IMAGINING MILITARY, NATION AND PEACE: THE NARRATIVES OF THE
POST-2015 WOMEN CONSCRIPTS-VOLUNTEERS IN LITHUANIA

by
GRETA ARMONAITYTE
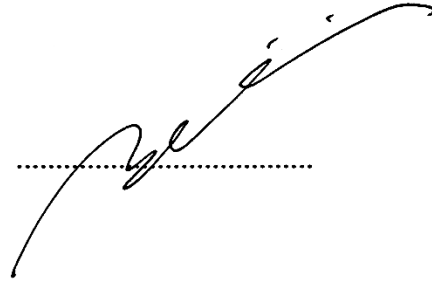

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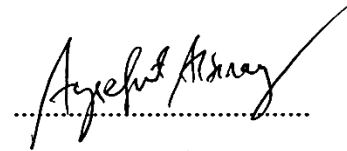Master of Arts

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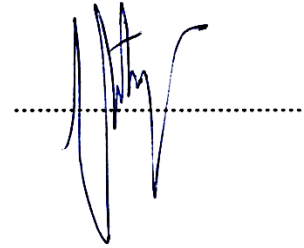POST-2015 WOMEN CONSCRIPTS-VOLUNTEERS IN LITHUANIA

APPROVED BY:

Prof. Ayşe Betül Çelik   ....
(Thesis Supervisor)

Assoc. Prof. Ayşe Gül Altınay   ....
(Jury Member)

Assoc. Prof. Hülya Şimga   ....
(Jury Member)

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ABSTRACT

IMAGINING MILITARY, NATION AND PEACE: THE NARRATIVES OF THE
POST-2015 WOMEN CONSCRIPTS-VOLUNTEERS IN LITHUANIA

GRETA ARMONAITYTE

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Keywords: Military, women, nationalism, peace, war

Since the reinstatement of 2015 conscription law in Lithuania, a total of 160 women have joined the military as conscripts-volunteers. This thesis is the first attempt to inquire where women in the military in Lithuania position themselves in state processes, how they perceive state-security, war and peace, and identity concerning gender. The recent developments in the military in Lithuania and the current case should be considered in relation to the efforts of NATO and UNSCR 1325 to include women in conflict resolution, peacekeeping, and therefore, military.

Eighteen semi-structured interviews were conducted. The collected data has revealed that being able to serve in the military, was seen as empowering by women. State institutions and civilians were identified as carrying responsibility for state security. War was either described as an occurrence of human nature, and thus, an inherent part of human experience, or something caused by political motives and interests, and decided by the leading political parties. Military's role in peace was believed to be protecting and sustaining peace, while in other cases they were identified as conditional – only in the time of war, and only for defense. Peace or war effects were not discussed extensively, and were mostly believed to be experienced by men and women differently, because of "inherent" different characteristics.

Gender identities mostly have to be negotiated, in order to become a full member. Discrimination or inequality were not discussed on different levels, thus, negative or discouraging comments and attitudes in the military are highly normalized by the women.

ÖZET

ORDU, MİLLET VE BARIŞI DÜŞLEMEK: LİTVANYA'DA 2015 SONRASI GÖNÜLLÜ KADIN ASKERLERİN ANLATILARI

GRETA ARMONAITYTE

Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Haziran 2017

Tez Danışmanı: Prof. Dr. Ayşe Betül Çelik

Anahtar Kelimeler: Askerî, kadınlar, milliyetçilik, barış, savaş

2015 yılındaki askere alım yasasındaki değişiklikten sonra Litvanyada 160 kadın gönüllü olarak askere yazıldı. Bu tez çalışmasıyla Litvan ordusundaki kadınların devlet kademelerinde kendilerini nasıl konumlandırdıkları, ülke güvenliğini, savaş ve barışı, kimliği sosyal cinsiyet bağlamında nasıl algıladıkları ilk kez sorgulanmaktadır. Litvan ordusundaki güncel değişiklikler incelenirken kadınların çatışma çözümü, barış devamlılığı ve orduya dahil olması için NATO ve UNSCR 1325 gibi kurumların çabalarını da göz önünde bulundurulmalıdır.

Çalışma için 18 adet yarı-yapılandırılmış röportaj gerçekleştirilmiştir. Toplanan veriler kadınların orduya katılma kararlarının bir mükellefiyet duygusunu yansıttığını, ülkeyi korumak ve savunmak için gerçekleştirilmesi gereken bir görev ve karlı bir kariyer tercihi olarak görüldüğünü ortaya çıkartmıştır. Orduda görev almak kadını güçlendirici bir görev olarak görülmüştür. Devletin güvende olması durumu kendisini savunma yetisi üzerinden algılanırken, devlet kurumları ve sivil vatandaşlar devletin güvenliğinden sorumlular olarak tanınmıştır. Savaşlar insan doğasının bir sonucu ya da öncü siyasi partiler tarafından kararlaştırılan, siyasi motivasyonlar ve çıkarlardan kaynaklı olaylar olarak tanımlanmıştır. Ordunun barış zamanındaki görevinin barışı sürdürmek ve korumak olduğuna inanılırken, diğer şartlarda;savaş zamanı, savunma zamanı gibi, duruma bağlı olarak tanımlanmıştır. Savaş ve barışın etkileri etraflıca tartışılmamaktadır, ve çoğunlukla erkek ve kadınlar tarafından farklı kalıtımsal kararkteristiklerden dolayı farklı şekilde tecrübe edildiğine inanılmıştır.

Ordunun tam anlamıyla bir üyesi sayılabilmek için cinsiyet kimliğinin üzerine müzakere edilmesi zorunludur. Ayrımcılığın ve eşitsizliğin ordunun farklı kademelerinde tartışılmaması sonucu kadınlar olumsuz ve cesaret kırıcı yorum ve tavırları normalleştirmişlerdir.

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education. Above all I would like to thank to the first feminist I have ever come to know, my brave and intelligent mother Gintarė Armonaitienė. Thank you for showing me the value of human connections and dialogue, and teaching me active listening. Your love, understanding and patience has lead me to where I am today. As the great ee cummings once said, "whatever is done by only me is your doing".

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INTRODUCTION

The introduction of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, has contributed to the way the world perceives gender in conflict, in terms of the importance of gender equality in political representation and women's roles in peacebuilding and dialogue around the globe. Furthermore, there has been an increasing attention paid to research and literature, kindling new approaches and methodologies to the analysis of gender-related issues. One approach would be to define and juxtapose concepts such as gender, masculinity and femininity along discussing peacebuilding or militarism. However, while all of these are essential components to an intellectual debate, one can also include the notion of power into the discussion on gender representation as well, and ask, where women are in today's world, how they got there and what they think about being there. (Enloe, 2014). If one initiates a feminist-curious discussion by asking where the women are, this would give an opportunity to delve into some further social constructions, such as nations and states, alongside the institutions part of them, and discover the reasons behind these social, yet too often gendered constructions (see Kantola, 2007, Kim-Puri, 2005, Yuval-Davis, 1997). By asking feminist-curious questions, a term formulated first by Enloe (2004), we try to understand what has led to these gendered outcomes. Additionally, asking what women think or how do they feel about being where they are, directly addresses the women that are part of these gendered constructions and provides both a space and an opportunity to learn of their unique stories of understanding the many outcomes of the gendered systems. Hence, such an approach of posing questions of "how" and "why" is central to the current discussion.

The current study addresses the intersection of gender, state, militarism and nationalism; more explicitly, the experiences of women voluntarily joining the military in Lithuania through the post-2015 reinstatement of mandatory military conscription (Delfi by the Lithuania tribune, 2016). Additionally, the research is aimed at discovering how the notions of peace, peacebuilding and war are constructed, significantly so when dealing with contexts exerting power, i.e. military. Furthermore, the research is set to look into how the concepts mentioned above are formed and where they stand in today's discussion on feminism and equal participation. Such are all essential to research, since they do not only speak about the gendered structures in the military, but also provide valuable insight about the societal and state constructions

overall. Moreover, the study is focused to explore the formation of a dominantly masculine-value-induced field such as, the military, in relation to gender and its development within a particular framework, and through the eyes of the women. It also aims to identify the possible differences that the participation of women conscripts-volunteers in the military has made to the vigorous debates about conscription, and women's participation in state-and-social processes altogether, as noted and experienced by the women themselves. Moreover, it attempts to look closer into the contribution of women conscripts-volunteers to the military and how ideas about masculinity and femininity in the military are constructed, reproduced and relived by women. It addresses the questions of what roles there are for women to occupy in the military; what (potential) difficulties or struggles exist for women in military. This study extends the issue of women participating in peace-building or waging wars – where women position themselves, how they conceptualize these notions, and where they see themselves in state and security-related issues. It concerns the junction of women and concepts such as nation and militarism, but more so, based on the extensive analysis of feminist scholars and activists, the current discussion seeks to get closer to the answers to the previously mentioned question: "How did women get there and what do they think about being there?", or in other words, "How do women conscripts-volunteers feel about being part of the military and what are their journeys?".

A substantial component of a feminist-curious analysis of this kind is to acknowledge the context provided. The military context is not only timely to study, considering the reinstatement of the law of conscription in particular in Lithuania, but it is also a framework where power and gender (the masculine) are established and practiced. Militaries today are some of the most power-wielding institutions in states – most militaries become peculiar environments dedicated to practicing the most honorable form of membership to a state, and customarily attract a great part of national resources. In some cases, militaries symbolize or have a powerful relation with nations and states, thus, it can be assumed that they may be considerably connected to nationalistic ideologies as well.

The focus of this research is the experiences of the women in Lithuania, who have joined the Lithuanian military voluntarily. Their stories, experiences, beliefs about military, conflict, peace and gender roles were collected, using qualitative methodology and further analyzed and interpreted.

The findings of the study could potentially become a humble contribution to the extensive discussion concerning militarism, gender and peace in Lithuania, and present a space to research conscription, since little to none studies have been carried out on the recent changes in the country thus far, raising feminist-curious questions in particular. Accordingly, while few academic studies were carried out directly addressing women in the military structures in Lithuania (Neliubsyte, 2010, Maslauskaite, 2006), none thus far looked into their personal experiences and perceptions of notions such as, war, peace and state security, equally acknowledging where women position themselves in the military structure. The master's thesis presents possible input in the discussion on how women who are part of contexts wielding power (military) perceive peace, and whether or to what extend these contexts exert an impact on these perceptions. Moreover, the thesis provides some information about the inclusiveness of gender in the modern-day military structures, and how gender-inclusive is the military's approach to forming notions of state security, war and peace. The work aims to pursue the development of traditional masculinity and femininity notions in the military, in the light of extensive scholarly work, gender activism and women's independent choices. Finally, it contributes to the fields acknowledged, by directly addressing the women and presenting their unique experiences and stories as substantial evidence.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Foundations to Gender Discussion

Throughout the history, people's myriad expressions for collaborative action towards creating equal opportunities for the sexes have created an impact. Many of such actions turned out to be long-lasting movements that challenged and later changed both domestic and international policies. Many brought light to the most poignant issues in gender discussion and even started social movements. Some of these movements had different goals in comparison with others, and some resorted to different means of achieving the desired outcomes. All of those, nonetheless, are unique in distinct times and places of particular gendered environments, but time and again united in similar causes – providing a voice and an opportunity for both women and men to become fully equal members of and participants in the society. The acknowledgement of gender activism and the development of policies and tools aimed at gender equality is salient to any research on the matter, since activism oftentimes went (and continues to go) hand in hand with improving the theories and even the academia itself. It marks an insatiable desire to build scientific arguments around the topic and thus, use these same arguments to provide evidence and solutions to multiple gendered outcomes in the history. Furthermore, activism and research in gender-related fields, is fueled by authentic experiences of those surviving "gender", hence acknowledging such is eminent.

Dating back to the late XIXth and early XXth centuries, the Suffragette movement in the United Kingdom was dedicated to granting women the right to vote. Late 1960s and early 70s were marked in history as the time when the Women's Liberation Movement in the US was seeking after equal access to education and employment, while simultaneously starting a daring discussion on some of the fundamental perceptions on women's sexuality and domestic life in the country at the time. In 1979 came the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the UN General Assembly. 2011 was marked with the creation of UN Women as a single and operational unit long after the UNSCR 1325 resolution on women, peace and security. Clearly, incorporating gender and inviting women for the formation of dialogue have changed the perception of global issues, specifically relating to socio-political processes, economic challenges and peacebuilding as we know them. Today people (although more often women) around the globe witness and participate in women's movements in Egypt bringing awareness

to cases of sexual harassment, in Saudi Arabia where women take on driving as a tool not only to change the law prohibiting driving without any male guardianship, but also to appeal to the government on many other human rights issues, particularly those regarding gender equality. While these and countless other actions are in times challenged by critics as incomplete or imperfect in their visions, there is an increasing expansion in the causes regarding feminist movements and these continue to be significant to the states and societies around the world. However, some peculiar local contributing factors, altering the views and perceptions of gender in certain places around the globe should not be disregarded, which will later be discussed in this thesis.

As part of the immense research and public action, (only some of which were mentioned in the paragraph above), or rather as a fruitful result, today we finally see women in leading positions. Today, women are part of the history, they are policy makers, politicians, peacebuilders, scientists and participate in numerous other life areas that their counterparts in the past were courageously standing by in their activism. We see efficient and influential transnational feminist networks and organizations, such as Equality Now, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice and countless other. Nevertheless, there still is a need to look at the reasons of why the circumstances, structured in this particular way, were made to be gender unaware and inconsistent, and what purpose they serve. The discussion on gender in the world remains to be compelling and imperative, in spite of numerous feminist authors and activists having achieved so much thus far. Here, as acknowledged in the introduction section, a similar question should be posed again. Although, a discussion as such, should begin from looking into people (human) connections and how these are shaped and influenced, especially in social creations consisting the myriad – social *pools*, communities and societies, all of which constitute states or nations.

Since some of the contributions have been briefly discussed, a significant definition of what comes to be as 'gender' should be defined in the current study as well. The definition adopted is the one that is performative, as acknowledged by Butler (1990), in that it is not naturally prescribed and is constructed through one's acts, and the one that is socially constructed and non-static.

Defining State and Its Power

Looking from a global perspective, states are oftentimes considered to be separate homogeneous entities. The complexity and diversity within a state in such a case would then be a domestic matter – a concern of that one sovereign state. Additionally, a state is no less of a social creation than a community or a society itself, because it concerns communal values, effort and boundaries. Prior to the further mentioned conceptualization, the states "must be defined with simultaneous sensitivity to what it is and what it does, since it is necessary to include reflection on the perceived intended or actual functions of the multiple bodies within" (English and Townshend, 1999:3). Hence, a substantial point to recognize is that states are likewise defined and tied to collective goals and reasons to exist. Out of many definitions, concerning the state, George Steinmetz's (1999) was one focusing on another essential conceptualization: an unequivocal aspect of the lifetime of a state – state-formation. State-formation concedes that states reflect ongoing processes as opposed to one-time only historical events, i.e. while states conceive laws and policies they accordingly continue "making" themselves. Thus, it is not simply the static definition of a state that we are coming after, but rather the formation and creation aspect of it. Steinmetz then accordingly distinguished the structural features of a state as follows:

1. The arrangement of ministries or departments
2. Systems for generating revenues
3. Legal codes and constitutions
4. Electoral rules
5. Forms of control over lower bodies of government
6. Nature and location of boundaries between state and society

As the scholar claims, "it is more accurate to say that 'policies' that affect the very structure of the state are part of the ongoing process of state-formation" (1999:9). From this perspective, a state acts more as a system and because the social, political, economic and legal processes work accordingly to the regime adopted, they must be maintained in order for the state to function. This matters a great deal to the current discussion in several ways, but for the most part, identifying state functions correspondingly directs the further feminist analysis on gender. Delving deeper into how institutions work, power and the distribution of such takes a significant part. Power

greatly forms peculiar social relations within a state as well (Reis, Collins, and Berscheid, 2000). Breaking down the definition of state into state-formation and its functions poses a question, or rather turns this question into a more of an in-depth approach: where is the gender argument in the state-formation, or in other words, what space is there for gender in state processes, if any?

