clear gender border, separating masculine and feminine in relation to the idea of the ‘war effort’” (Drewett 2003:88).

For the pro-war lobbies, the articulation of gender binaries was a critical foundation upon which to build support for the wars. In response resisters tackled not only the injustices of the wars in general but they often undermined the gender binary logic of supporters of the wars. This not only made support for the wars questionable, but also made resistance more acceptable and courageous. Morell (2001:7) has argued that “masculinities are socially and historically constructed in a process which involves contestation between rival and understandings of what being a man should involve.” And indeed war resisters posited alternative forms of desirable masculinity, as opposed to the militarised masculinity advocated by the pro-war lobbyists.

While the gendered nature of support and resistance to war discussed here is characteristic of many war contexts, this paper provides a limited focus on the two aforementioned wars. The most apparent motivation for choosing these two particular conflicts is that at the time of the South African border war many South African soldiers and their supporters referred to the border war as South Africa’s Vietnam, and several comparisons between the two wars have been made (see for example Baines 2003, Marx 2007, Rudham 2003 and Wolfswinkel 2002).

Whether or not fighting in wars is an appropriate form of patriotism, especially when there is strong sense that they are futile or unjust, has long been debated. This has been the dominant theme of several publications on popular music and the Vietnam War. For example, books including James Perone’s *Songs of the Vietnam Conflict* (2001) which is divided into contrasting chapters on ‘Anti-war songs’ and ‘Pro-government and plight-of-the-soldier songs’. Similar treatments of the war are provided in Andresen’s *Battle Notes*:

Music of the Vietnam War (2003), Philip D. Biedler's *Last Thoughts on an Old War: The Legacy of Vietnam* (2004), Kevin Hillstrom and Laurie Collier Hillstrom's *The Vietnam Experience: A Concise Encyclopaedia of American Literature, Songs and Film* (1998) and in shorter pieces by Terry Anderson (1986), Ben Auslander (1981), R. Serge Denisoff (1990), David James (1989), and Christine Scodari (1994), to provide a few examples. In relation to the South African border war, Catherine Morrow's unpublished thesis *Selling the War, Surviving the War: The Use of Music During the Border War* (2009) considers how music was used by the state and soldiers during the war while Drewett (2003) considers the metaphor of the border in songs for and against the war, including a consideration of gender constructs in songs relating to the border war. However, little specific attention has been paid to the gendered narratives of songs for and against the two wars in question and certainly no connected study of the gender constructs and popular music relating to the two wars has taken place. It is the aim of this paper to provide an initial analysis of this important gender issue related to these wars.

Contesting Patriarchal Patriotism

In times of war, especially at the time of the wars dealt with in this paper, it is customary for men to demonstrate their patriotism by fighting for their country. As Joshua Goldstein (2001: 10) notes, although there is cross-cultural diversity regarding gender and war, "these variations occur within a uniform pattern that links men with war-fighting in every society that fights wars." In agreement, Richard Godfrey (2009: 203) suggests that "the relationship between notions of masculinity and notions of militarism have been so closely connected that in many societies, throughout history, war fighting becomes a form of male rite of passage, to be a real man is to be ready to fight." Based on a historical sexist and sexual division of labour, men as protectors go off to war while women and children, the protected, stay at home. The patriotic duty of those on the home front is to support those in the military. These contrasting yet interconnected patriotic expectations reinforce hegemonic heteronormativity, through a practice of patriarchal patriotism. Accordingly, fighting in a war is not only a symbol of a man's patriotism but of his masculinity too. However, this does not mean that women were simply the passive protected back at home. Goldstein (2001: 301) argues that "male soldiers can better motivate themselves for combat if they can compartmentalize combat in their belief systems and identities. They can endure, and commit terrible acts, because the context is exceptional and temporary. They have a place to return to, or at least to die trying to protect – a place called home or normal or peacetime." This dichotomy between the frontline and the home front played a critical role in both wars considered in this paper. Both the USA and South African states and their supporters emphasized the

need for men to be protectors and for women to play an active protected role. This involved being loyal and supportive of soldiers, whether as mothers, wives, girlfriends, sisters or daughters. Soldiers needed to be reminded that back at home there were women who loved them who were waiting longingly for their safe return. Women, if they are patriotic and true women, should wholeheartedly support their military men in appropriate ways.

This paper now explores examples within popular music which illustrate the contest over gender roles and patriarchal patriotism. For the pro-war lobbies, the articulation of gender binaries was a critical foundation upon which to build support for the war. In response some resisters tackled not only the injustices of war but also undermined the gender binary logic of supporters of the war. Importantly, in terms of how this struggle penetrated society as a whole, the vast majority of these songs emanated from popular musicians within civil society, in other words they were not commissioned by the U.S.A. or South African governments or defence forces. Likewise, songs in opposition to the war were very rarely, if ever, commissioned by anti-war organisations, but were written by individuals expressing their own point of view. Furthermore, the songs considered here are in no way exhaustive but sufficient examples are provided to emphasize that the use of popular music in support or opposition to hegemonic gender roles was not uncommon amongst those writing songs about the two wars. In line with the gendered themes discussed, the paper takes the following form:

