

The Politics of Special Forces Podcast Show Notes

Episode 6 – SOF and Culture

Summary

An organization's culture is increasingly being recognized as something not only important to understand, but indeed a critical component to that organization's success. The military – as an organization – is no different. Moreover, a critical examination of SOF culture remains underdeveloped. In this episode, Kevin and I sit down with Erin Yantzi, a graduate student from the University of Waterloo who is conducting a unique sociological and anthropological examination of SOF culture. In this conversation, we discuss both the shaping effect of culture upon SOF organizations as well as how the concept of culture can be operationalized by leaders to improve unit – and indeed individual – performance.

About the Guest

Erin Yantzi is a Master's Student in Political Science at the University of Waterloo, with a current research interest at the intersection of Canadian Special Operations Forces (CANSOF) narratives and SOF culture. With an undergraduate degree in Anthropology and Peace and Conflict Studies from the University of Waterloo, she published her thesis as “Embodying Refusal: Resistance, Pathologization, and Mental Health Exemption in the Israel Defense Forces” in *Critical Theory and Social Justice: Journal of Undergraduate Research*. Erin is a bright, articulate emerging scholar and we are thrilled to feature her work and insights on this podcast.

Additional Readings

Collins, Jim and Bill Lazier. *BE 2.0: Turning Your Business into an Enduring Great Company* (New York: Penguin, 2020)

Crompvoets, Samantha. *Blood Lust, Trust and Blame* (Monash University Publishing, Kindle Edition, 2021)

Danielsen, Tone. *Making Warriors in a Global Era: An Ethnographic Study of the Norwegian Naval Special Operations Commando* (Lanham, Maryland, Lexington Books, 2018)

Strozzi-Heckler, Richard. *In Search of the Warrior Spirit: Teaching Awareness Disciplines to the Military* (Berkeley: Blue Snake Books, 2007)

Tait, Victoria. 2020. “Regendering the Canadian Armed Forces” *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 41, no. 2 (2020), pp. 9–25

Winslow, Donna "Misplaced Loyalties: The Role of Military Culture in the Breakdown of Discipline in Peace Operations: Organizational Crisis," *The Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology* 35, no.3 (1998)

- *The Canadian Airborne Regiment in Somalia: A Socio-Cultural Inquiry*, (Ottawa, Canadian Government Publishing, 1997), 1. online at https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/bcp-pco/CP32

Audio credits

From Storyblocks (<https://www.storyblocks.com/>) and the song is called "A Taste of Victory" by Valentina Gribanova. Produced with Apple's GarageBand by the hosts.