To begin with, structures imply order. There is a certain order that states must abide by and in regard to distinct political regimes, they are exclusive to any other particular political location, i.e. these structures are different. Different nation-states inherently have different governance. Because sovereignty is set to only protect and comply with the needs and values of that particular state, transnational conventions, agreements, charters, human rights or in this case, plain conceptualizations about gender, do not get incorporated into these structures easily nor equally in comparison to other states. This is concerning the societal level as well – policies directed to inform and develop under any agreement or convention means that there would need to be an active approach from the local governments or individuals. In hand with the global activism towards gender aware-societies, there also has to be a more profound analysis of the domestic state structures and how these are built, in regard to feminism, because they are responsible for how different societies construct and perceive gender and gender-related issues.

States go through different stages of developing, thus, gender-related issues are or could be at a different position on the national agendas. They may have been overlooked for a long period of time, only serving for different purposes other than inclusion, or a significant component from the very start of a democratic movement or policy formation. Gender issues could be very sensitive to collectively reflect upon; they may be extensively discussed, or pushed farther away in regard to the shared national values. However, every state-structure builds particular policies, is a unique construction, and is not necessarily based on the same array of values in comparison to others.

Furthermore, another definition known to be one of the earliest, and laying ground to countless other research in sociology is the one of Max Webber. In particular, the sociologist noted the power, or force that states wield, claiming that "[…] a state is a human community, that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within its territory" (1946:78). Indeed, territory is one of the most common variables to states, and in a similar way the use of force by the state; power is

present in the definition yet again. Webber indicated that correspondingly politics then become striving to influence the distribution of sharing of power (1946). Naturally, the distribution of power is essential when talking about gender (not excluding nationalism as well), and not surprisingly the two are strongly interconnected. Consequently, it is compelling to look into the national values that shape all of the above, because they are or potentially could be the rationale behind today's gendered societies. A gendered society does not only stand for, for instance, gendered family life, but it extends to gendered national histories, parliaments, education institutions, militaries, and many other if not all social settings where women meet men. In addition, the ever-changing quality of state, discussed previously in the section, suggests that the narrative of gender evolves as well. Hence, the notion of not only the state, but the nation and/ or nationalism too, in this discussion are as significant.

Defining Nation and Nationalism

The reason to discuss nationalism in the current research is that a critical approach to the notion, would allow to question the multiple ways it was or continues to be used to satisfy the needs of the (commonly gendered) states. By this we mean that oftentimes gendered systems even serve for the growth of states; for states to become wealthier with women and men continuing to lead gendered lives, even in the modern century. However, first some fundamental ideas on nation itself should be discussed prior to moving forward in the current discussion, although it is not necessarily possible to come up with one absolute approach.

A people's social existence in states or part of nations is strongly shaped by nation-wide values, which forms some of the essential values of nationalism. Every state offers a particular space for nationalism to grow; nationalism by all means is materialized in nations. The scholar of nationalism, Benedict Anderson, construed nation as an "imagined political community, imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign", and it is done so regardless of the "exploitation and inequality, that may prevail within" (1983:06). Therefore, we could believe that a nation is not born in a day, but rather it is a constructed unity, something expected and representing a mental image. Notwithstanding, a nation may also be imagined or relived collectively, through the cultural aspects of it, which Ross Pole (1999) distinctively points out. According to Pole, nation itself is a cultural object and is enabled through cultural artefacts, such as language, public symbols, history, art, etc. and thus, it "provides a moment of self-

recognition, through which we confirm our individual existence and become conscious of ourselves as having a collective existence" (1999:13-14). The particular moment of self-recognition is essential in human life; it provides a sense of legitimization and approval of one's existence. In such way, it is undoubtedly why nationalism would often become an indispensable idea for a people and the state.

Based on distinct political systems in these states, societies internalize nationalism to a different degree, most commonly in relation to their past history, quality of life or even geographical location. Ernest Gellner's (1983), definition of nationalism, considered to be one of the earliest, is based on nationalism being primarily a political principle, possessing the national and political units together and harmonious, however, the philosopher and social anthropologist also discusses the so-called "nationalist sentiment" and identifies the concept as a "feeling of anger aroused by the violation of the principle or the feeling of satisfaction aroused by its fulfilment" (1983:3). It would then be accurate to claim, that it is unacceptable for some, to negotiate or alter their identity by request of another – whether an individual, group of people or some change in the local system, coming after this collective fulfillment. This principle is something worthy to protect. In a similar way, it is often unimaginable to negotiate where gender stands in this category (particularly if this is challenging the order of the "receiving" fulfillment) or how much is distributed and offered to men and women. Hence, as anticipated, there would not be nation-states as we know them to be, if this was not for nationalism. Nationalism constitutes nation-states; however, we may consider that people have internalized nationalism to a different extent, based on the reasons discussed.

Additionally, it is rather common, to come across of claims that "nationalism has risen", significantly so in politics of today. Gellner's idea on the "progression of nationalism" claims, that nationalism does not rise when a state experiences a lack of some sort, or is in some serious doubt, but rather when a state is "conspicuously present" (1983:3). The boundaries and the distribution of power, and perhaps some other benefits and conveniences, in his claim, are the factors that paved the way for the rise of nationalism in states. Moreover, nationalism is often closely tied to one's self-identification as a social member, i.e. it is a part of one's identity, but especially part of one common collective identity of a people (a state or a nation as well). Although socially constructed and realized within the society or in groups more than rather individually, identity is something that is protection-worthy in times where individuals

feel a threat to their expression of it, and non-negotiable. Craig Calhoun examined identity formation, which is an inevitable subject when discussing nationalism and states, or especially when trying to make sense of gender issues. According to Calhoun, identity formation, being the primary condition to participate in social life is acted through adult participation (1994:23). This means that adults are the ones who fully participate in state life and the ones who also share power. But the author also extends his idea to the complexity of identity and the constitution of identity, particularly so, when multiple identities meet:

> "<…> we have been led by our theories often to underestimate the struggle involved in forging identities, then tension inherent in the fact that we all have multiple, incomplete and/or fragmented identities (and sometimes resistances), the politics implied by the differential public standing of various indefinites or identity claims, and the possibilities for our salient constructions of identities to change in the context of powerfully meaningful, emotionally significant events – like many social movements" (1994:24).

Different cultures tie different meanings to their identities, but the core structural changes to their identities often cause a defensive reaction. Perhaps in this case we could treat belonging to a nation or even nationalism based on Turner and Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (1979), that explains identity as one's understanding of "self", built or dependent on belonging to a group, and thus sharing the common rituals and experiences and most importantly membership, i.e. the feeling of belonging.

Furthermore, most nations live and express themselves in states, possibly for this reason, *nation* and *state* are commonly interchanged, however, this assumption that they both resemble one another or function identically, is not entirely correct. Nations are not tangible, and are sustained by both proactive and reactive measures (Mayer, 2000:3). Furthermore, states, being politically sovereign, are also protecting nations, recognize their existence and legitimize their actions. Nations are bound to states, in the sense that territory is commonly considered to be an asset to one's nationality, as explained in the previous section, through which common past and future, legends and myths are survived or connected to. Feminist writer and theorist Cynthia Enloe, defines the concept of nation to be a compelling idea: "At the core of this idea is the collection of people, believing to have been shaped by a common past and united in sharing a common future" (2014:94). Thus, a nation becomes this social material, igniting the common existence and a desire for shared experience.

The values that nationalism holds are often interrelated and are a commitment to keep the state capable of independent decisions for the sake of its future, as Enloe adds. Naturally, stripping oneself of such a tight relation would be rather difficult. Such diversion may turn even more complex in times, especially, when one has to accomplish his duties for the sake of this membership. "Nationalism defines who belongs and who does not belong to the national collectivity, and prescribes appropriate gender and sexual identities by which genuine members of the nation may be recognized" (Charles and Hintjens, 1998:8). This is rather a paradoxical juxtaposition, when boundaries of belonging are rather strict, and membership is a strictly defined concept, yet if one was to expand his membership in practicing some other unusual rituals, they would be threatened to lose this right to belong, i.e. roles of belonging and acting within nationalism can often be limited or extensive only to a certain degree. Lastly, what Charles and Hintjens point out is precisely why nationalism and gender are significant to research to this day – for the belief that being aware of the challenges that feeling of one particular gender may bring, and yet for acknowledging these challenges, and that they somehow are a threat to the usual order or system of membership.

Women and Nationalism

For the most part, analyzing the fixed roles and functions of the sexes is inconvenient for many, because it is questioning (or appears to be doubting in the self-experienced national way of living) the power structure of gender in nationalist political systems, or as some may feel of the nation and the state itself. A change in the gender-power order (or disorder) is a complex process to understand and evaluate, especially if we consider how substantial identity is. It is difficult to do so, since we treat identity as a process, instead of a static entity; a process that is open for change, agreement and disagreement, similarly to what R. Jenkins had claimed (2008:5).

To begin with, nationalism concerns gender, because it is experienced differently by men and women. This is because nationalist affairs often do not include or simply overlook the concepts of masculinity and femininity (Enloe, 2014). The roles and expectations ascribed to men and women are different, thus, purposes of living and serving for the nation, are naturally different as well. Yuval-Davis in her book "Gender and Nation" gives an insightful comment regarding the purpose of men and women in national discourses: "Although often legitimate fatherhood would be the gatekeeper for membership in a national or religious collectivity, women are the bearers of the

collectivity" (1997:116). The author continues that the construction of womanhood has a property of "otherness" – women become the symbols, representing the goals of the nations; and their essence, based on this collective unity. Nonetheless, they are often objectified as opposed to being considered as equal participants, actors in states and state-making processes. That is, a woman is commonly considered as part of the demographics within a nation, but not exactly part of the social and political life. A simple and widely-known example illustrating the political rhetoric using this symbolic portrait of womanhood is the term "Mother Russia". Used in various contexts for different political meanings, it originally referred to a country (Russia), as being the bearer and the protector. However, the term also reflected the "conquer-all" imperialistic politics, and the political aspect behind the saying in a way also legitimized the actions by using the image of woman. A state equals a woman, but more so a mother, that is especially the most protection-worthy. Physical symbols are present too, such as the Statue of Liberty – a statue of a woman holding a torch and the declaration, with broken chains on her feet. The "Mother of Georgia" (*Kartlis Deda*) is right in the heart of the capital Tbilisi, featured wearing the national garment and holding a sword in one hand and a cup of wine in the other. The French national moto "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" (*Liberte, Egalite, Fraternite*) features a portrait of a woman over the French flag. At a first glance, perhaps these examples have little to do with politics or national agendas as we know it, but it certainly says something about the imagine behind "a woman" or better say the definition of true womanhood. The expectations, the duties, the roles, the virtues they portray and the noble causes that come with this depiction of a nation, and above all, the one noble nation-related cause that a woman has to live by – serving and dedicating herself for the nation, or simply giving birth is far from effortless womanhood. In reality, these national narratives formed by and via national values force women of becoming selfless. "Women have served as symbols of the nation violated, the nation suffering, the nation reproducing itself, the nation at its purest" (Enloe, 2014:87). Thus, in nations, the purposes for women of "serving for" are not only built around the population or the reproduction of population, but the protection of culture, i.e. traditions, religion, language and art, all of which likewise construct a nation. A change in the gender-power order (or disorder) becomes even more complex and difficult to perceive for that identity of one-collective-membership. It is not that such an identity is necessarily not fluid, but it can be disengaging, and by putting motherhood over other roles or freedoms that women may

choose to pursue, we take away the right of independent decisions, which C. Enloe identified as a power in decision (2004).

Nationalism has in many instances defined the roles and practices that are so-called "appropriate" for women. These certain expectations then imply on particular positions and boundaries women have to keep in mind, such as appropriate behavior, mannerisms, clothing, yet this is not simply limited to behavior in one's domestic environment, but to public scene as well. In July 2016 a story was published about the famous Pakistani model Qandeel Baloch (real name Fauzia Azeem) that was murdered by her brother, which was eventually recognized to be an honor killing (Time, 2016). The website later published a follow-up article, where the brother of the victim commented on the case saying that "he did so because she brought dishonor" to the family by posting pictures on Facebook that he had considered "shameful" (Time, 2016). This is a clear instance of what Yuval-Davis calls the "burden of representation", when women are required to carry "the collectivity's identity and honor, both personally and collectively" (1997:45). This refusal to carry the burden is considered deviant and is even punishable in certain cultures, similarly to this example.

Based on the arguments discussed, however, women believing in nationalistic ideas, or basing their lives according to these ideas, have not inevitably been left without a space to realize their goals. Nevertheless, because of the limited approach to gender issues within a nation or even a nationalist regime or a movement, and a lack of interest in observing the gender relations (especially gender-power relations), the space and the achievements of women are much limited as well. Although, this is not to say that those expressing themselves within the frame of nationalism do not express their membership through a gender-aware lens. "From Where We Stand" by Cynthia Cockburn (2007) features a great number of women interviewed by the author who shared their experiences of witnessing war and being part of women's activist and feminist movements. One in particular well illustrates the point made earlier in the paragraph:

> "[…] Vera Jordan, who is active in Northern Bat Shalom, continues to feel herself Zionist and espouses its nationalism more positively: 'My nationalism's about self-determination. I have to have my country, a Jewish state, which I was denied for so long. I want my own flag, my own anthem. Recognition of the Nakhba […] is legitimate, but it shouldn't mean we can't any longer celebrate our Israeli Independence Day" (2007:194).

The feelings that Vera Jordan shared in this piece are of course the feelings that perhaps many could relate to, regardless of the political environment, but naturally, affected by that environment one way or the other. According to the author, "nationalism translates into many different forms; however, the feeling of belonging to a 'people', possessing an ethnic identity, may not always translate into nationalism (2007:195). Additionally, one should not necessarily consider nationalism as simply straightforwardly gruesome or favorable in nature, but rather examine what constructs nationalism and how it shapes human lives in any given level – societal, statehood, individual, etc. That is quite the case when discussing nationalism, women's experiences are turned into the experiences of victims, disregarding other possibilities of why women take action in the first place. Cynthia Enloe clearly puts this matter into perspective – "Accepting a priori the assumption that women are best thought of victims in any nationalist mobilization that has turned violent dulls analytical curiosity" (2004:104). Conclusively, choosing to direct the conversation in this way is incomplete.

Looking at the particular gendered order, another question should be posed – what or who is sustaining this order? Countless ideas exist for reinforcing this gender division; one of such, as Enloe argues, is the one where the world is a dangerous place and in it there are those who protect and those that need to be protected (2014). This is even more relevant when one considers a nation that has collectively experienced great injustices and grievances – genocides, mass deportations or occupations, and how these grievances were addressed *via* memory and interrelations. That kind of a case where independence and sovereignty were especially hard to achieve and required sacrifices of people of that one nation may naturally desire for exclusive protection. In other words, freedom is not just a human need to realize oneself as a member, but those "worth protecting" and those "protecting" elevate their mission into the only possible way of never falling back to this painfully unjust historical past. On the one hand, this may seem as a rather noble and purely socially-aware bond between the members – a considerate relation of giving for the sake of existing. On the other hand, the distinction made is that the two groups have significantly different goals to pursue. Men living in a dangerous world are commonly imagined to be the natural protectors. Women living in a dangerous world allegedly are those who need protection. What the author claims is that precisely "such primacy of particular forms of masculinity is reinforcing the idea while subordinating most women and femininity itself" (Enloe, 2014:30).