Pro-war songs

- 1) Promoted militarised masculinity
- 2) Ridiculed war resisters for their failure to be masculine
- 3) Encouraged women's role as supporters of soldiers on the battle front

Anti-war songs

- 1) Rejected militarised masculinity
- 2) Promoted war resisters as courageous (creatively masculine)
- 3) Questioned women's role as supporters of soldiers on the battle front

A.1. Promoting Militarised Masculinity

David Morgan (1993: 74-75) notes that the masculine body is constructed, among other attributes, to be a dominating and disciplined body. War and the military are extreme sites for such construction, so that the basic training of civilian men into soldiers is an extreme form of socialisation into dominant and disciplined masculine bodies. Militarised masculinity is not only essential to the military machine, but in societies at war it regularly becomes the hegemonic form of masculinity, the most desirable form of masculine body.

Cockburn (2008: 438) argues that “Gender relations are deeply implicated in what is done to turn ordinary people into soldiers, and shape them up for fighting. While the patriarchal gender order varies from society to society, and evolves over time, in most contemporary societies the roles and qualities imbued in boys and men include competitiveness, combativeness, physical strength and assertiveness, courage, and ambition. These qualities themselves, even in ‘peacetime’, incline males to fighting.” In South Africa pro-war musicians regularly eulogized the process towards militarised masculinity which recruits would undergo when committed themselves to military service. In the song “The Recces”, Lourens Fourie extols the strength of the brave soldier:

Many men, many men, many men
Have tried for the laurel dagger
The wings and the compass rose
Many men came for the test
Many failed and some came close
But only one got the compass rose

Similarly, in ‘Troop Train’ by Buddy Vaughn, the message from a sergeant to the new recruits’ girlfriends is, ‘Don’t worry about your boyfriend cause we’ll bring him back brand new’. According to a Bles Bridges in the song ‘Tawwe Tienies’, the new man would be a ‘tough guy’:

Do you see each man, standing there
Brave heroes each and every man
There’s a task to complete
And with pleasure, it’s our duty
Because we’re tough guys, the tough guys
We do battle on the frontlines

In further examples George Bartlett claims that soldiers are brave heroes, in his songs ‘Ons is Dapper Helde’ and ‘My dapper seun’ (‘We are brave heroes’ and ‘My brave son’). While Matt Hurter also upheld the tough guy image of the soldier in the ‘Ride Safe’ song recorded to promote a voluntary lift scheme for soldiers initiated by the South African Defence Force:

He’s just a boy in uniform trying to get home
With a heavy kitbag and
Not much hair to comb ...
If you pick him up and talk to him
You’ll find he’s quite a man
And he can tell you army stories like only a soldier can...

The song portrays an image of the soldier as a real man who is strong, has

short hair, and the hard-hitting army stories which separate him from civilian men who have not undergone army training and service. In line with heteronormativity, military men were heterosexual men, defending women on the home front. Thus Hurter refers to the soldier receiving ‘that perfumed letter in the post’. In ‘Jungle Green’, John Edmond sang of a soldier who had seen a beautiful woman while he was on a weekend pass. When he returns to service he is stationed on the border where he is killed. Edmond concludes that there is:

No one to tell her that he fought and fell there
Thinking of the blue eyes he was really fighting for

Dennis East also explores the same theme of a brave heterosexual soldier fighting to protect a woman in ‘Love Manoeuvres’, a comic song from the soundtrack to the film *Boetie op Manoeuvres*:

He’ll fight for the lady
These are love manoeuvres

Here East incorporates a double entendre to imply that fighting in the defence force demands both military and sexual manoeuvres. Thus pressure was placed on white South African men to become strong, disciplined soldiers who were unambiguously heterosexual and masculine.

In the United States probably the most famous jingoistic patriarchal war song recorded during the Vietnam War was Sergeant Barry Sadler’s “The Ballad of the Green Beret”. It was certainly the most successful in terms of chart position and sales (Denisoff 1990) and clearly summed up the notion of the tough soldier prepared to fight and die for his country:

Fighting soldiers from the sky
Fearless men who jump and die
Men who mean just what they say
The brave men of the Green Beret

A similar message is part of Senator Everett McKinley Dirksen’s ‘Gallant Men’ (1966) in which he emphasises the strength of soldiers as:

Brave gallant men who have died
That others might be free

While these songs promoted the tough masculine soldier image, in their song ‘So the prophets say’ The Centurys warn of the consequences if young men do not opt to become fighting soldiers:

You may not like it if they hand you a gun,
 before you turn 21 and say "now you've got to be a man!"
 But when your freedom's bells stop ringing, and a Red slave song you're
 singing,
 You'll wish you had a gun in your hand!