Gender roles within the concept of nation hold a special relationship, which is in many ways connected with power. Because power takes many arrangements and positions, it is important to investigate the intersection of gender and power. Additionally, there is an obligation to look into who wields or distributes the power, and what the power institutions in a state that assist people in practicing their national membership are. Furthermore, one should also be looking into the practices of serving for the nation, a limited access to such, and what sense nations make off of those practices, especially where and when women meet men. Based on the points discussed, a particular approach to the issue is selected as the leading and the investigative, as developed by Altinay, who suggested gender to be taken into account:

> I approach state-making as a gendered cultural revolution; a revolution whose discursive power is derived from nationalism and is enabled by modern apparatuses of power. This revolution has involved a number of militarizing processes. The institutions of a "citizen-army" usually based on universal male conscription has defined the nation at birth as a "military nation" (2004:6)

Finally, the inclusion of gender presents to be inevitable in conferring of the state and military, extending to power boundaries. The following section will focus greatly on the cases distinguished.

Constructing Gender in the Military – Power and Boundaries

In the first part of the literature review section, the structural features of a state, as developed by Steinmetz were discussed. Based on this distinction, we could claim that the power-wielding institutions are those that are given a great amount of recourses, and directly and in some cases symbolically representing the national agenda. Those usually happen to be military institutions, parliaments, state institutions, such as, ministries or departments, religious institutions and numerous others. However, it is utmost important to recognize how complex the notions 'military' and 'militarization' in actuality are. This is not to claim that one stands for the other, however in establishing national goals, these are not mutually exclusive. Enloe (2000:2-3) distinguished several points to consider when conferring of militarization:

- Militarization is never simply about joining a military
- Militarization does not always disguise itself as war
- Militarization is very often normalized and greatly internalized

- Militarization equally involves both men and women, particularly privileging masculinity

In the current study, militarization is primarily considered as a complicated process, translating into multiple layers and contexts. While the initial response to militarization is the consideration of a perceived threat, especially to territorial integrity or state security, military deals with more than just that. It is equally a space for practicing the distinguished citizen roles, gender roles and expectations, and enabling the national values. Inherently, it supports the common conception to regard military as something only to be utilized in cases of high risk or emergency, often claiming that the primary goal of a military is to defend and protect the nation. However, militarization also serves as a tool of power, a (political) statement that never goes by without utilizing the everyday realities. The common case is to discuss militaries in context of war. Nevertheless, many developments take place right at the home front (e.g. conscription, military education in schools, military out-reach activities, military-civilian relations etc.) that can also be considered as part of the militarization of everyday life. Eventually, military has become an indispensable characteristic of a strong, modern state, so much so that it would be naïve to imagine modern-day states having no military resources and putting little to zero investment into military development. Military signifies how safe and "ready" a state is; therefore, security is usually measured *via* military. In this way, militaristic ideas often become national-militaristic ideas, as the people and concept of security become strongly dependent on military and militarization. Furthermore, military touches upon both men and women to a great extent, simply because the notions of what is masculine and feminine are sustained by the military. This understanding of military should also be perceived as one spanning over numerous cases and contexts, since military is never only about soldiers. Oftentimes both men and women's participation in the military is regarded as acceptable, notwithstanding, limitations exist. Additionally, serving for the military is recognized as a "real man's duty", a noble sacrifice that one makes for his country and nation. Women are often not recognized to be "protectors", except in highly militarized states such as Israel.

The data on how many women actually serve in the military should be recognized as well, if we are to consider what roles exist for women in decision-making, security and defense positions. In 2014, women were estimated to contribute to a total of 39.6 %

to labor force (The World Bank) in the world and the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments in 2015 was indicated to be only 22.8% (The World Bank). For instance, in 2015 6% of military personnel deployed in NATO operations were women, and 11% of armed forces of NATO countries were made up of women, on average. (NATO, 2015) In addition, 85% of NATO members had all positions in their armed forces open to women and fully 69% of NATO members had a military entity dealing with gender perspectives. However, even though a vast majority of research carried out suggests the solutions and practices of incorporating women into important institutions or as decision makers are multiplying, and major issues are improving, the data has still been rather unsatisfying. Moreover, there are some institutions, environments or jobs that are still considered as more acceptable for women than the others. Similarly, there are some prevailing preconceptions about where women are good at, such as, "women are naturally capable cleaners, washers, cooks and servers" (Enloe, 2014:69). Moreover, what women are or are not, such as "men are the war makers, women are different" (Cockburn, 2007:222) or say, the well-known "you throw like a girl", regarding what women can and cannot do well.

Military, indeed, is one of those institutions that wield many different forms of power. Aside from that, serving in the military, whether voluntarily or as part of the compulsory requirement, as Altinay notes, remains to be one of the noblest practice of citizenship: "Who can talk about those men and women who bravely put their lives at risk for us? We can only be grateful" (2008:364). Indeed, the dedication for military represents the selfless and honorable dedication for the nation, the state, however there is more to this connection. Military forces are predominantly masculine institutions; in that they are populated primarily by men. The culture of military is based and induced with ideas about what it means to be a man within a military environment for the most part, but not simply "to be a man". It is often the heroic act that is praised and acknowledged, a noble cause that is behind the act of a man in military, an act of perseverance and strength. It is also the linguistic aspect that is chosen to convey these ideas, how the message is formed, i.e., soldiers are commonly referred to as the "protectors", "martyrs", more often than they are "killers", for instance. Perhaps the nobility behind the action is even more significant when discussing nations that are yet to collectively approach the memory of past grievances and sacrifices for the sake of the independent state. However, militaries are not simply environments where women meet men, seeking for recognition or self-realization, or as part of their belonging practice.

Militaries are also environments where concepts like femininity and masculinity, where roles ascribed to certain gender, and different forms and expressions of nationalism and citizenship meet. However, these do not simply meet – all of these notions often clash a great deal as well. Therefore, there is no simple way to confer of militaries and how they are constructed, although several other facets have to be acknowledged first.

There is a certain paradox when it comes to women in military. Indeed, the famous assumption that military is not a place for women is in agreement with the regular moral practice of female citizenship, membership, because women are the ones that are objected to being protected, and also objected to protect and bear the culture. Yet, this form of female membership or participation is respectively incomplete to what numerous women in the world essentially strive for. It differs in nature from the morale of what is it like to be human and practice human rights, the right to practice one's free choice to position oneself as one believes is the best. Nevertheless, there are some examples such as Kurdish women guerilla fighters, battling the Islamic State and representing their stand on their own – their Kurdish identity and the political movement, and deeply internalizing some of the military culture, oftentimes through their own leadership, yet in a considerably patriarchal shared environment. Thus, in some instances women are leaders or active participants even when the participation is relived via the military.

Moreover, how masculinity and femininity are defined or experienced in the military is equally as important: "The incursion of women into the soldierly lifestyle threatens distinctions between what is male and what is female, threatening everything that generations of military tradition have established. Furthermore, the very ability of women to compete as successful soldiers devalues the vocation" (Aydt, 1998:8). Indeed, what Aydt states is a contributing point to the overall discussion, however, such military anxiety extends further than the military itself and, accordingly, dictates the national tradition too regarding what is male and female. A significant question to raise is whether or not the participation of women in the military exist at the expense of the duty and whether that duty is highly devalued in this case. The assumption that women in militaries are somehow challenging the concept of masculinity should be one taken seriously, and further questions should be posed as to why women in the military is a troublesome challenge to overcome and even comprehend.

Notwithstanding, social constructions of masculinity do not entirely rely on men that are soldiers, but also on simultaneously elevating women as mothers-of-soldiering-

sons, valuing women chiefly for their maternal success (Enloe, 2004:107). Being a soldier and fighting along military represents contrasting ideas for men and women; for men "being a warrior is a central component of manhood, forged by male initiation rituals worldwide" (Goldstein, 2011:266). However, perhaps the biggest threat of both women and men criticizing and challenging gender roles in military may be that it is also challenging the absolute nobility and in some cases the unquestionable dedication for the nation and the state. There are many women who strive to join military and some men who do not (Cockburn, 2007:223), and these men and women are also considered to be deviant. As Aydt argues, "the tremendous sacrifice of giving one's life for the homeland is justified if it means protecting the way things are" (Aydt, 1998:8).

Silva's research on femininity and masculinity in the US military featured interviewing male and female cadets. Both differentiated between "men's work and women's work" linking masculinity and soldiering in juxtaposition to femininity, essentially drawing the traditional femininity and masculinity conceptualization (2008:947). Such differentiation could assure that there are different roles distinguished for women and men in the military. Additionally, such distinctions could also affect men-women relationships in terms of deepening the cleavage between the two, and increasing competition or even peer-pressure. Silva also adds that the majority of women cadets in her research (68%) described their relationships with others in the battalion, as influenced by personality and not gender (2008:944). Therefore, men and women's relationships are to some extent defined by their own perception of gender (identity) and the social, political, cultural norms of gender not only in the military, but in civilian life as well.

However, another substantial argument to include is that even when women are part of military, they do not necessarily receive equal treatment, compared to men, or access same vacancies, career opportunities or are entitled to the same pool of choices. What do we know exactly about roles for women in the military? Valerie Bryson provides an example about women conscripts in the Israeli army, illustrating the argument:

> "Although Jewish women serve in the army, they do not do so on equal terms with men: they are drafted for a shorter time than men and they are more likely to be granted exemption, only single women under 24 are liable for reserve duty and they are less likely than men to sign up for a career in the army. They are also ineligible for combat duty; such duty is a prerequisite for higher military office, and this means that women are

ineligible for the top positions even in the fields of education or medicine" (1998: 141).

The military in Israel is formed by conscripts, which is not the case with every single military in the world. However, even having conscription as part of recruiting soldiers, officers or military personnel, is still rather gender-unaware. Issues such as, trivialization of sexual harassment, gender division of labor in the military are still present. (Sasson-Levy, 2003). Similar to this example, in the US army women are still prohibited by law from serving in positions with a high likelihood of direct ground combat. As of 2004, women made up 15% of the army population (around 73.000), and approximately 18% of those women were officers (Dempsey, 2010:28). For instance, African-American women made up 40% of the overall female population in the army (Dempsey, 2010:28). However, relatively more positions are now accessible to women in the US army than 20 years ago. J. Goldstein, for instance, claims that the most widespread involvement of women in combat has been neither in all-female nor in gender-integrated units, but as individuals scattered through the ranks (2001:106).

However, it is quite impossible and insufficient to discuss military in the light of the femininity/ masculinity debate exclusively. J. Goldstein elaborates more on what is holding the man-making process: "Shame is the glue that holds the man-making process together. Males who fail tests of manhood are publicly shamed, are humiliated, and become a negative example for others" (2001:269). Additionally, the public portrayal of this manhood is said to be incomplete without expressing it through being a soldier (Enloe, 2004), not to mention politics, the governments, the presidents, using these masculinized men, militarism to strengthen their image as strong leaders and, naturally, to achieve their political goals. Thus, men who perceive their duties and express their citizenship ways unlike the more-expected-way are also subjected to unjust categorization, and are stripped off equal treatment and opportunities within or out of the military. Cultural shame is something to consider as driving both men and women to accept particular choices and make decisions at a certain personal price.

Women Making Peace – an Overview

Considering women's participation and representation in various processes, e.g. in post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding, a significant part in the current study should be given to challenges regarding women in peace. That is partially because since the meaning of peace expanded greatly from simply drawing the absence of war, so did

the meaning of peacebuilding (Mazurana and Mckay; 1999:01) and thus, the way women's participation is viewed in such processes. Additionally, the arguments claiming that women and men are simply and inherently different by nature are demystified, not only by the public acknowledgement of women's approaches and knowledge of peace, but also from women's understanding of gender and unique experiences of violence and peace (Kelley and Eblen, 2002:193). The common preconception that women are by some means "more peaceful" or "tend to promote peace more" in comparison to men, would also require a more profound and critical approach, based on what the recent scholarship on gender and peace presents, if not simply be dismissed because of the lack of critical approach. Similarly to how women directly or indirectly challenge and criticize the military system, they further make contributions to how peace is perceived, and such contributions should be recognized and defined more precisely. In addition, women experiencing violence is yet another significant point in question, that is to be briefly discussed in the current part respectively.

While the scholarly and activist contributions have established a firm bedrock of feminist-inquisitive conceptualization of restoring peace, the still common assumption of women in post-conflict by some means implying that "women" is synonymous to "victimhood" is presenting formidable challenges (Schabel and Tabyshalieve, 2012, Mazurana and McKay, 1999, Sorensen 1998). Not only does such preconception stigmatize women as passive or absent actors in such contexts, but it also advances the underpinnings of patriarchal societies. These social constructions, on the other hand are some of the many contributing factors to reconsider, in how such preconceptions are conceived. Schabel and Tabyshalieve provide a more detailed picture:

> "Opportunities for long-term peacebuilding are lost, and sustainable peace and stability are at risk, when a significant proportion of stakeholders in a society's future peace and conflict architecture – half or more of the population – are marginalized and excluded during efforts to heal the wounds of war and build a new society and state. The exclusion of women also distorts our understanding of men's experiences of war and peace, as it tends to protect images of hyper-masculinity and gloss over the vulnerability and suffering of less powerful men" (2012: 3).

Distinguishing women as valuable contributors regarding participation and restoration, at the very start of the discussion is therefore of high essence, since the distinction expands to understanding of what is post-conflict and post-war. According to the

official data by published the UN Women, in peace processes between 1992 and 2011 women made up only 2% of chief mediators, 4% of witnesses and signatories and 9% of negotiators globally (Diaz, Tordjman, 2012). Oftentimes, the benefits of including women at the negotiation table are trivialized as well, although there is a 20% increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 2 years, and a 35% increase in the probability of an agreement lasting at least 15 years, when women are included in peace processes (Stone, 2015). This would essentially mean that women are not only present at the table, but also that the national agendas and aims, including a particular notice of women's issues, is also recognized. Certain positive efforts should be mentioned as well – the Columbian peace process included a gender subcommittee, which is considered to be the first of its kind. In peace negotiations overall, women acted as gender advisors and experts and negotiators, and made up one-third of peace table participants and over 60% of victims and experts in delegations of women affected by conflict (UN Women, 2015). In addition, 22% of women constitute 16.507 civilians working in peacekeeping missions (UN Peacekeeping, 2017) The challenges that women face in post-conflict environments are countless; some of the most discussed are, yet not limited to gender-based violence and health issues, while others such as, social integration, economic survival and participation in social and political life, and women's legal status also expand to limitations of women's roles in post-conflict (Schabel, Tabyshalieve, 2012). Therefore, to systematically support and encourage women's contributions becomes a substantial task.

Similarly, women forming and participating in antimilitarist movements serve as indispensable game-changers. This is not to say that such expressions and the overall participation is not complex; on the contrary, as noted and Kelley and Eblen, such actions or movements for peace involve not only women speaking out in patriarchal societies, but also women speaking out in social settings prone to violence (2002:197). Naturally, challenging military and military actions alone is a considerably great test, not to mention challenging the masculine values that military promotes. Movements, such as the Women in Black or the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, have not been the sole establishments in portraying a different mindset. However, the more significant part to discuss, is the critical approach these movements adopt and how they transform working for peace.

To provide further examples, in the month of April 2017, 159 women were deployed as military experts in twenty of UN's ongoing peacekeeping missions (UN

Peacekeeping, 2017). The number was significantly higher in the same missions, were 2,843 women served as troops. In comparison, 2,151 military experts and 79,623 troops were men, serving in the same missions in April 2017 along women. Several mainstream ideas as to how women peacekeepers contribute to the overall mission should be acknowledged. In conflict areas, women peacekeepers are believed to improve the prospects of sustainable peace by "facilitating good relations between traumatized civilians and security services, giving authority a female face, offering alternative perspectives on conflict resolution and by providing positive female role models" (Norville, 2011:4). However, one of the initial challenges for women serving as peacekeepers is that only a limited number is recruited, and thus, only a restricted number is then deployed to these missions. This is greatly influenced by the opposition in societies or militaries against women in the military, and the overall socio-political, economic barriers to include women in significant processes. In addition, according to Norville, joint male-female forces also present a positive effect in terms of reducing potential sexual abuse of civilians inflicted by peacekeepers themselves, which has occurred in some conflict areas. Nevertheless, women peacekeepers are also subjected to gender-based violence, perpetrated by their male colleagues.

Gender Development in Lithuania

Since the study is formulated in a way that women themselves are the actors and witnesses, or rather the story tellers of experiencing and perceiving military and nation, it is eminent to study in what ways the different roles and expectations are ascribed to gender. Furthermore, to look into how the overall perception of gender has evolved, in connection to the foundations laid in Lithuania, starting mid-XXth century. This could potentially draw some comparison to the (socio-political) history of the country. Moreover, to form a cohesive narrative of gender issues in the current frame in today's Lithuania, past to modern-day issues regarding statehood, a brief military history should be addressed accordingly. In this way, the power relations, and how the concepts laid earlier are translated into the reality of women in the military will be equally recognized.

The late XXth century freedom movements across the Soviet Union were exclusively nation oriented and had no or very little space for "gender", or gender issues, in their national agendas. There is not enough of substantial evidence or data to claim, that gender issues or consideration of gender roles were part of the democratic

transitioning in today's independent states that were once part of the Soviet Union. According to Ashwin (2000), a powerful demand for freedom that later turned into the collapse of the Soviet Union was not addressed by diverse and gender-informed arguments; the main goal was primarily separation from the Soviet Union, independence and self-governance. Ashwin claims that this separation was based on the uniqueness of every nation that demanded independence; the national heritage and the back-to-basics of national cultural values. However, in almost all of the cases this meant getting back to being patriarchal-oriented people. The new nation-state formation in the post-communist era had more to do with ending the artificial belonging than any other issue, according to the author (Ashwin, 2000). Nevertheless, gender did have a particular space in the Soviet times, considerably economics (women were part of the labor force and had opportunities to be employed) and politics. Both men and women were primarily identified as "workers" or in other cases even "breadwinners" by the state. While some women were actively participating in the Communist party, this did not automatically translate into women acting as decision-makers and policy-builders, since multiple other limitations existed:

> "In the case of women, their role was defined as worker-mothers who had a duty to work, to produce future generations of workers, as well as to oversee the running of the household. In return, they were to receive protection from the state in their capacity as mothers, as well as independence through their access to paid work. Men, meanwhile, had an at once more limited and higher-status role to play. They were to serve as leaders, managers, soldiers, workers – in effect they were to manage and build the communist system – while the state assumed the responsibility for the fulfilment of the traditional masculine roles of father and provider, becoming in effect, a universal patriarch to which both men and women were subjected" (2000:1)

Nonetheless, at the time gender issues were not central to state processes. Such aspirations, in the socialist political environment, though, did have an impact on women's lives and how these roles were perceived by both women and men. Occasionally, socialism, as part of the political agenda, was praised for giving the women the right for labor and earning, but it also made them highly-dependable. Attwood (1990) discussed the work of several sociologists of the time, and how sex roles were perceived in the light of socialism, though in this particular case "sex" instead of "gender" was adopted and discussed. Attwood concludes that while socialist women could have expected their roles to be important in the social and economic life,

as well as develop a sense of the greater social need, they also had to have a strong commitment to family and marriage. Socialism did not actually transform women's personalities, but rather merely grafted new equalities on to the old ones (Attwood, 1990:122). In fact, socialism in the USSR did not seem to go far from patriarchy in many ways, and the mere fact that women were allowed to work and earn, did not change the overall perception on women's self-development, participation, claiming different choices for themselves and extending, if not breaking, the patriarchal boundaries of first and foremost embracing motherhood. Men's roles did not end with serving in the military, it included the role of being the main provider, an honorable and responsible title of the breadwinner (1990:167). Women, on the other hand had numerous challenges to face. Restricted or no political freedom left the party-controlled institutions to bolster traditional family roles. This resulted in many outcomes, as discussed by Goldman (1996) such as, women taking lower-paid, lower-prestige professions, poor contraception, job discrimination, political underrepresentation, inconsistent quality in child-care and social services, and the overall burden of two lives – the worker, the mother and wife. In addition, no grassroots women's movements were available, since to organize outside of the Communist Party women's council was illegal (1996:36-37).

The gender narrative of Lithuania at the time, may have followed the footsteps of the narrative considered above, although to dismiss the prospects that women in Lithuania have translated these issues into different realities are very high. The underground or dissident movements were the only ones left to substitute social environments for challenging the system. One significant example to mention here is women's active participation in Lithuanian's armed resistance movement in 1944-1953 against the Soviet forces. The movement supported the idea of independent Lithuania, and had distinguished relatively important roles for women as well:

> "It is evident from the documents of the Lithuanian Freedom Fighters Movement that women partisans were treated in the same way as men. They participated in military operations and carried out leader's orders. Just like the men, when killed their dead bodies were displayed on town squares. Although women did not hold high positions, they had responsible roles as messengers, paramedics and defense heads at headquarters. Not all women who joined the underground had weapons and not all were active fighters. Some of them did daily chores, such as cooking and laundry. <…> However, the partisan initiative to urge girls to join in the resistance had a real basis. Sometimes men had to dress as women which shows how specific

women's work in the resistance was. That partly explains the partisans' efforts to enlist women to work as scouts and messengers" (Smolskute, 2006:62)

Interestingly enough, according to Smolskute, 72% of active fighters among the women were married. In contrast to what the social life consisted of in a day to day socialist environment, the reality of women in Lithuania, was constructed in its own peculiar direction, not only serving for the family, but for the Lithuanian nation as well. The author continues, stating that no restrictions were adopted in joining the partisans, noting that even the printed press addressed the fighters as "Brothers and sisters, resist, fight!". According to the data collected by Smoslkute, women were participating in some military operations, spy removals, and similarly to men, died in battles and if necessary, blew themselves up in the bunkers, had the locations been revealed by Chem[1]. Although once suspected to be related to the movement, all efforts were raised to produce legal documents and let women leave safely. This may suggest that while women had a particular role to serve, they were still perceived as those protection-worthy. Some of the practical motives were observed, however, dismissing the political circumstances would be unwise. Looking at to one of the examples, how men and women were addressed in the press of the time (e.g. brothers and sisters), it is clearly a rhetoric using family metaphors. Women acting as doctors or nurses were also referred to as "The Merciful Sisters" (*Gailestingosios seserys*). Undeniably, women part of the movement took their participation seriously and believed in the cause, even sacrificing, giving their life for the cause (Gaskaite, *et.al.*, 1996:94-45). Some personal letters or statements survived, illustrating how some women felt like they were a burden to the units, hiding in small bunkers and performing daily chores. Based on these data, it is possible to say, that the women in Lithuania at the time, in reality were drawing their own narratives and refused to act as observers, however that is rather incomplete to a fair extent. For instance, little to no present-day sources observe gender-based violence in the time of the armed resistance or during and after mass deportations, initiated right at the start of the movement. The famous scholar Andrea Peto (2003:131) extensively analyzed rapes, repeatedly utilized by the Red Army in Hungary, Austria and Eastern Europe, and even called on to recognize the silence on tackling rape, naming it a "conspiracy silence" rather than "amnesia". Indeed, a deficiency of critical scholarly work surrounds not only the women in the armed resistance, but their narratives in mid-

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[1]The state-secret police organization in the Soviet Union

XXth and later-XXth century Lithuania. Additionally, little is known about women's experiences of family, working life and the effort of inclusiveness, representation in social and political settings of the time. Therefore, it is not that women are absent as heroines or actors in many of the national narratives. The more perplexing idea is the silencing and dismissal of these testimonies, providing inattentive and indifferent arguments that both men and women were united by similar goals, or that gender has little to do with the creation of such collective goals.

Today, according to the Eurostat (2014) statistics, 54% of population in Lithuania are women; and the gender gap of employment of men and women in the age of 20-64 is the lowest in the EU, (67% of men and 65% of women are employed) along with Finland that takes the leading position. Additionally, a prevailing means of persuading that gender equality is after all present and serves as one of the core values in modern Lithuania, is to discuss the top political leaderships positions, such as the President[2], Speaker of the Seimas[3], the Minister of National Defense[4] that are or at some point were all held by women.

Women and The Military in Lithuania

The historical past of the state of Lithuania was extensively marked with battles and fights for independent territories. With the restoration of independence, the army forces were restored accordingly, in 1916 November. The biggest historical enemies of Lithuania of that time were Germany and Russia, but in 1940 when the state became part of the Soviet Union, after an ultimatum that forced to let the military forces into the territory, were the leading, contributing factors to the future politics, society and ideas on statehood and state security. Private property was nationalized, social structures of independent Lithuania were deformed and turned into new, Soviet structures, and the most prominent social, political, religious figures and activists, individuals that served Lithuanian society at the time in many ways and especially in valuing and sustaining independence were exiled to Siberia, along with their family members or those suspected to be ideologically related. No exceptions were made to sex or age; in total

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[2] Currently, the President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaite is serving her second term of office

[3] Irena Degutiene served as the speaker of the Seimas in 2009-2012. Loreta Grauziniene served as the speaker of the Seimas in 2013-2016

[4] Rasa Jukneviciene served as the Minister of Defense in 2008-2012

(in the span of 1941-1953) close to 300, 000 people were exiled (Genocid.lt, 2016), every 10th being a child.

Today Lithuania, or the six Former-Soviet states in Europe is a particular region with certain specific social and political dynamics of its own. As commonly acknowledged in the media, it remains to be at somewhat of a tension with the central political power of the former USSR, Russia, similarly with some other European states, such as Latvia, Poland or Ukraine. However, this so-described tension is not to be mistaken for political tension; rather it deals with more complex identity matters. Post Russia's military intervention in Ukraine in 2014 has encouraged the government of Lithuania to reinstate the compulsory military service, responding to the "growing aggression in Ukraine", as stated by the President D. Grybauskaite (The Guardian, 2016). Hence, on November 9, 2015, order N-1143[5] (in action with the conscription law article VI, parts I and II, article IX parts I and II, article XII parts I and II) of compulsory basic military service was released. As a result, in 2016 January-December 3190 individuals were called for duty. It remains to be uncertain, however highly possible that it will in fact become one of the newly added moral practices of membership. How the general public will perceive the change in the long run is not necessarily a fixed conclusion either, however, it is safe to say that conscription defines new boundaries of military and civilian relations, draws new and improved communal values and affect the understating of what is security. Such changes are apparent in societal political and economic processes. Military is equally responsible for the making of "men" and "women", sustaining the gender order in the society. According to the law, women are exempt from military service unless they declare their wish to join.

Women were officially permitted to study in General Jonas Zemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania in 2000, which does imply on certain gender-aware development in the military and state structures. However, Novagrockiene identified that women in the military in Lithuania accept sexist behavior as natural and that they are less often to recognize sexual harassment (Delfi, 2013). In addition, according to the official NATO National Report on Lithuania in 2015, "there were no specific strategies to prevent sexual harassment and sexual abuse, nor were there programs related to the prevention of sexual harassment". In addition, no formal procedures existed in place for female or male victims to report harassment. Not surprisingly, no cases of sexual harassment in

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[5] Identification Number 2015-17779

the Lithuanian armed forces were reported in the same year (NATO, 2015). However, there were also no restrictions on the incorporation of women in the armed forces, nor were there restrictions that apply only to operations, according to the source. Furthermore, the Lithuanian Armed Forces had five gender-related training programs, out of which three courses were offered in the Military Academy: International Conflicts and their Management, International Organizations and International Operations and Fundamentals of Political Science. The courses covered UNSCR 1325 and feminism, women's rights and movements respectively. The armed forces and the Ministry of Defense had one trained gender advisor in 2015.

The earlier scholarly works on women in military structures in Lithuania significantly featured analyzing women's positions or career opportunities in the military or women-soldier's portrayal in the media. Maslauskaite claimed that a great number of women positively perceived their position in the military, however, far less believed the organization was favorable, accepting in terms of women's participation in the military and overall stated that the military environment was rather limiting than encouraging women's career opportunities (2006:305-306). Furthermore, Neliubsyte concluded that the media were often creating the image of "woman", as opposed to "woman-soldier", in putting an emphasis on her family, social status or her appearance instead (2010:84).

METHODOLOGY

Before analyzing the transcribed data, defining the framework of this study is essential. To answer the research questions of this study, the interview methodology was adopted.

Qualitative methodology is most commonly noted for intersecting various disciplines and fields, yet maintaining separate and distinguished histories in education, social work, communications, psychology, history, organizational studies, medical science, anthropology and sociology (Denzin, Lincoln, 2005:27). Initially, the current research is not defined by a particular, definite hypothesis, rather it regards the research questions as inquisitive and conceivably insightful. Nevertheless, the methodology is guided and driven by several aims, in foreseeing the topical areas of gender and nationalism, and the power within this relation, using interview as a means to collect data. Prior to advancing the discussion on adopted methodology, it is of high essence to acknowledge certain context-related issues, and the sensitivity of the questions posed to the respondents overall. As discussed in the previous chapter, in order to achieve the aim of the research the unit of analysis for the study was chosen as women conscripts-volunteers of the military in Lithuania.

While currently, the global tradition of conscription with few exceptions is *en masse* aimed at men, 76 women have joined the military in Lithuania voluntarily[6] in 2015, and 84[7] in year 2016 as conscripts-volunteers after the reinstatement of mandatory military conscription. According to the official edition *Lithuanian Defense System: Facts and Trends 2017*, prepared by the Ministry of National Defense (Kam.lt, 2016), the number of military personal grew by 20% since 2009, while 20% of conscripts joined professional service in 2016. In addition, the number of women in the military in 2015 was 1733, while in 2016, 1854[8] women were officially part of the military in Lithuania in multiple various divisions. In relation to this historical change in Lithuania and the overall discussion of gender equality, the current study addresses the intersection of gender, nationalism and military; more explicitly, the experiences of women voluntarily joining the military in Lithuania.

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[6]This refers to conscripts-volunteers as part of the non-professional military (*NPPKT, Neprofesinė privalomoji karinė tarnyba*)
[7]According to the official data obtained from the Ministry of National Defense Lithuania on April 6, 2016
[8]According to the official data obtained from the Ministry of National Defense Lithuania on April 6, 2016

To contribute to the women's roles in armed struggles and peace, this research raises the following questions: How do women feel about being in the military? What do they have to say about their own personal experiences, making sense of their identities, goals and active participation, in processes or institutions wielding power, such as the military? Do women negotiate their gender identities in order to be part of and belong to the military? How do women, as being part of the military, perceive war, peace, peace-building and state security, and how does military shape or affect their understanding of these concepts? Questions as such, however, could solely be approached and properly understood acknowledging the context first. Dey (1993) elaborates more on the significance of conveying the meaning of message and communication in qualitative framework in social sciences, in relation to the context:

> "Contexts are important as a means of situating action, and of grasping its wider social and historical import. This can require detailed descriptions of the social setting within which action occurs; the relevant social contexts may be a group, organization, institution, culture or society; the time frame within which action takes place, the special context, the network of social relationships, and so on" (1993:33).