A2. Ridiculing War Resisters as Cowards (not masculine)

'So the prophets say' was one of a number of songs relating to the Vietnam War which supported Glen Campbell's (in Anderson 1986: 56) contention that "If you don't have enough guts to fight for your country, you're not a man." Certainly, the belief that opposition to the war was motivated by cowardice and that draft resisters were not real men was an important characteristic of songs by pro-war musicians, quick to ridicule men opposed to the war. Indeed, Daniel Conway (2008:427) stresses that the apartheid state's response to objectors drew from constructions of hegemonic white masculinity in South Africa and from powerful cultural discourses that defined white nationalism in virile, militaristic and defiant terms." Along with this idea, Hutchings (2008: 401) makes the point that "The crucial characteristic that is shared by all masculinity discourses is that they are not feminine." This is certainly exemplified by the tough fighting character in Merle Haggard's "Fightin' Side of Me' (which was later covered by Matt Hurter and applied to the South African border war context) refers to "some squirrely guy who claims, he just don't believe in fightin.'" Perone (2001: 98) notes that "Haggard makes a strong point that it is *specifically* the protesters' running down of the nation that brings out his fighting side." Just as much as pro-military songs tend to endorse patriarchal patriotism, as Haggard's song reveals, they are equally able to condemn refusal to serve as equally cowardly and unpatriotic. This is illustrated in Jan Berry's 'The Universal coward' which was a response to Buffy St Marie's anti-war 'Universal soldier':

He's the universal coward, and he runs from anything
 From a giant, to a human, from an elf
 He runs from Uncle Sam, and he runs from Vietnam
 But most of all he's running from himself

Similarly, in 'What's come over this world' Billy Carr mocks draft dodgers as unpatriotic cowards:

There's an army of cowards, see them marching in line
 While the country's in danger, they just carry a sign
 Look at them burning their draft cards and refusing to fight
 While they talk about freedom, they're dimming liberty's light

While in ‘Vietnam Blues’ Dave Dudley provides a more serious attack on draft dodgers, suggesting that while real men are bravely prepared to stand up and die for their country draft dodgers simply crawl away from danger:

Another held a sign that said we won’t fight
 I thought to myself boy ain’t that right
 To leave a lot of our soldiers die instead
 I said it’s a shame that every man who ever died up there that far off land
 Was dyin’ for that you wouldn’t have to wake up dead ...

So all I mean to say is I don’t like dyin’ either but man I ain’t gonna crawl

In ‘The Ballad of Two Brothers’ Autry Inman contrasts letters from two brothers, Bud, a patriotic soldier fighting in Vietnam and Tommy, an anti-war protester a student in university. The names ‘Bud’ and ‘Tommy’ evoke strength in opposition to weakness, which is further emphasized by Bud’s description of how:

We must’ve marched twenty miles today
 Through the rain and the mud

while Tommy is portrayed as weak, as he tells how they:

Marched twenty blocks today
 And, baby, I’m beat
 I mean, like the sign
 I was carrying got real heavy

Not only is Tommy ridiculed for being weak but after Bud is killed in Vietnam he realizes his error and joins the military, going off to fight in Vietnam in an attempt to emulate his brother’s supposed patriotic bravery. Perrone (2001: 96) notes that “the use of an overabundance of ultra-hip expressions by Tommy, such as ‘groovy,’ ‘out of sight’ and ‘my bag’ ... paints him as nothing more than a caricature, with whom probably no one hearing the song in 1968 could seriously relate.”

Setting up a similar caricature of a war resister and probably the most severe ridicule of draft resisters came from the Beach Bums, a group which included a young Bob Seger.¹ ‘The Ballad of the Yellow Beret’ was a send up of ‘The Ballad of the Green Beret’, using the same tune and structure to ridicule

¹ Two years later Seger wrote the anti-war song ‘2+2 =’ after a friend was killed. In a seemingly autobiographical song he later wrote ‘Leanin’ on my dream’ a song in which the song narrator changes from being anti protesters to being a protester himself, after being called up to fight in Vietnam.

those who were not prepared to go to war:

Fearless cowards of the U.S.A.
Bravely here at home they stay
They watch their friends get shipped away
The draft dodgers of the Yellow Beret ...

Men who faint at the sight of blood
Their high heeled boots weren't meant for mud
The draft board will hear their sob stories today
Only the best the yellow beret"

More startlingly, Pat Boone, in 'Wish you were here, buddy' accuses draft dodges of staying at home while leaving 'the fighting to us' and that 'when the whole damn mess is through ... I'll come looking for you.' But on the bleakest of notes, in 'An open letter to my teenage son' Victor Lundberg threatens to disown and disinherit his son if he refuses to serve in the war:

If you decide to burn your draft card, then burn your birth certificate
along with it.
From that moment I have no son.

A3. Encouraging Women's Role as Supporters of Soldiers on the Battle Front

Within the pro-war scheme of things, integral to the brave soldier fighting to protect his women and children at home is the expectation that the protected on the home front be supportive of the men who have gone off to fight. This entails openly showing support through reminding the soldiers that they support them and are waiting for them, and crucially, that they are waiting faithfully for them. It is critical in the battle front/ home front binary that the soldier believes that the people he is protecting do support him and that, in the case of girlfriends or wives, that they are being faithful; otherwise the desire to protect them would in all likelihood fragment. Accordingly, a common theme in pro-war songs in both South Africa and the United States was that women were there for their men, and completely supportive of what they were doing in difficult circumstances. Women musicians recorded numerous songs dedicated to their men, especially, but not exclusively, to those fighting in Vietnam or in the South African border war.

In the South African context the song "Vasbyt, Daar Op die Grens" (Hold tight on the border) by Min Shaw continues with theme of the brave soldier. The country music song,² punctuated with hints of militaristic brass,

² In apartheid South Africa country music was embraced by English and particularly Afrikaans conservatives. It was the favoured musical style of many die-hard army

is in support of her particular soldier on the border and promotes stereotypical ideas about gender binaries in war situations:

I think of you so far away on the border
I send to you my warmest heartfelt wish
I send to you the love in my heart
My brave hero, you stand trusting in higher powers

I know that you always think of me
And that one day we will find happiness together
Because one day you will come back to me
To come and stay with me forever

Hold tight, hold tight on the border
This is my message to you
If you hold tight, hold tight on the border
I send my greetings to you ...

An important way of sending reassuring greetings and thereby showing support at such times was to write letters to ones loved ones on the border. This was a fairly common theme in South African pro-war songs. John Edmonds (In 'Forgotten Soldier') reminds his audience letters fulfil a vital link between soldiers and loved ones at home. In the song the soldier tells his girlfriend or wife:

So when I feel like a forgotten soldier
And when the night is extra long
That crumpled letter is my inspiration
The words they just push me on

An Afrikaans song called 'Soldier, Son' sung by Esmé Solms supported men on the border both practically and lyrically. The song was released in order to raise funds for the Southern Cross Fund (which supported soldiers serving in the military) and likewise perpetuated a binary between the brave male soldier as the protector and his family back home, protected because of his sacrifice: As was often the case with Southern Cross Fund projects, the song both promoted the idea of support for the men on the border and raised funds for the SADF Fund.

At night as the stars shine so bright
Then longing and danger is my sky above

recruits. Matt Hurter (in "Ride Safe") draws a connection between the typical army recruit and country music while Bernoldus Niemand (in 'Snor City') views the connection as being between country music and stereotypical Afrikaner males more generally.

I miss you my son on the border
As your wish is for me to fall asleep tonight

In yet another example of the protector/protected dichotomy, the woman in Marie Van Zyl's 'There's a Man on the Border', waits faithfully at home, with desire and respect for her man. Once again, a marching beat is deployed, represented marching in time, unquestioning conformity to the state's policies and to the propaganda behind the war effort. Marching music is also jingoistic, used to stir up nationalistic pride.

There's a man on the border
Don't know where on the border ...
I will wait for him
Night and day for him
My prayers will keep him safe
And I'll wait until he's back on my side
Oh my darling come back quickly

Likewise, in an overtly pro-war song the Four Jacks and a Jill accentuate the separation of soldier and his girlfriend or wife when he is away on the border. In 'Boy on the Border' the soldier's girlfriend or wife sings:

Your home town's the same and your folks send regards
And I'm still here waiting to be in your arms ...
There's a boy on the border and that boy's in my heart
There's a boy on the border and we are far apart
Come back home safely home
When you do return my darling
'Cos I need you I need you and you need me too

A similar theme is dealt with in "Border Song" (translated by Gideon Roos 1980), although from the soldier's perspective. He sings:

Lonely and long are the nights on the border
Far from our family and home
Sweet are the visions of dear ones we long for
Under the night's black dome.

Songs portraying loved ones at home supporting their men on the battle front were also commonplace in the United States. Nancy Ames put her weight behind the war effort with her response to 'The Ballad of the Green Beret'. In "He wore the green beret" the wife of the soldier sings about how her 'true love' wore the Green Beret to protect her and their son:

When there is peace
And men are free
We'll know he died
For you and me

But furthermore, the husband's death does not get in the way of the wife's patriotic duty. She nevertheless will encourage her son to grow up to wear the Green Beret:

Though my love died
I'm proud to say
His son will wear
The Green Beret

Similarly, in "The Soldier's Last letter", Ernest Tubb sings of a mother who receives a last letter from her son. It is incomplete and she realises that he died before finishing it. Although saddened by his death she turns to god to pray for the safety of the other boys fighting patriotically in Vietnam:

That night as she knelt by her bedside
She prayed "Lord above hear my plea and
Protect all the son's who are fighting to night
And dear God keep America free"

Dave Dudley in 'Hello Vietnam' sings of a soldier impressing on his girlfriend or wife to write to him:

Kiss me goodbye and write me while I'm gone
Goodbye my sweetheart, Hello Vietnam.

The soldier in John Michael Montgomery's 'Letters from home' places equal importance in letters from home. In response to a letter from his mother the soldier sings:

I fold it up in my shirt
Pick up my gun an' get back to work
An' it keeps me drivin' me on
Waiting on letters from home

While the woman at home in 'Soldier boy' by the Shirelles provide a compelling show of support for the soldier in her life:

Wherever you go
My heart will follow
I love you so
I'll be true to you

Take my love with you
To any port or foreign shore
Darling you must feel for sure
I'll be true to you
Soldier boy
Oh, my little soldier boy
I'll be true to you

B1. Rejecting Militarised Masculinity

In response to the types of persuasion reflected in the pro-war songs (but not necessarily in direct response to the songs themselves) some musicians opposed to the wars considered in this paper became engaged in a struggle to reconstruct gender and war as fluid categories, thereby fracturing rigid binaries. Given the anti-war position which resisters adopted, the sex/gender position ascribed by war resisters was not in favour of women's combat, but rather against the idea that men needed to join the army in order to be truly masculine, or that women should support such notions.