In addition to Dey's distinctions on context, Fontana and Frey (2005:695) have also acknowledged the interview's boundedness to history and politics. Hence, the purpose of the research is to analyze the concepts of gender and nationalism, raising feminist-curious questions in the context of military, and to directly address the women who are part of the military in Lithuania. That is to say, it aims to discover insight with respect to the questions raised, primarily "from the subjects' own perspective" and "involving specific approach and technique of questioning" (Kvale, 1996:27).

The Interview Method

Considering that the essential purpose is to understand individuals' experience and perspective, semi-structured (semi-standardized), in-depth, *one-to-one* verbal interviews is the methodology adopted. Semi-structured interviews contain both pre-established and possibly spontaneous questions, and most commonly, a progression of topical areas, i.e. themes to be addressed in the interview. On the other hand, the progression of the questions must be ensured to move from non-threatening to threatening (Weinberg, 1996: 85), i.e. asking questions considered to be less personal and/ or sensitive at first, to avoid any discomfort discussing information of sensitive

nature. The points indicated, including possible modifications in order, may vary in respect to the interviewee's positional stance and the interviewer vs. interviewee interaction throughout the process. In-depth, in particular refers to knowledge collected and evaluated in an itemized manner, while *one-to-one* sets the interview tone to be rather informal and strictly individual-revolving (i.e. no interference of any other possible parties or participants), and partially relates to building a more robust rapport and trust between the interviewee and the interviewer, taking into consideration the sensitivity of the themes discussed. The interview participants are the women conscripts-volunteers, currently serving or having completed their military service, post-2015 reinstatement of constription. This is not to be mistaken for *volunteers*, that could also refer to the volunteers of the National Defense Volunteer Forces, integrated into Land Force, which admits women as well. Thus, the term conscripts-volunteers is adopted in the current study. In order to ensure confidentiality and protection of the participants' identities, sixteen names have been changed, while two women gave the permission to use their own names.

The data has been collected over the span of three months – January to March of 2017. To acquire the data, an official permission to carry out the academic research had to be obtained from the Ministry of National Defense of the Republic of Lithuania prior to interviewing the women in the military. The interviews began in January 2017 shortly after receiving the permission and were arranged in relation to the Ministry's guidelines and security measures. This concluded two separate visists to two intaftries and meeting women on the military premises. The meetings with women who have already completed their service were held in a setting (time and location) of their choice.

Due to the specific circumstances of obtaining data, building trust between the interviewer and the participants was a substantial step in the overall research. Thus, the principal investigator ensured a professional approach and maintained being an active listener throughout the entire research. The consent form provided to every participant, reported that participants may withdraw from the study at any time of the research and may withdraw their testimonies up until the work is published. The consent form was written in Lithuanian (See Appendix 1 for the consent form in English and Appendix 2 for the consent form in Lithuanian). Additionally, questions where participants might feel influenced to give their answers in a certain way were strictly avoided. Information related to their personal identities was strictly kept confidential and known only for the

interviewer/ principal investigator in all stages of the research, including after the completion of the study, and are not revealed in the published form of the study. All digital records are kept private, i.e. the data obtained electronically were stored on the computer of the principal investigator and can only be accessed by the principal investigator.

Before the interviews started, participants were informed that they were allowed to skip or refuse to answer certain questions, without having to provide a reason for their choice. In cases where the participants did not wish to provide their signatures for the consent form, a certain other mark or an oral consent (given when the interview begins) was offered as an option to the participants and was treated as acceptable and valid. To ensure confidentiality, the interviewer/ principal investigator did not and will not discuss the participant's profiles and testimonies with other individuals throughout and after the research is completed. The participants were also free to introduce their own issues or questions, in case these were not adressed by the interviewer primarily. The consent form containing participant's rights and information about the research was presented to the women prior to the interviews. Only after obtaining the consent from the participants of the study, the testimonies and stories were recorded with an audio device and later coded, classified and conceptualized, according to the theoretical framework and the questions raised.

Furthermore, non-probability convenience (snowball) sampling was adopted in the study. The sampling case adopted in the research was used in regard to the difficulty of reaching the targeted audience and naturally to discover more potential participants. Simultaneously, using the informal platorm for women in the military in Lithuania on Facebook "Women of the Lithuanian Military"[9] *(Lietuvos kariuomenės moterys)*, and contacting some of the activists, photographers was used as the bedrock of searching for resdonpents. The sampling is also that of self-selection, since the respondents decide whether or not to engage in any kind of interaction or participation. The pre-determined limits to the sample pool are self-explanatory – women conscripts-volunteers that serve or served voluntarily as the only criterion in selecting, however, no age or demographic limitations were taken into account, since it did not present particular threats in obtaining valuable results.

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[9]https://www.facebook.com/lithuaniamilitarywomen/

The interview questions were designed to appertain to the topical areas of the research, i.e. gender, military, nationalism, peace and war. These concluded questions of introductory and background nature, questions focusing on women's experiences in the military, women's conceptualization of peace, war and military, and their experiences and perceptions of gender. The initial purpose of the questions of introductory and background nature was to establish trust, by using non-threatening questions. Such were also focused at getting to know the women interviewees/ participants and building their general profiles. The women were to disclose the information they felt comfortable to share. Using a different name throughout the interview and the rest of the research was offered and highly suggested, in order to protect the participants' identities.

Questions focusing on women's experiences in the military sought to obtain some personal insight of military realities along the perception of women conscripts-volunteers, i.e. (power) relationships, social interactions, preconceptions of both military life and gender and how the two concepts intersect in real-life contexts, and the boundaries between "civilian" and "military". They additionally focus on women's social lives, in order to learn how supportive their social environments are of their decision, and how the public opinion potentially shapes their own perceptions, and feelings. Questions seeking to discover the participants' conceptualization of war and peace are accordingly looking for the connections between the two, in relation to the women's experiences as women and soldiers. In addition, questions focus on how being exposed to military potentially impacts women's understanding of war, peace and post-conflict. Finally, the last set of questions noticably aims to learn of women's understanding of gender in the national context and how the public discourse in Lithuania encourages them to feel, and how challenging or convenient the environment in Lithuania is for women in the eyes of women in the military. However, multiple questions could be perceived to be intersecting and additionally providing a niche to uncover new issues, considering that the interviews are semi-structured. All the interviews were held in Lithuanian (the interview questions in Lithuanian and English are provided in the Appendix 3).

Consequently, an eminent part of the current methodology is based on the three fundamental dimensions of language, gender and power. As established by Alvesson and Skoldberg, these refer to "language as the medium in which we conduct our social lives and create our symbolical existence; gender as the fundamental dichotomous

figure of thought characterizing our private as well as public lives; power, entangling all of us in its constantly reinvented ruses and snares and <…> the fine-grained basic structure that holds society together" (2000: 200). In the previous chapter, we have already uncovered that gender relations are perceived to be social constructions, rather than being defined by nature. Alvesson and Skoldberg expand the definition even further, by claiming that genders are not only social but linguistic constructions as well, that are decided by social and discursive practices and essentially, by existing ideas and concepts (2000: 213). Thus, in relation to the dimensions found, an approach of interview analysis to the current study proves to be the most appropriate and effective, by differentiating the concepts and understanding and their variations.

Limitations

Limitations of non-probability sampling not only touch upon the concepts of validity and reliability; non-probability samples are oftentimes regarded as ungenerizable as well. Theferore, the conceptualization of generalizability will be briefly discussed in the current study. While the assumption is that it is fairly problematic to propose homogeneous outcomes in discussing data collected in interviews, the relevant case here is to acknowledge naturalistic generalization (Kvale, 1996). Specifically in relation to the issues of sampling and the insightul nature of the questions posed, the evidence in the current study lies in reflecting on descriptions and experiences reported, and preferably should not be utilized as a litmus in offering concrete and robust generalizations.

Additionally, validity should not only be discussed as a particular point of analysis, but it should be acknowledged to rather "depend on the quality of craftsmanshp during investigation, continually checking, questioning, and theoretically interpreting findings" (Kvale, 1996:241). To tackle the issue of validity Kvale suggests to adopt a critical outlook, continuously check and question throughout the entire process of performing a study. Reliability in qualitative analyses, especially in cases of analysing interviews rests highly on appropriate data documentation, which in this case included recording the interviews for precise verbatim transcriptions and thefore analysis, providing a sufficient amount of exerpts from the interviews, in order to provide a bedrock for the data. In cases where participant would refuse to be recorded, a written record of the responses was kept. Nevertheless, some contextual issues regarding both validity and reliability must be addressed in the current study.

Due to the principles of visits in military institutions, specificaly in this case the infantries, the location for collecting data was provided by the authorities in charge and could not be decided by the interviewer nor the participants of the research themselves. This included a particular date and time frame given for the two visits and the physical room arrangements on the premises. In addition, the interviewer was not able to make decisions on choosing which infantries or battalions to visit, neither the room arrangements in the infantries. The interviewees were those able and willing to participate at the time of data collection, i.e. no direct contact or arrangements between the principal investigator and the participants took place prior to their first meeting on the military premises. That was the case with the interviews carried out in the military premises, but not those conducted with women who have already completed their military service. In this matter, it is substantial to recognize that in some cases these factors could have been potentially eminent in how much the interviewees wanted to share, discuss and how comfortable they may have felt in discussing their experiences in greater detail. Thus, the data collected will be discussed acknowledging the contextual limitations – fourteen women who at the time were serving in the military and four who had completed their service at the time of research.

A total of 160 women concsripts-volunteers were part of the military in 2015 and 2016, while eighteen women were interviewed in this reserach. Thus, the research interviews have adressed a little over 11% of the sample universe.

DATA ANALYSIS

As established in the methodology section, the interview questions lay out certain concepts which consistently lead to an approach of the collected data. Nevertheless, newly introduced findings are discussed along the existing conceptualizations, as the method applied was semi-structured interviews. A total of eighteen interviews were conducted, seventeen of which were recorded with an audio device. Two separate visits to the two infantries were arranged in the period between January and March 2017, where eight and six interviews were carried out accordingly. In both cases these were arranged on the premises of the infantries. The remaining four were held in locations and times of the participants' choice, however in the time frame indicated. Certain questions (see Appendix 3 for the interview questions in English and Lithuanian) vary accordingly to the women's stage of service, however, no theoretical assumption as to how the interviews would differ was established prior to conducting the research.

The age group of the respondents varied from eighteen to twenty-nine. Only four out of eighteen women had completed their service at the time of conducting interviews, however, two of them were proceeding with their careers in the military after the nine-month service. Initially, every interview was started with an offer to use a different name, in order to protect the participant's identities. As a result, sixteen out of eighteen participants' real names are not provided in the current study, based on their decisions. For the same reasons, full institutional names of the infantries are not provided in the study and hereby will be referred to as Infantry 1 and Infantry 2. Eight interviews were held in Infantry 1, while a total of twenty-three women were serving overall. A total of eight women were serving at Infantry 2 at the time of interviews, however, six interviews were held. It should be noted that interviews conducted with women who had completed their service were generally taking place longer. A complete list of research participants, including their names and age is provided in the Appendix 4.

Military as Choice versus Military as Obligation

The decision of choosing the military based on choice versus based on obligation thus far represents a rather broad category. However, it was displayed in several different cases, most commonly discussing questions related to women's ideas of military or military service prior to their service, and self-reflecting ideas on seriously

considering service (see Appendix 3). The differentiation of military representing choice and obligation was established in relation to the women's responses. In the current context, both stand for something beneficial, useful, meaningful or of high importance, as expressed by the interviewees. To begin with, "obligation" suggests a decision greatly connected to a duty one feels for her country – to serve, protect and defend. Therefore, it is much more than simply a choice. In other instances, the choice was described as a decision, made for one's career or experience, i.e. choosing military service as being a potential career path or a long-time wish, eventually resulting in their enrollment into the military:

"I knew I would go to the military since my childhood. My relatives are in the military <…> I've always said that – in my childhood, in school; I have always said that. They would ask me, 'Where would like to be?' and I used to say, 'in the military' (smiles). I have always said that. I don't know where else could I be" (Jurgita, 19).

"[Being in England] I thought of joining the military, because I have dreamt about it since my childhood. I liked guns, war, I attended military camps and was part of the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union. Working and completing tasks in teams seemed appealing to me, so I wanted to join the military" (Deimantė, 21).

"When I was little my mother used to tell me (these were the years of gaining independence, so we've gone through a lot at that time), she used to say that when I was little I would scream until I would start crying about how much I wanted to go to war, stand in the Baltic way[10], defend Lithuania. My first ever song was 'Ginsim Lietuvą Tėvynę[11]'. All of my games were with sticks, imitating guns (laughs). We would play war with other kids. I don't know, military has always fascinated me […] Guns have always fascinated me, I don't know, maybe the structure? (Emilija, 29)

"[…] I thought that I had a duty to fulfill for my motherland […]" (Gintarė, 20)

Aside from the responses provided, in one particular interview a woman (Morta, 24) told that a significant reason for joining the military was the probability of war. She also expressed her belief in "fighting for her culture", "for the things that are precious", as opposed to "hiding or running away". While many women described patriotism or the importance of defending and protecting the country as pivotal, only three women's

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[10] Emilija is referring to a peaceful demonstration held on 1989, August 23, called the Baltic Way, where people holding hands formed a chain spanning over Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, demanding acknowledgement of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and making a public stand demanding independence

[11] Emilija is referring to a song title that directly translates to "We will defend the Motherland Lithuania"

responses specifically provided reasons for joining the military as being of nationalistic nature, i.e. to defend, to protect and to fulfil the duty. That is an interesting case, especially knowing that all women participants are conscripts-volunteers. Several interviews, had the idea that women can equally "defend the country, same as men do", as expressed by the interviewees themselves. In discussing other questions, the participants described, their personal relation or closeness to the country in more detail, or what serving meant for them:

> "[…] Service has made me prouder of my state. I have this feeling that if I represent my state then I always defend it; and I'm saying, "you live in this state and it has to be good for you, you have to love it back" (Viktorija, 24)

> "[…] Just like everyone loves their land, so does the military give itself. People in the military give themselves for their land, some ever more, do it for their families, completely give themselves for their motherland. So, one shouldn't create this myth that military is just shooting around" […] (Vesta, 20)

In these occasions, the military provided a space to practice and give meaning to goals, such as to protect, to serve, to sacrifice. In addition, this also rejects the mainstream notion that women are somehow inherently more peaceful, in the sense that they are capable of waging or taking part in wars in the name of the motherland, and that overall, they seek for a space for themselves (in the military) to realize these goals. Furthermore, nation-goals for women in this case did not seem to differ from the ascribed nation-goals that men have to fulfil.

Additionally, as seen in some instances military proved to be a wise choice in making a career move. This was true in five cases, where women initially wanted to select other state institutions, such as the Lithuanian Police School or the Border Guard School, however, for certain reasons or circumstances eventually enrolled into the military instead:

> "I thought about studying in the Border Guard School but decided, well, I was not sure of my abilities, since there are certain requirements to fulfil, and I wanted to get an idea of how this would look like; would I manage, would I fit in, would I succeed? So, I decided to try joining the military" (Vesta, 20)

> "At first, I really wanted to enroll into the Police School, but the requirements changed and after talking to my parents, I decided I would go to the military, become stronger physically and then I could join the police. Now that I am here, I am planning to remain in the military" (Eglė, 18)

In fact, nine women out of eighteen admitted to having considered joining the military or having some sort of consideration of military as potential career, from an early age or at least in certain periods of their lives, while two women made work/ studying arrangements in order to enroll into the military, and three, having lived abroad, returned to the country in particular to pursue their careers in the military. Two women specifically indicated military to provide future employment perspectives, while another two, as mentioned previously in the methodology section, have remained in the military after completing their nine-month service.