One of the gender themes which comes across in anti-war songs is a contrast between mindlessly obeying military orders and creative freedom of expression. Amongst South African musicians opposed to the South African border war there was antagonism towards the dehumanising and conformist path which entering the South African Defence Force involved. The militarised masculinity referred to earlier in the paper was a threat to thinking, caring and independent South African men who did necessarily believe that joining the military was necessary to be a strong and brave individual, standing up for his beliefs. On the contrary, it was felt that the military broke down these attributes, threatening creativity, compassion and intelligence. This is clearly expressed in the Cherry Faced Lurchers' 'Warsong':

The old men in the top storeys
Organise another war
All this blood and guts and glory
Is this what life is for?
How can they make me feel like somebody else when I'm already myself?
How can they make me act like somebody else when I can act for myself?

Likewise, the Kalahari Surfers provide a parody of conformity and blind obedience expected of soldiers in the South African Defence Force. In 'Don't Dance' the singer calls on South Africans not to dance to the SADF's tune:

Hey white boy get your feet off the floor
The Lord gave you legs to march to war
Your leaders want you in a sporting affair

So put on your boots and cut your hair
 Don't talk back or stop to think
 Don't dance

A mocking approach to conformist, militarised white South African males is adopted by the Aeroplanes in 'South African Male'. In the song they directly undermine patriarchal patriotism. The lyrics that appear in parenthesis are gormlessly uttered in a white South African accent. The last line is an order shouted out by an army officer.

South African male, you're a South African male
 You've got a uniform
 South African male (I've got a new car)
 You're a South African male (And a big tape deck)
 South African male (Go out on Friday night)
 You're a South African male (Get pissed)
 South African male (Pick up some chicks)
 South African male (Wait for your next order)

"The song mocks the image of the stereotypical South African male who unthinkingly appropriates the dominant white South African masculine characteristics and waits for his next order. Given the equivocation of the lyrics it is not clear whether the uniform is the army uniform the South African male is wearing, or the dominant form of masculinity he has donned. The prevailing image portrayed in the song is of a conformist masculinity of which the singer is critical" (Drewett 2008: 111).

Moving beyond the changes which military training inflicts upon individuals by means of turning them into unthinking fighting machines, the Kalahari Surfers tackle the expectations of soldiers once they enter the warzone. A pro-military photo story book followed the exploits of a South African Rambo-type soldier named *Grensvegter* (Border fighter). In the song 'Grensvegter' the South African Defence Force hero is portrayed as a savage rather than a courageous soldier. He is described as someone spat out amongst the weeds by 'some reluctant womb' who devolves into a soldier who fills hungry mouths with bullets.

In the United States, Leon Russell's 'Ballad for a soldier' also exposes the myth of the soldier as a gallant man, fighting for admirable patriarchal patriotic ideals:

I had no understanding 'till I saw my mother cry
 When they told how many babies I had killed that night
 A dozen color photographs inside of a magazine

Told the morbid story like a movie screen
But I was not the hero I thought myself to be

Although not an overt protest song, Mel Tillis' 'Ruby, don't take your love to town' (most famously covered by Kenny Rogers with the First Edition) considers the plight of a paralysed Vietnam veteran who can no longer have sex with his partner, Ruby. As noted by James Perone (2001: 93), Rogers' version "conveys a sense of frustration, resignation and physical weakness" at no longer being 'the man I used to be'. The character's anger at being the victim of 'that old crazy Asian war'; which he fought as a 'patriotic chore' certainly paints a picture of resentment at the patriarchal patriotic ideal that lured him into the war in the first place.

While Mel Tillis expressed concern at lost masculinity as a result of a war injury, MC5 viewed the Vietnam war itself as a threat to the independence of masculinity. In 'Over and over' they suggest:

Vietnam, what a sexy war
Uncle Sam's a pimp, wants us to be whores
I said no, I said I can't take much more of this
You better let me outta here
I said no, no

MC5's outlook on what the military will do to men going to war evokes the same threat to creative and independent masculinity considered earlier in songs by the Lurchers, the Kalahari Surfers and the Aeroplanes in the South African context.

In the most famous of anti-Vietnam war songs 'I-Feel-Like-I'm-Fixin'-to-Die', Country Joe McDonald also subverts Uncle Sam's call for men to prove their masculinity by fighting in the Vietnam War (According to Rick Andrews [in Marx 2007: 93-94], this song was also sung by conscripts in the SADF, with lyrics changed to suit the South African context). Through the use of a sardonic attack on the draft, McDonald suggests that patriarchal patriotism involves blindly following the government's call to arms without question:

Well come on all of you big strong men
Uncle Sam needs your help again
Got himself in a terrible jam
Way down yonder in Vietnam
Put down your books and pick up your gun
We're gonna have a whole lot of fun

And it's one, two, three what are we fighting for?
 Don't ask me I don't give a damn, the next stop is Vietnam
 And it's five, six seven open up the pearly gates
 Well ain't no time to wonder why, whoopee we're all gonna die

While not quite coming home in a box, Mrs Reiley's son in Scott Walker's 'Hero of the war' does not return from the war as the hero he was supposed to be:

He's a hero of the war
 All the neighbourhood is talkin' 'bout your son
 Mrs. Reiley get his medals
 Hand them 'round to everyone
 Show his gun to all the children in the street
 It's too bad he can't shake hands or move his feet

Just as the Kalahari Surfers did in 'Grensvegter' in the South African context, musicians in the United States questioned the type of masculinity soldiers would be expected to perform when fighting in Vietnam. Phil Ochs in 'Is there anybody here?' suggests that instead of bravely defending the United States they will be expected to commit murder:

Is there anybody here proud of the parade?
 Who'd like to give a cheer and show they're not afraid?
 I'd like to ask him what he's trying to defend?
 I'd like to ask him what he thinks he's gonna win?
 Is there anybody here who thinks that following orders takes away the blame?
 Is there anybody here who wouldn't mind a murder by another name?

And Ochs explores this theme further in 'We seek no wider war':

While we were watching the prisoners were tested by torture
 and vicious and violent gasses maintained the order
 as the finest Washington minds found slogans for slaughter
 but please be reassured, we seek no wider war

In 'The Willing Conscript' Tom Paxton juxtaposes the image of a willing patriotic conscript and the tasks he will have to perform to prove his patriotism and masculinity:

To do my job obediently is my only desire.
 To learn my weapon thoroughly and how to aim and fire.
 To learn to kill the enemy and then to slaughter more,
 I'll need instruction, sergeant, for I've never killed before.

Now there are several lessons that I haven't mastered yet.
I haven't got the hang of how to use the bayonet.
If he doesn't die at once am I to stick him with it more?
Oh, I hope you will be patient, for I've never killed before.

Adopting a similar yet differently expressed naivety to the willing conscript, the protagonist in Frank Zappa's satirical 'I don't wanna get drafted' dismissively shows no desire whatsoever for militarised masculinity:

Roller skates in disco is a lot of fun
I'm too young'n stupid to operate a gun.
I don't wanna get drafted ...

B2. Promoting War Resisters as Courageous (Creatively Masculine)

In holding up the image of the tough soldier as an integral component of hegemonic masculinity, the pro-war lobby necessarily viewed war resisting males as unpatriotic cowards worthy of their scorn. In opposition to this, the anti-war protesters viewed war resisters in a positive light, believing them to be bravely refusing to serve, and demonstrating a different kind of admirable masculinity. Some songs anti-war songs carried this notion forward. In South Africa, Bright Blue wrote a song about the conscientious objector David Bruce, sentenced to six years in prison for taking a stand against conscription and refusing to serve. The song praised Bruce for his decision, regarding him as a hero, an icon of a new generation of white South Africans confronting the government over their conscription into the apartheid military:

And always, always remember your words have been heard,
We're on your side
Talking 'bout the word
Talk and we'll be heard
Talking 'bout the word
Over and over
Walking side by side
We're the rising tide

Meanwhile in the United States context, Steppenwolf's 'Draft resister' portrayed similar sentiments with regard to the Vietnam War, referring to a draft resister who had refused to serve in the army because it tried to crush his spirit:

He had joined to seek adventure and to prove himself a man
But they tried to crush his spirit 'til his conscience ruined their plans ...

Don't forget the Draft Resister and their silent, lonely plea
 When they march them off to prison, they will go for you and me
 Shame, disgrace and all dishonour, wrongly placed upon their heads
 Will not rob them of the courage which betrays the innocent

Songs like these made a strong case for alternative forms of (respectable and admirable) masculinity, based on different understandings of what it meant to be brave, and which proffered intellect and creativity as key components of alternative masculinities, rather than simple brute strength and non-questioning conformity.

In '2 + 2 =' Bob Seger suggests that those who question why they are sent to Vietnam and conclude that it is only because of the government's propaganda are labelled cowards. In a sense then, the song exposes the accusation as false and in contrast it strengthens the reputation of those who question the war:

Well I knew a guy in high school
 Just an average friendly guy
 And he had himself a girlfriend
 And you made them say goodbye
 Now he's buried in the mud
 Over foreign jungle land
 And his girl just sits and cries
 She just doesn't understand
 So you say he died for freedom
 Well if he died to save your lies
 Go ahead and call me yellow
 2+2 is on my mind

In 'An Open Letter to My Dad' Marceline responded to Victor Lundberg's 'An Open Letter to My Son' in which she made the case for a different kind of patriotic masculinity according to which men who burn their draft cards "are not anti-American. Simply pro-mankind ... do not weep that you have lost a son. Rejoice. From this moment on, one less man will shoulder one less gun."³ Dick Clair took the response to Victor Lundberg's song further in his "Hi Dad (An Open Letter to Dad)" in which he asks his dad why he released a song rather than writing a letter. Fortunately, he said, he heard the song on the car radio and recognized his father's unmistakable voice. In the song he undermines Lundberg's manliness by

³ However, after a complaint from a Maine radio station disc jockey Marceline apologized for releasing the record, saying that "we did a great injustice to all right thinking Americans by releasing such a record" (Vietnam War Song Project).

stating that "There is no reason for us not to just sit down and have a man to man talk." In the song the draft dodger comes across as entirely sensible, bright and humorous as opposed to his unreasonable, bitter father who doesn't have the courage to man up to his son.