Moreover, discussing military as a choice, it is also equally relevant to comprehend how the women conceive their futures. One question (see Appendix 3) was specifically aimed at understanding how the participants view their career opportunities and how confident they feel about establishing a niche for themselves in the military, after the completion of their service. Seventeen participants believed that military provided opportunities to continue with their careers post-conscription and twelve out of seventeen provided comprehensive answers as to where and how this process would potentially take place, i.e. identifying specific institutions part of the military, discussing military systems, ranks and time-frames in terms of how available such would be. Five women serving for the military at the time of participating in the interviews, indicated they would continue their careers in the military. Nine women stated they were considering military or were as yet undecided about their future in the military. Out of four women who have completed their service two remained in the professional military. This offers some insight into how deliberate or measured the choices essentially were, and raises further questions, as to how connected these decisions are to the reinstatement of the conscription law. Moreover, to what extent the military environment is stimulating and encouraging, in relation to women's decisions to remain. A contributing factor to reconsider, is that conscription was set to provide support not only the country's security, but also to strengthen the military. Therefore, soldiers, or particularly increasing the number of soldiers, is an invaluable asset.

In addition, how the public discourse could have potentially made an impact on women's decisions, is another significant question to consider. Similar examples prevail, where women elaborate on choosing military as providing favorable circumstances in "trying out something new" or "testing oneself", whicht is also not mutually exclusive from choosing military as their first or even second option:

"When…when I actually thought about where to study after high-school graduation, I had an opportunity and a desire to continue studying, but I wanted to try something new, not just studying, but something else, different. A different routine, if you can call it like that" (Erika, 19)

"In the very beginning I joined the military because I wasn't sure of what to study. But I considered military my entire life, it seemed interesting to work in the military […] conscripts-volunteers were a good alternative; you just go and test yourself and then understand if this is for you or not" (Akva, 19)

"[…] I didn't want the year to go in vain, to work for a minimum wage. Because I don't have an academic degree I decided to gain some experience first and to become stronger, at the same time" (Laura, 21)

"To be honest I wasn't sure of what to do in life, because the environment around, my relatives were pushing me to study something that brings financial benefits, something that could later help me get a job. I almost made a mistake and applied to study medicine. I don't think I would have liked that. When I found out that girls could be admitted to the military I suddenly decided that I wanted to go. I didn't think that I wanted to join military before. I was always fascinated by it, but I never had thoughts that I would like to join" (Gintarė, 20)

In discussing the women's testimonies, it is substantial to recognize their social environments in attempting to understand how social interactions or public discourse affect their decisions. Such points were mainly drawn in responses to the question regarding how supportive or understood the interviewees felt in the process of making the decision to join the military (see Appendix 3) or while being in the military. As it is with numerous cases, support as well as public discussion regarding military or conscription were observed to be very common factors. All eighteen women claimed that despite certain remarks, questions or reactions received, they have felt supported and/ or understood at some point or throughout the entire experience of being in the military. Their families and/ or friends were noted to be primary support system. While some claimed their decision to be strictly not relying on considered-to-be-traditional social norms or social reactions, to their personal choices, effort to support or understand could nevertheless be considered as a contributing factor to the overall perception of gender roles in Lithuania. This phenomenon could even be acknowledged as a positive reinforcement, reflecting on how much space is given to discussions on what is generally considered of masculine or feminine nature in the society in Lithuania today. Several interesting responses encourage to explore the effect of public opinion on conscription:

"I didn't expect that there would be that many of us. It's sort of like a trend now. Women come to the military, too" (Karolina, 19)

"I had thought about it for a while, because I had acquaintances, friends that joined voluntarily, and I heard many responses, that it's difficult but that there's also plenty of positive emotions […]" (Saulė, 19)

"The main factor [for seriously considering military service] was my friends. They would talk about it a lot; they got me interested" (Laura, 21)

"I didn't think [about military before] until May 2015 when the media started discussing the subject. Everyone started massively talking about conscripts, "*verktiniai*"[12]. I thought that that was interesting and started reading about it more (Viktorija, 24)

Seven women acknowledged the public discussion on military conscription in the country in the interviews, and explained having had positive impressions in connection to conscription and/ or military as a whole, in their interviews. One of the interview questions (see Appendix 3) asked participants to provide reactions that they have received because of their decision to join the military. Ten women claimed having received reactions expressing admiration and pride, and were generally told to have made a "wise decision", being thanked by other individuals for their choice or receiving pride. Some of the then also discussed having received surprising reactions. Nine women told they have received remarks questioning their decisions (e.g. "Are you stupid?", "What are you talking about?"), or those in some ways claiming that women and military do not go together (e.g. "Don't go, you'll become masculine, it'll be bad", "Women should carry about pans and pots", "Why do you need this? You're a girl").

"I didn't talk about it to nearly anyone in my family; some didn't really understand it. One of my acquaintances said I wouldn't be accepted because my physical preparation was not sufficient, I wouldn't be admitted. But I was. And then they start looking at you differently. Especially now that I have completed the Walk of Honor[13], I'm proud of myself, but they should be embarrassed for not believing in me" (Neringa, 20)

However, this requires an additional look at how women's personal connections reinforce their realities and perceptions. When asked if they knew someone who was in

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[12] Viktorija is referring to a social project created by Neringa Rekašiūtė and Beata Hazanova, responding to the Lithuanian government's decision to reintroduce conscription. The project featured photographs of crying men that were also wearing uniforms. Later in the media and social networks, the public began referring to the men as "*verktiniai*", which refers to a crying person. However, the word is of mocking and sarcastic nature and similar to the word "conscripts" (*šauktiniai*) in Lithuanian, thus trivializing the project and the men that were criticizing conscription.
[13] Course of obstacles that is part of the training in the military, "*Šlovės takas*" in Lithuanian

some way related to the military, thirteen women responded that someone among their family members and/ or friends had served in the military or was employed by the military professionally in different divisions. Three women expressed they were the first in their families and/ or among their friends to choose to join the military. In particular, out of thirteen women five identified a male (father, brother or friend) and six a female (mother, sister or relative) figure, as not necessarily having connections with the military but more as important and influential in their lives, who also encouraged their decisions. Notwithstanding, in the majority of these cases significant individuals in their family had an important position in terms of how women's decisions to join were perceived. To put it shortly, if these individuals played a significant role in these women's life, they expressed a feeling of satisfaction in making them feel proud. Few women claimed that their service has encouraged to build contact with other people in their social circles serving and/ or working in the military. Some of the cases discussed are provided as follows:

> "Another [reason for joining] was that my father would be proud. He wanted to have a boy, but we were three daughters in the family. He really wanted a son, so I'm doing this that he would be proud in me. I am a girl, but I can do what a boy can" (Deimantė, 21)

> "My father was a conscript-volunteer, in the Soviet times, served for two years. He is really proud that I joined the military, really. He always calls me his "little wolf" (Erika, 19)

Some of the responses discussed thus far, also introduce another aspect, where military is associated to certain journeys or transformations of educational and maturing nature. As perceived by the women, emerging oneself into this experience is an apparent future advantage, thus, an opportunity of some kind in regard to what they seemed to identify as a positive factor. Nevertheless, contradicting points could be noted as well, as to how prevailing the idea of "testing oneself" or having to reassure one's abilities is. What exactly does "testing oneself"" mean? Why the women would feel the need to have their abilities approved or evaluated, is yet again a critical facet to the discussion. On the one hand, this could simply be perceived as a learning experience, that tests evaluate one's abilities, readiness and knowledge, and that these are merely valuable lessons learned as part of one's experience. On the other, testing oneself, gaining experience and becoming stronger, more capable all have something to do with owning or wielding power, in one way or another. In addition, concepts as such

also introduce another notable conceptualization, where military is associated to strength.

The Military Journey

Certain preconceptions of military life versus civilian life, as to how the two cut across or if the boundaries can be strictly defined between what is "military" and "civilian" are considered. Furthermore, how military (life) and military-related experiences have been internalized by women, and how their personal journeys in the military evolved, is also to be discussed. In self-reflecting on their first impressions in the military and how the feelings have changed gradually over the time of service, nearly all women expressed that comparing to their first days, they have adopted different impressions. In most cases, first impressions were described as "suspense", "scary", "chaos-like", "difficult" or "uncomfortable", while following "great", "fun" "confident", "home-like", "routine-like" or "boring". Such change was observed mainly because of getting used to the routine, understanding and adapting to the boundaries, and/ or learning how to live and work with their peers/ colleagues. Seven women stated their service has changed them. This change was mostly described as gaining more self-confidence, becoming stronger or obtaining more knowledge. Fifteen felt happy or content about their decision to serve (e.g. "I have found myself, "expectations matched reality", "I have developed", "I feel safer", "my worldviews changed", "military is for one's own benefit", "you learn a lot in the military"). Some claimed that military has "fostered patriotism" or "love for the state". One woman specifically claimed she regretted her decision to join, mainly because of struggling to find a niche in the military, questioning the relationships in the military. Other two also expressed their encouragement and invited for more people, in most cases specifically women, to join the military service in their interviews.

A total of seven women discussed the importance of peer relationships (conscripts-volunteers), in one way or another. Interestingly, in four cases, this relationship was described as a family relationship:

> "We feel like a family. And that is very good, because in the case of war, we would support one another, protect. That's how it has to be" (Karolina, 19)

> "[…] Every day we spend with the guys; we wake up and go to bed together, see each other all the time, just like brother and sister – you fight

and that's it. Literally, because brothers and sisters never get a long, and here we live and do everything together (Deimantė, 21)

In other examples, where family relationships were not used to describe the connection built with their peers, rather simply working as a group, maintaining a strong bond, trust, not giving up on each other, or bearing difficulties no matter how big, for the sake of the team was expressed. This reinforces women's experiences to some extent – relationships of such significance and simultaneously their peer's perceptions of them as women in the military provide a different meaning to the overall journey. Both Deimantė and Karolina, and some other women too, have previously expressed having received negative comments, therefore, creating and bonding as "family" potentially presents additional challenges and self-sacrifice to some degree. However, the tight "family" or "group" connections also stand as more important value.

When talking about their experiences in the military, especially in comparison to their lives before military, in six interviews, a tendency prevailed where a clear-cut distinction between what was considered by the women as military and civilian life. That could be noted as an example of a military-related identity that has proven to be even more significant over the course of their experiences. Six women identified distinctions between the two lives as being different in terms of choice, discipline, dealing with issues and purpose, some of which are provided bellow:

"Military is not something terrible. Everybody thinks that there's something terrible here, but it's nothing like that. Yes, it is a structure, a system, things are different here. This isn't a civilian life, where you can do whatever you want. No, this is the military; yes, you serve for Lithuania, you go learn how to protect your motherland and you do it every day, but it doesn't mean that you don't have a life" (Emilija, 29)

"This was a new life chapter after all, so at first I felt a little intimidated" (Akva, 19)

"[…] For instance, when I think of myself when I was at home, all by myself, watching TV, I guess just like any other normal human being (smiles), civilian, you know, eating dinner after work. It's not like that here. You will never be alone; if you're having a hard time, someone will cheer you up. You will not be left alone, this is what I like about it, that you don't feel lonely" (Laura, 21)

Even if making a distinction between the two lives, the service seemed to present a purpose, (when in some instances civilian life did not), some also being paramount life decisions and life changes. Laura and Emilija's responses also touch upon the group

dynamics in the military, however, this will be in discussed in greater detail further in the analysis, since it relates to men-women relationship in the military.

Masculine versus Feminine Strength in the Military

Military is conceived to be an institution wielding power for countless reasons, some of which, as identified by the participants, are associated with strength, oftentimes physical. Accordingly, these were ascribed to men and women independently. The conceptualization provided here was not particularly developed in reflection to a specific question and was noted to be considerably fluid throughout the entire interview. The current notion is also intersecting with the previously mentioned category, where in certain instances military seemingly presented opportunities for "testing oneself" and for "becoming stronger". It is crucial to discover what the reasons for accomplishing a goal as such are, and if these are the values that turn soldiers or military into successful in the eyes of the women, in order to understand how military represents strength. For this reason, there has to be a distinction made, whether or not this was deeply internalized by the women as a social norm or a natural consequence.

To begin with, nine women differentiated men and women possessing different physical abilities, specifically identifying men to be more physically stronger than women, in military context:

> "I can say that I'm somewhat a feminist, this is why I came here, to prove that women can also be in the military. That they can also overcome difficulties, well, maybe not as much physical [difficulties] the way men can, but specifically emotional, and other too" (Erika, 19)

> "Yes, we are a little weaker than men. Mmm, of course, there are different men too, but for now, at least what I've noticed is that we really are weaker; we need to prepare more physically, because our… the physical requirements are a little different for us too (Barbora, 23)

> "Women probably face more challenges [in the military], because of physiology, women have less muscle tissue, it is more difficult for them, for instance, to lift a bag, more difficult to carry it for longer (Neringa, 20)

Aside from determining physical strength to be more related to men rather than women, certain other abilities were noted to be exclusively women-like, such as sensitivity, intelligence or critical thinking, mental strength and handling stressful situations, resilience to pain, and expressing their emotions more openly than men do, although

these were very few. Interestingly enough, femininity was not necessarily described or discussed. In most cases, such distinctions were introduced discussing the questions which specially inquired to give their perceptions about women in the military and what kind of message being in the military sends to other people (see Appendix 3).

Nearly all women specifically indicated or indirectly expressed women to be equal participants to men, willingly engaged not only in the military, but also in social and political processes as well, and thought of women serving in the military as rather natural, as opposed to a surprising phenomenon. In addition, nine claimed that women could perform in the military better than men. Regardless of more than half women associating men to physical strength, their beliefs about women as actors or women's performance in the military, are somewhat of a criticism of military or soldiers being primarily defined by strength. This could suggest that while military is still a reflection of power of some sort, power is not the only characteristic of soldier *worthy* of his/ her title. By critically evaluating "a good soldier" and thus, changing this definition, most women interviewees have overstepped the boundary in terms of what is generally considered masculine strength:

> "For me, a woman in the military is a sign of strength, because women can do the same, and even more than men can. I'm not the biggest feminist, but I don't see anything wrong about that" (Smiltė, 18)

> "Women in the military is a usual thing – there aren't that many women, but the number is not that small either. All of them remain [in the military]. Boys come so that they wouldn't need to come later, but no one asks girls to come. They come to stay, to show that they will move forward" (Deimantė, 21)

> "Not only men join the military, women join, too. They are determined to defend the motherland, not only men are. It's good that they join (laughs). It will prove to be useful, they will manage to do more" (Karolina, 19)

However, responses given under the concept of masculine versus feminine strength in the military, also present a desire to display, wield power over the other. Such could also be encouraging competition in terms of who has the power, in order to prove one's validity, presence. Additionally, women's choice of military and military life, serve as a statement in some cases, whether this would be a statement aimed at society, public, or their peers in the military. As a matter of fact, five claimed that they wanted to prove or show something with their decision to join the military, or that the decision was meaningful in some ways.