As much as pro-war songs promoted the difficulty of the soldier going off to war and leaving his loved one behind Tim Buckley, in 'I know I'd recognize your face', sings of the difficulty of the war resister leaving behind his girlfriend as he leaves the country to avoid the draft or prison sentence served on those who refuse to serve:

I wouldn't fight or carry a gun
I went far away
To start a new life
If I had stayed there
You'd be my wife
And I know I'd recognize your face
Your memory keeps haunting me
And I can't forget what time won't erase
You know it's hard for me to come back now
There's prison to face though the killing is done

Given that the song is an anti-war song, it unexpectedly shows the vulnerable side of the draft dodger, in revealing the difficulty of his decision to leave the United States and to stay away. It is no different in this sense to songs which recognize the fear of the battle situation for soldiers, away from their loved ones, who nevertheless, in terms of militarised masculinity, bravely travel to the dangerous battle front. The importance of the song is in drawing a parallel between that action and the difficulty of avoiding the draft, that it is not simply a cowardly act of running away without personal cost.

B3. Questioning Women's Role as Supporters of Soldiers on the Battle Front

Having undermined militarised masculinity and offering an alternative form of masculinity, it follows that dominant notions of ideal femininity in relation to the war were also questioned by anti-war musicians. This involved questioning traditional role of women as supporters of men going to war. This tradition applied to socializing children to become fewer military men, supporting men in their decision to join the military, admiring military men as the ideal masculinity, supporting men while away on military service, waiting faithfully for their return and even patriotically and unquestioningly accepting their death as the ultimate sacrifice to them and their country.

In South Africa Jennifer Ferguson provided a severe critique of the role of women as supporters of soldiers, from letter writing to sending gifts and

being faithful to them in their absence. In a satirical song ‘Letters to Dickie’, each verse is a segment of a letter, so that as the song unfolds so does the story of her attitude towards him:

Dickie baby
 This one’s for you
 Wherever you may be
 Tonight sleeping cold
 Fighting for your country and for me

As the song progresses, the protagonist finds the burden of waiting for Dickie (whose name intentionally emphasizes his masculinity) too heavy and ends up dating another man and falling pregnant. On receiving the letter in which she tells Dickie the news, he shoots and kills himself. The singer insightfully believes that the bullet he used to shoot himself was really meant for her. The humour and delivery of the song provide a parody of the expectations placed on women (and men) during absences brought about by the border war. However, it also provides a critique of the gender stereotypes and related gender role expectations. As with all effective satire, the song delivers a sad and difficult truth which works as a sobering antidote to the humour of the unfolding song.

Another South African musician to poke fun at the relationship between men and women during the border war was Bernoldus Niemand (in ‘Hou My Vas Korporaal’ - ‘Hold Me Tight Corporal’) who, rather than turning to his girlfriend or wife for support, ironically asks the corporal to hold him tight, to help him through his army experience which he endures out of duty and not by choice.

The Kalahari Surfers turn around the expectation that women should be faithful, reminding us that soldiers themselves can be unfaithful. In “Guttered with the Glory”, which cuts up the Lord’s prayer and adds lyrics relevant to the SADF raid on Maseru, we are reminded that soldier’s kill and rape with scant regard for faithful loved ones back home:

ashes BE of THY NAME caught in the crossfire
 THY KINGDOM strewn across the floors of flames as they COME in
 her bed

And in “Caprivi Strip”, Via Afrika, use a play on words to suggest that SADF soldiers occupying Namibia involve themselves in sexual encounters with local women, probably forcibly:

Cross the border of anywhere
 Touch my machine gun

If you dare
Do it Caprivi strip
Your camouflage
It slowly peels
Where you wound me
It doesn't heal
Slowly girls
Bit by bit
Let's do it Caprivi strip

In 'The Boys are in Town', Roger Lucey expressed the doubt of soldiers questioning the government's gender role rhetoric, not convinced that they were really protecting loved ones on the home front:

They say 'think of your family
Think of your friends'
But he knows that sentiment won't make it end

In the United States a variety of songs subverted the ideal role of women as supporters of brave men going off to war. In "Billy don't be a hero' Bo Donaldson and the Heywoods sang of a young woman who pressured her fiancée not to sacrifice his life in the war:

Billy, don't be a hero, don't be a fool with your life
Billy, don't be a hero, come back and make me your wife
And as Billy started to go,
She said keep your pretty head low
Billy, don't be hero, come back to me

However, Billy forgets her words and dies as a result of a brave sacrifice. Billy's fiancée is not impressed:

I heard his fiancée got a letter
That told how Billy died that day
The letter said that he was a hero
She should be proud he died that way
I heard she threw that letter away...

Similarly, the women in Joni Mitchell's 'The fiddle and the drum' is not impressed with her 'dear Johnny's' decision to go to war, and implores him to follow an alternative form of masculine patriotism, based in peace rather than war:

I can remember
All the good things you are
And so I ask you please

Can I help you find the peace and the star
 Oh, my friend
 What time is this
 To trade the handshake for the fist

The wife in Loretta Lynn's 'Dear Uncle Sam' is patriotic but undermines hegemonic patriarchal patriotism by asking whether sending men away to fight in a war is the appropriate form of demonstrating this patriotism:

Dear Uncle Sam I know you're a busy man
 And tonight I write to you through tears with a trembling hand
 My darling answered when he got that call from you
 You said you really need him but you don't need him like I do

Don't misunderstand I know he's fighting for our land
 I really love my country but I also love my man
 He proudly wears the colors of the old red white and blue
 While I wear a heartache since he left me for you

Unlike the widow in Nancy Ames' 'He wore the green beret', the widow in Steve Goodman's 'The ballad of Penny Evans' regrets the loss of her husband and is thankful she has no son to similarly sacrifice in Vietnam:

My name is Penny Evans and my age is twenty-one
 I'm a widow of the war that was fought in Vietnam
 I have two baby daughters - thank God I have no son
 They say the war is over but I think it's just begun

The woman in 'Playing war' by Martina Reynolds does have a son, but, in deference to hegemonic patriotic expectations, is insistent he won't be going to war:

There's a nameless war in Vietnam
 There's war in many lands
 And my little boy in our back yard
 Has a toy gun in his hands
 And the big toymakers in Buffalo
 Are getting my boy set to go
 But I say No and the kids say No,
 We're playing war no more

Also questioning the idea that parents (mothers in particular) should sacrifice their sons in warfare, in 'I-feel-like-I'm-fixin'-to-die', Country Joe McDonald saves the most biting message until the last verse, when he ridicules the idea that parents should be proud to send their sons off to war:

Now come on mothers throughout the land
Pack your boys off to Vietnam
Come on fathers don't hesitate
Send your sons off before it's too late
Be the first one on your block
To have your boy come home in a box

Along similar lines, some musicians voiced the point of view of sons in opposition to war. Rather than blindly follow government rhetoric by going off to war these men take a stance based on the desire to live. In a reversal of the songs in which men go off to war to protect their parents and other loved ones, John Lennon sang "I don't wanna be a soldier mama, I don't wanna die" and in an irreverent satirical role reversal in 'Doin' all right', the Fugs sang:

I'm not ever gonna go to Vietnam
I prefer to stay right here and screw your mom

'John Brown' in a Bob Dylan song is a returning soldier, who questions and undermines his mother's expectations of him before he left for war:

Don't you remember, Ma, when I went off to war
You thought it was the best thing I could do?
I was on the battleground, you were home . . . acting proud.
You wasn't there standing in my shoes.

Oh, and I thought when I was there, God, what am I doing here?
I'm a-tryin' to kill somebody or die tryin'.
But the thing that scared me most was when my enemy came close
And I saw that his face looked just like mine ...

And I couldn't help but think, through the thunder rolling and stink,
That I was just a puppet in a play.
And through the roar and smoke, this string is finally broke,
And a cannon ball blew my eyes away.

On a more solemn note, Edwin Starr (in 'Stop the war now') questions what a parent really benefits from the death of a son at war:

And what does a mother get in return
For the life of the son she's lost
A few measly pennies a month
A medal, a grave and a doggone cross
I said, stop the war now

In 'War' Edwin Starr similarly undermines war rhetoric by reminding us that far from protecting their mothers and other loved ones, soldiers are routinely killed, leaving thousands of mothers without their sons 'War':

War means tears
 To thousands of mothers eyes
 When their sons go to fight
 And lose their lives
 I said, war, huh
 Good God, y'all
 What is it good for
 Absolutely nothing

'A Dear John Letter' by Skeeter Davis and Bobby Bare provides a similar take on the role expectations of women at home as Jennifer Ferguson does in 'Letters to Dickie'. While the song may not be an overtly anti-war song it probably fits into what Perone (2001) refers to 'plight-of-the-soldier' songs in which the negative aspects of war are commented on, but the song nevertheless underlines the difficulty of the faithful girlfriend or wife on the home front waiting patiently for her loved one to return:

I was overseas in battle when the postman came to me
 He handed me a letter and I was just as happy as I could be
 Cause the fighting was all over and the battles have all been won
 But then I opened up the letter and that started dear John
 Won't you please send back my picture my husband wants it now
 When I tell you who I'm wedding you won't care dear anyhow
 And it hurts me so to tell ye that my love for you has gone
 But tonight I wed your brother dear John

Songs with these sorts of message assisted in the task of breaking down the myth of military service as a brave undertaking by males engaged in defending their country. On the contrary, such songs demystified the military, in a sense opening the way for a counter discourse in which meanings attached to sex and gender roles and military activities were open to wider interpretation.

Conclusion

Support for and resistance to the United States war in Vietnam and the South African border war often took the form of promoting and questioning traditional gender dichotomies. This paper has demonstrated that musicians reflected this contest through the songs they sang. The setting up and breaking down of gender expectations has formed an important part of the songs sung about these wars. While these songs did not directly cause audiences to

adopt the gendered positions posited in the lyrics, they did circulate such representations in society and in so doing reinforced hegemonic notions of patriarchal patriotism via military service and combat. They also serve as documents of the ideologies being contested at the time and therefore serve as an ongoing reminder of the difficulties confronting conscripts and draftees within these two war contexts.

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