Oftentimes, that they "could" and "were able to" in terms of their performance and belonging to military, i.e. justifying women's presence in the military. The notion involved responses, such as "show courage", "prove that women are capable", "prove that one has strength", "women can do as much as men can", "fighting for other women", "women can be in the military too". A sense of competition can be seen in women's responses, when in most cases their answers touch upon competition between men and women in the military specifically. An important detail to mention is the physical requirements for men and women in the military, and how these translate into competition and thus, relationships. Nine told that women receive concessions in the military, while four women specifically acknowledged that concessions are apparent when it comes to physical requirements, that are different for men and women. Such is the official and institutional approach of the military as well. However, this is not to be confused with tasks, where both are asked to complete certain tasks, but rather could be considered as physical exercises and physical punishments that is physical exercise for disorderly and inappropriate behavior or minor misconduct:

"There can't be any exclusivity. Of course, it happens that women get concessions, yet, equality exists" (Karolina, 19)

"At first everything was easier, now, of course, everything is still easier for us than it is for men. When it comes to punishments, it used to be that if men were given 50 "cirkulis"[14],women were given 25; a half, you could say. This of course isn't bad, but it already is a separation. It's not the same. Boys look at you differently, as if there are some things that you can't do like they can. You feel separated, different" (Erika, 19)

While physical strength was not acknowledged as the primary definition of a soldier, it is questioning that the physical requirements would differ after all. This is especially true if we were to consider that the values and principles that the military is greatly based on are team effort, soldiers' ability to work and communicate in teams, and his/ her dedication for the country, as opposed to individual victories and losses. Different requirements, based on what most women referred to as 'physiological differences' as seen before, are thus, perceived equivocally by men and women in the military, and encourage further competition, contradicting the values (mentioned above) of the military itself. Why would there be a need in differentiating who may or may not

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[14] *"Cirkulis"* stands for a repetitive cycle of e.g. 10 push-ups, 10 squats, or 10 crunches, etc. The number of physical exercises repeated can differ

perform better in the military, is yet another telling consideration. The second response given, in particular discusses concessions as a contributing factor in forming different attitudes when it comes to women's participation in the military. Other responses involved discussing men's attitudes towards their women peers based on these rules in the military. Some illustrating men and women's relationships in the military suggest of competitive nature:

> "They [our male peers] don't like [that we are here]. Of course, we receive concessions, someone lets us do something first. For instance, they don't like if we criticize them, for something regarding formation, if we say: 'don't stand like that, stand the other way'; there's an immediate strange aggression. Some react in a normal way, but there are those who don't like that someone supports us or complements us. You can feel that they're not always happy about that" (Barbora, 23)

> "I go along with either side, we are on good terms, but there are those who attack out of nowhere, which isn't pleasant" (Akva, 19)

> "I don't know, I've never heard anything directly said to me, but boys are boys. They don't take women in the military seriously. […] If they think like that in the military, I think they generally think like that, too. Actually, I don't think women really belong in the military (Saulė, 19)

Looking into relationships within military in depth, it would require additional research questions or perhaps even a research to understand how both men and women perceive their interactions, and how these affect their realities. Nevertheless, in some cases expressions such as "either side", "attack", "aggression" describe troublesome peer relationships, which could be acknowledged as competitive or perhaps even clashing in some cases. All women acknowledged to having received both "negative" and "positive" or "supportive" reactions from their male peers (conscripts-volunteers) in the military, although the question requires a more thorough discussion. Two women also expressed feeling competition among women as well. During the interviews, two out of eighteen women even admitted to feeling that military was not the right place for women. This was mainly because of their experiences in interacting with their peers and struggling to identify a space for themselves in the military.

Gender Meets the Military

Another question (see Appendix 3) directed to the participants was aimed at understanding how men consider women in the military through the eyes of the women themselves. As previously discussed, all women acknowledged to having received

different reactions from their colleagues or leaders, comments or attitudes, ranging from negative to supportive and encouraging. However, such perceptions of simply positive or negative nature are incomplete, and if taken into consideration, could potentially bring new examples into the discussion. Because of different power relations, responses discussing relationships between platoon commanders and squad leaders, and conscripts-volunteers will be examined separately, further in the analysis discussion.

In one of the interviews, right at the start a participant expressed her opinion that since women could be admitted to the military, she believed that it meant that conditions in the military were created for women as well (Saulė, 19). In light of the conscription law, such is a curious response, especially acknowledging that military service is only required for men. Thus, an important question should be raised as to how well the necessary conditions for women in the military are established. Despite the fact that one in the military would not consider the prescribed gender roles in this formal distinction as such, preconceptions of what is ascribed to men and women can be noticed in women's responses regarding the issue. Women gave answers saying their peers believed "military was not a place for women" or that women were perceived as "weak" and that could potentially pose obstacles for the rest of the team (responses of three women). Three women stated they felt that men did not agree or support the idea of women being in the military. Two women claimed that men felt jealous of women in that women received more support from their leaders or commanders. Oftentimes women would receive questions such as "why are you here?" or "why did you come here?" from their peers, who also "would not take women seriously" or "did not like that women were in the military". In one particular case, a participant stated that her peers even felt uncomfortable with women being in the military, while in another "men would not like if women performed better than them". Some of these responses are provided bellow:

> "It depends on a situation. Sometimes they [our male peers] seem very understanding, but in other times it looks like they don't want girls to be here, from listening to their remarks, and they emphasize that military is not a place for girls. But this is their opinion and I think we don't pay attention to that. If there was an all-woman military and men would start joining, maybe that would be weird, too (smiles)" (Gabrielė, 25)

> "They [our male peers] don't really like that we are here. They're very jealous […]. You just shouldn't stand out and pay attention to what they say,

because if you do, they'll try to show off even more. They think they're better than us, but that's not true (Eglė, 18)

> "Maybe 2%, let's say 7% are supportive of us; the fact that girls are here too, that they [girls] managed to come here. But I'm specifically talking about conscripts[15]; leaders have a different vision. Maybe 7% would say 'well done!' and think that we're cooler than some other dudes, but the rest are completely adverse. They don't like if someone else performs better than they do. That is a fact" (Vesta, 20).

Notwithstanding, in few cases women claimed they "were getting used to men's reactions" and stopped paying attention, which is a problematic case of normalization of such attitudes or perhaps an approach to overcoming and coping with the environment as well. In instances where interviewees would describe positive reactions, in most cases, they would refer to men as a "minority" (e.g. "7%", "few", "minority", or that "their perception is situation-dependent"), yet a minority that is supportive, encouraging, understanding, and helpful, significantly so in completing tasks together, applauding women's choice of military, or complimenting them for being better with certain duties. Few women also acknowledged that while in the very beginning men's reactions, attitudes were questionable, eventually their opinions changed into more positive and/ or understanding of women and few admitted to not caring that much of what their peers thought of the matter. One interviewee claimed that men were happy that women were serving in the military with them.

> "At first, of course, they [our male peers] would ask 'Why did you come here? You're girls. You won't be able to do anything, you won't carry your bags'. Now they don't say anything. They see… they've noticed that girls can do better than guys. During the physical training, we did more pushups and crunches that guys did. They immediately got sad. But that's alright. We're good now. We communicate" (Jurgita, 19)

On the visit to the Infantry 1, two interviewees described an interesting case where everyone from their infantry platoon (that three women were part of) independently organized a group meeting to discuss their performance and communication as a group. The case should be examined in greater detail, to better understand how certain preconceptions, affect relationships in the military:

> "Yesterday we had a great talk with our platoon. We just sat down in a circle and talked about what we liked and disliked about one another and what we would like to change in one another. Some boys said they felt uncomfortable that girls were here, because girls are weaker and not as

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[15] Vesta used the term *conscript*, not *conscript-volunteer*

responsible as men are, supposedly, […] because in some cases we are granted concessions, for instance, physically-wise. The punishments are 50% milder, for example. And they think that we are more relaxed. But yesterday we opened up and told how we felt. And actually, none of us are easy. Well, I don't know, their feelings vary, but they're really happy that we're here. Of course, maybe they think that we're a little weaker. I don't know" (Smiltė, 18).

"Maybe at first it was a little unusual for them, that there are that many women, but now I guess they've gotten used to it. I'm part of a reconnaissance platoon. Yesterday we sat down together and talked. One [man] said he was against women in reconnaissance platoons and told to try and change his opinion. So that, well so that it wouldn't be worse for them because we're here. So that we'd help them" (Erika, 19)

In essence, this is a great example of individual effort in aiming to understand and establish effective communication, especially where there's a lack of institutional approach to certain issues. Or perhaps the military's approach would be similar to this one, where teams would essentially take it upon themselves and try to establish common ground, having different perceptions as individuals. However, regardless of the promising effort, it is questionable as to why women in this particular case would have to prove something to someone and validate their presence, only because otherwise they would be considered as obstacles by their peers, as expressed in the excerpts provided. In one particular response, an interviewee claimed that "a woman would have to do double the work, in order to withstand, to stand by her *name*, so that to prove she is capable of accomplishing things (Akva, 19). In a similar case, another participant claimed that "if you are a woman, you have to fight for every single spot" (Deimantė, 21). Indeed, discussing the current case and the previously given responses it is evident that in majority of instances women have to be approved first, in order to be considered as contenders, worthy of their titles. Most often this approval comes from their peers, and to dismiss this approval would be misguiding, especially because, as mentioned before, the pillar of the military is team effort; a compelling sense of community serving for the community. The following question, as anticipated, would be to what extent (if applicable) women would negotiate their female identities in order not only to comply with the social requirements in the military, but also to be seen as equal participants. However, this will be discussed in greater detail.

Another thought-provoking example is taken from the second infantry visit (Infantry 2), where two women shared a case that not only highlights the relationships

between men and women in the military (conscripts-volunteers), but also provides somewhat of an approach from higher ranks:

"I think they [our male peers] are jealous, because some leaders support and stand for us, or something like that. I will put forward an argument. Yesterday was March 8th. The leaders congratulated us and presented us with flowers and a cake. We had to complete a run of 40 minutes, but we were allowed not to run because of the occasion and to just eat the cake. But boys had to run. They were very unhappy about that and you could feel that they were jealous. But you would never get a "congratulations" from them, of course, to none of us […] (Laura, 21)
- How did you feel about that, that you got the cake and were allowed not to run? (Interviewer)
- Me…? I actually felt a little embarrassed. I don't know why, maybe because I'm just like that, but I got uncomfortable. Of course, that was a nice gesture, I'm not saying anything, but I really didn't want that, I felt ashamed for not running" (Laura, 21)

"Yesterday was March 8th and we got a cake, flowers, but they got angry, because they had to go and exercise from the morning, but we were told we didn't have to, we should go and eat the cake. We invited two other women who were serving professionally; we had coffee and they were running. They got upset and were saying "Who are you? You're not girls, you're soldiers, you have to do what we do". They're very jealous. If something's wrong or something's better for us they feel distress and want to attack. Disagreements. […] (Eglė, 19)

Quite an extensive description of what could seem to be a simple event does suggest some insight not only about this particular situation, but also about some sort of "gender anxiety" in the military. To begin with, the current case presents an argument, a misunderstanding of what is considered to be appropriate for soldiers, and expectations that were not met, however, based on these socially-appropriate rules. Indeed, an idea supported greatly by the military is that men and women are equals, hence the famous saying, "There are no men and women in the military, there are only soldiers". Because of miscommunication or perhaps other challenges to transmit the messages clearly, it would be difficult to say that social interactions became more efficient after this particular one, however, the approach could have been slightly different as well. A celebration that is supposed to mark equal rights could have been offered to both men and women to mark, as it is for both men and women, following with some informal discussion or some other group bonding activities, a change of opinions, where soldiers of higher ranks could have been present as well. In addition, this could have potentially been a move to solve an apparent on-going argument between men and women

conscripts-volunteers. In any other case, it is possible that the message of "There are no men and women in the military, there are only soldiers" is contradicting with the actual situation. Even more so, it is not possible to say whether or not the soldiers themselves felt happy and comfortable or even wanted the event to take place, as it happened. That is not to say that the gesture involved no effort from higher ranks, although the claim of not using or emphasizing gender pronouns and using the word "soldier" by default does not establish equality in the military. Otherwise, in certain cases it is contradictory as well, and makes the famous saying rather incomplete.

Three participants not only distinguished the relationships between men and women conscripts-volunteers to be troublesome, but also described the situation as "tension", and shared in the interviews having received comments from their peers, such as "you are stupid", women should "wash the floor", "stand next to the pots" or that "women belong in the canteen", while a few reactions were implying on quite alarming situations, where a participant was experiencing deep distress:

> "What if I start crying? They would immediately think I can't handle the pressure, but here you have to handle everything. If you come across as weak they'll call you weak. They'll say, 'What are you doing in the military if you're weak?' You can never show your tears" (Deimantė, 21)

This example reflects on the group dynamics, relations or potential peer pressure, women conscripts-volunteers face. Additionally, it serves as a representation on how systematically unaddressed situations could potentially affect those in the military. However, making a transition on focusing on platoon commanders and squad leaders' relationships with their subordinates, and social relationships in the military in a broader sense is also of great importance. That would not only be for the apparent power relationship, but also for the role model or the *teacher* position that these commanders and leaders in general take on. Perhaps because military is greatly measuring their success on communal team effort as distinguished previously, commanders and leaders play a crucial role in influencing the overall climate in the military. Ten women explicitly referred to leaders or commanders in their interviews. Out of the ten, two interviewees stated that some leaders[16] had expressed their point of views that "military was not the right place for women", and in one case, with the

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[16] In some instances, it was not possible to detect whether a participant was referring to a platoon commander or a squad leader. The exact word used by these participants was *vadai* or *vadas*, a direct translation of *leaders* for plural and *leader* for singular. In these cases, the interviewees did not provide any specific distinctions as to what were the ranks.

exception that "women should work in medical aid stations or medical treatment facilities or canteens" instead. In other occasions, interviewees claimed that "leaders did not like that women where in the military" or that there were those who "supported men more than women". However, some of the previously provided excerpts illustrated that some women did refer to their leaders or commanders as being more supportive of women, as opposed to men. Additionally, a common tendency was to acknowledge that there are always those leaders or commanders that are supportive, understanding and involved. Three women described situations where they sought help and felt trust towards these leaders or commanders, felt supported and/ or understood in more detail:

> "[…] You get here and you see that he[17] is just a regular person – he's just doing his job. He's teaching you, giving you all that he has, so that you would learn, gain some knowledge, become stronger mentally and physically, and you see that it's not like what everybody says it is. You start feeling more comfortable […]" (Vesta, 20)

In three interviews, women stated that "the leaders themselves were not used to seeing women in the military" or "were not prepared/ used to seeing women in the military" and thus "give concessions"; in some occasions "possibly take care of women more". This is quite a perceptive idea, that could potentially lead to an opening discussion on how the official, institutional approach in the military could be forming attitudes of their subordinates. This is significantly so if we consider that leaders are acting in superior and leader positions in some cases and carry responsibility of their teams, thus, potentially forming opinions. Had more women expressed their thoughts on the matter it would be possible to critically evaluate this idea and give it much needed consideration. A specific response observes power relationships in particular. Morta (24), who had already completed her service, at the end of the interview said she would "probably not go to the military again", even though she believed that the experience was beneficial (as provided in the response, "Meeting new, interesting people, seeing the new side of life, and understanding how important military was") and did not feel regret about her decision. An excerpt of further communication is given bellow:

- "Why wouldn't you go there again? (Interviewer)
- Because when you see the system from the inside, you don't really want to come back – all the time you run only to wait, or you wait only to run. Not much really depends on you personally. It depends more on the

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[17] Vesta is not providing any specific distinctions as to what were the ranks. This could have been platoon commanders or squad leaders.

people above you. The minority is in control and you see the life of the state, of the society as if through a looking glass.
- And how do you see that? (Interviewer)
- Those who maybe don't really understand what they're doing, control the others. They say: "jump" and you have to jump, simply because someone has a higher rank than you, and can do whatever pleases. There's so much nonsense only so you would understand that he is above you […] The focus is on securing the power, not on educating something. That is a problem"

Previously in the interview, Morta also stated, that sometimes leaders/ commanders would feel uncomfortable or not very sure of how to treat women in the military. Such was expressed as wanting to be considerate and understanding of the women, yet not really knowing how to approach the women or express that[18]. This excerpt expresses somewhat of a critique by someone who has both positive impression (e.g. new, interesting people, the importance of the military) and a critical eye to the military, in particular, the power system, that is adopted, which with no exceptions is the basis to any military around the globe. Partially because of the power structure, the relationship between leaders/ commanders and conscripts-volunteers is seen to be problematic, and even preventing from appreciating full military experience. Receiving the gained knowledge as educative becomes difficult as well. Therefore, such distinct power relationships in the military (higher ranks versus lower ranks) seem to carry a particular, different kind of importance to conscripts-volunteers, and are to a great extent responsible for how the military is perceived and remembered.

For question, regarding how women perceive gender-related challenges or if they considered that there was gender equality in the military (see in Appendix 3) responses varied in great extent. Three women acknowledged that effort was made in order to establish and/ or maintain gender equality in the military, which was also perceived to be a cause for increasing number of women joining or in another case, on the contrary, an interviewee claimed that women abuse their status, in certain times. In other two responses women assured there was gender equality in the military, however in one instance the perception of gender equality or gender-related challenges was a matter of "personal point of view, perception". This would mean that the overall climate in the military would have very little to do with how gender is perceived. One interviewee (Viktorija, 24) explained that "in order for her to feel comfortable, she has to create her

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[18] A famous saying in Lithuanian "*Kaip ant stiklo šukių vaikščiot*" can be indirectly translated into something that causes inconvenience

own conditions", such as "arranging times when to use shower" or "discretely changing clothes". Few women also believed that the way females were overall treated in the military was their own responsibility, e.g. in how they deal with negative comments or how they "present themselves". Five women believed that gender-related challenges differ. In these responses, women were the ones dealing with more difficult challenges, which were all distinguished to be physical, as expressed by the interviewees. Only in one interview, these challenges were noted to be based on attitudes about women, i.e. how women are generally perceived. In another interview a participant concluded that gender equality in the military did not exist, and expressed she had felt discriminated. Some of these responses are provided bellow:

> "I think they're trying to introduce gender equality more, because you can see more women coming, so I think slowly people are getting accustomed, leaders and conscripts including, that more and more women are coming; it is starting to look normal. But the very beginning is difficult" (Gabrielė, 25)

> "I never felt discriminated in my life because I was a woman. Until I joined the military, I had never felt it. Only here I felt it. [Gender equality in the military] doesn't exist, only because we are the weaker sex, and you have to be automatically strong in the military, according to what others think. But it's not only that you have to be strong. You have to be bright, and many other things too" (Laura, 19)

Another interview presented an interesting case where a participant expressed that she had felt discriminated against, but later in the conversation stated she believed there was gender equality in the military after all (Deimantė, 21). In few of all the responses discussed on the question, the now-famous "There are no women and men in the military, there are only soldiers" was used as a bedrock, forming solid arguments for why gender equality is part of the military teaching. A contributing point to the current discussion could be how women perceive not only "equality", but "discrimination". Additionally, the responses provided in the entire subchapter so far also present some critical questions – does one consider that gender equality exist, despite acknowledging discouraging and negative comments, attitudes? What is equality and where does it translate into? Do legal guidelines stand for or frame the notion of equality, or does equality have a more profound understanding? Would establishing gender equality require persistent effort from higher ranks? These are all questions to reconsider,

however, a substantial point to the discussion is how women perceive their own identities and conceptualize equality, or in some instances, feminism.

A Genderless Military

Having discussed how the interviewees experience their military realities, additional two interview questions should also be considered – whether the women had any ideas about women in the military prior to their service (see Appendix 3), and if gender-related challenges, and gender equality exist in Lithuania (see Appendix 3). Without delving deeper into the questions, it is first worth mentioning that militaries often step away from addressing gender, and thus, gender-related issues – a common way to do so is by claiming that gender simply does not exist in military (e.g. There are no men and women in the military, there are soldiers), and that what matters more is that both men and women serve for the same purpose. Men and women are measured using the same litmus – through their dedication and determination to the nation, however, not necessarily through their contributions as diverse individuals.

In reflecting on their personal ideas and experience, the research participants oftentimes addressed the overall space for gender in their social environments as well. In addition, how the women imagine their own gender identity, or how this identity evolved is equally a significant facet, notably so if taking into account how military context potentially impacts this process. In most cases (twelve) the interviewees distinguished differences between men, that were fixed to a particular gender, or had a personal awareness of what gender was and what it meant for them. Such were connected to specific abilities or opportunities, similarly to what was acknowledged previously, examining the notion of female versus male strength (see page 42). In these instances, women either themselves believed in distinctions of what men and women are, or acknowledged that society had certain biases, when it came to understanding what masculine and feminine mean. Some women expressed to being surprised "in seeing that many other women were joining" or "being happy that other women join too". Three women claimed they did not personally consider or thought of gender (men or women) in the military before starting their service, mostly because they did not "differentiate people by their gender". Two women expressed it was easier for them to communicate with men, as opposed to women. Additionally, some expressed not identifying as women specifically. Few explicitly referred to conscription – one interviewee believed that conscription should be aimed at both men and women,

however, some other respondents raised further critical questions as to why conscription was aimed at men only and what participation in the military meant for them overall. Some of these examples are provided bellow:

> "I thought, 'why shouldn't women go?' I thought to myself, 'am I worse than a man?' but when I got here I realized that it was better for women not to be here. Or maybe be in a different division[19], so that a squad wouldn't be formed of women only; that women would be in squads with men" (Barbora, 23)

> [I thought about women in the military before my service] because many people were saying 'what are you going to do there? A girl and so little. Military is no place for women'. When I got here it was the same – 'military is no place for women'. I thought, but why not? There are many different women, and maybe I was little and not capable enough, but there were those who were. The more women join, the bigger the chance that some will succeed and remain in the military, and that this opinion will change […] When they announced the conscription, I thought about why men were required to join, but not women? Why is it like that? (Morta, 24)

These are both insightful examples illustrating the women's perception of their gender, but also of having to bargain for it, or better say, having to earn and double-prove their decision and dedication (e.g. military is no place for women, am I worse than a man?). While a systemic difference in how men and women are approached by the military is acknowledged (e.g. why shouldn't women go, why men were required to join, but not women) the examples provided suggest that in times, women need to negotiate specific terms of their participation. Finding a ground for one who identifies as a woman presents certain difficulties, that eventually result in how they perceive themselves. It is not possible to say how much such self-perceptions deal with belonging, or wishing to be considered as equal contenders, or even, to what extent they determine how women feel about their service, however, without any doubt they exist and are significant. Not only so, but in some cases, they also shape women's choices and eventually how they see themselves as women and soldiers:

> "I didn't really [think about women in the military] because I always did what boys do, like, all that physical thing, because I grew up with my brothers. I didn't feel any discomfort, that girls will be here so now they would be treated like men, or something like that. I wasn't afraid, at all […] When I communicate, I communicate like a boy. I don't know why. I don't

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[19] In Barbora's case, her infantry had tried forming squads of women only, where she initially was serving, however, such squads were later dissolved and women and men eventually served in mixed squads.

like to talk in an affectionate way. I like to say something strictly, and girls didn't like me for that, because, well for example, I always tried to keep the order. Maybe I would say something in a strict way, and all the other girls, as I understand, have just recently left their parents' nest." (Smiltė, 18)

"I don't know, I never compared myself to an ideal of femininity; I barely know my biological father, I knew my stepfather better but so it happened that I myself fostered the masculinity in me. When I entered military, I didn't think of myself as a woman. I thought that I had a duty to fulfil and I wanted to become stronger, get to know myself better, get to know the world. Once you graduate [from high school] you are pushed into this cruel life, where you have to do everything on your own and you don't really understand what is happening and you haven't seen much either (Gintarė, 20)

"I used to think that women [in the military] would be less feminine than… That was my first opinion, that they should be less feminine then others, but that is actually not true" (Laura, 21)

In Smiltė's case, physical abilities were associated with men, while affectionate way of communicating with women. Laura reveals of having thought she did not associate femininity with women in the military and Gintarė gives a very personal and touching example – embarking on self-reflective journey in discovering her identity as an individual. Nevertheless, masculinity was seen as something to be fostered by a fatherly figure, and the duty to serve stood higher than one's self; in a way identifying as one gender did not seem to go along this decision to serve. These excerpts present that certain traits or characteristics would have to come at the expense of others, yet, could a woman both be physically strong and communicate affectionately, should she want to? Could she consider herself feminine and simultaneously serve in the military, if she desires so? Would communicating affectionately or being feminine turn a woman into less worthy of a soldier? More so, could identifying as a woman and as a soldier, present certain difficulties? Who gets to define what is a soldier? These examples illustrate a negotiation of one's gender identity in some way, when it comes to experiencing gender in the military, and such does not simply cease to exist here. The way to belong in the military in these cases, is primarily seen as not identifying oneself as something, or better to say, not identifying the concepts that are associated with women or femininity. Acknowledging one's female identity in the military presents an apparent personal discomfort or conflict of some sort. In addition, these perceptions lead to how women function in the military. Notwithstanding, only five women in their interviews discussed military service in terms of duties or jobs for

women and men individually, distinguishing that men are better in certain positions and jobs, while women are in other:

> "If women are in the military it doesn't mean that they are going to be doing something difficult. You can choose according to your abilities, physical abilities and where you're best at; it's not difficult to work in say, the headquarters. I think then men will understand that there's a place in the military for women too" (Gabrielė, 25)

> - "[…] For example, there is some sort of an unwritten rule – in reconnaissance most often men work, because maybe the conditions for women to work there are not always created, but I agree that, for example, in reconnaissance, especially combat, only men are suitable.
> - Why? (Interviewer)
> - Because first of all, there are no conditions. For instance, if one girl is selected to reconnaissance, can you imagine that she would need to be accommodated separately? She could experience discomfort, because sometimes you need…. Well, maybe it's different in other countries, they say men and women use the same shower, but it's not yet like that here. And partially I agree – this is a difficult job and maybe it would be more difficult for a woman, because of physiological reasons. There are some duties where I agree 100% that men would be better" (Viktorija, 24)

In the first example Gabrielė shares her views in how more consideration for women's abilities in the military, significantly by her peers, would result in equal participation and an overall thriving military. Nevertheless, this consideration is limited to work for women that is "not difficult", which in itself is a tremendous limitation. Viktorija shared a similar example, however, she is also referring to certain institutional and physical limitations (e.g. accommodation, shower, physiology). It could be argued whether the present structural-institutional reluctance to address gender in actuality leads to a more equal military, and whether the full potential of its soldiers, men or women, who identify as willing, is given sufficient space to grow.

However, to tackle concepts of femininity and military would be incomplete without delving deeper into what masculinity stands for and how it relates to both men and women's experiences in the military. In one particular case, discussing conscription with one of the women who have completed her service, causes to reevaluate certain other perceptions:

> - So, every citizen of republic should complete a three-month basic training? (Interviewer)
> - No, only women should. Men – I very much agree, 100% should go for nine months. Because men need that. This is a very great school of

masculinity. I see great examples – my acquaintances, my brothers became very masculine in nine months, very much. It changes so many things, gives you some understanding, independency. They see things that actually happen in real life. What I mean is that things the things they were interested in before their service were no longer important, things like phones, computers, parties […] that is a good thing, especially knowing the current situation in Lithuania. What can women in the military do, well yes, not all women, I'm not saying this is sexism or gender discrimination, but the majority of women become paramedics, provide medical aid. They can also be messengers and control information, although this is one of the most dangerous jobs in the military. What else do women do well? Well, paramedics. Looking back into the old times, where were the women? Where it was needed to provide medical care for soldiers […] A man on the other hand is someone who fixes things, who protects, provides for the family, the old-fashioned point of view that is strict and present in Lithuania today" (Emilija, 29)

"In the military, they would always take into consideration that girls are girls. If they tell to do fifty push-ups or say: 'go do push-ups', if girls could no longer do it and would start doing knee push-ups, that would be overlooked. But if boys would start doing knee push-ups, it would be said 'you're not a girl, you can do the normal push-ups'" (Morta, 24)

In this particular case, Emilija shared her views about conscription relating both men and women. Additionally, these are views that also illustrate how military contributes to the image of a successful man – one that is mature, strong and independent; an image that is somewhat desirable and considered socially acceptable. Military is understood to be the right place in order to foster these values. In spite of this, she simultaneously acknowledges how perceptions like such contribute to a greater understanding of how people think of gender not only in military, but in Lithuania as well. It would be valuable to examine how the women contemplate of gender in the national context. Similarly, Morta provides an example of how the traditionally perceived masculinity is sustained through various practices, yet this example is of institutional practices, accepted and adopted transmitted to various ranks in the military.

A total of six women claimed that gender equality existed in Lithuania, explaining that "men and women are able to get the same jobs or study the same subjects", they were able to "get the same positions and are offered the same wages" and "equally received respect". Two women claimed that gender was not a contributing factor; what mattered more was a person's individual effort, abilities and characteristics. The remaining interviews consisted of more different perceptions. In one particular case, an interviewee believed that the challenges people were facing were because of age, and

not gender. Two claimed that women received more challenges in "seeking employment", while one participant specifically noted that both genders are challenged in seeking employment in cases where that specifically involved aiming at jobs that were not considered to be traditional based on gender, e.g. "women working as truck drivers, men selling purses and shoes". Three women claimed that gender equality did not exist in Lithuania (e.g. women are made to choose between work and family; men are men) while in one interview, a woman expressed that in today's society women are used for and represent the "commercial, presentational side of business". In additional two cases gender equality was perceived to be conditional, i.e. only in specific cases or fields the equality did not exist. Some of the responses discussed are given bellow:

> "I believe [gender equality] exists. You know, I have never encountered inequality directly. Of course, there are some corny jokes, sometimes you're a soldier and sometimes you're a woman. But to me, that is not inequality, because I work, take the same positions as my colleagues-men that came here with me, I receive the same wage and the same respect. Of course, they don't send me to do some 'super' jobs, but I'm happy about that myself. You know, since I've never experienced inequality, so that I would be shaken by it, I can say that gender equality exists" (Viktorija, 24)

> "Some women can do more, while some less, and that's the same with men. Some men can do more and some less. I don't know, it depends from what kind of people they are; there are weak people and there are those who are not weak. Depends on what kind of character they have. I would need to get to know them to be able to tell what is what" (Jurgita, 19)

> "Talking about Lithuania, it's difficult everywhere. Men are men, everything is open for them. It's like with the case in the European Parliament. His[20] words upset me a great deal, that wasn't a good act. So, I don't know, it's not equal yet. Really, new governments are here, a new time has come, where it looks like women take the lead, so I don't understand. Well, men are men, it's the best for them" (Akva, 19)

> "It looks like [gender equality] exists, but I don't think so. […] Men are men. Women will never be able to do what men do and I think men feel more superior and can do more" (Eglė, 18)

As seen from the responses, gender equality is believed to be a concept, that is proven to realize itself through personal experience, i.e. equality is mostly believed to be apparent because of certain opportunities (the same wage, positions available) experienced personally. More so, only by knowing those around us could we be able to

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[20]Akva is referring to a case where a member of the European Parliament Janusz Korwin-Mikke made a claim that women were smaller, weaker and less intelligent than men and, thus should earn less than men.

tell if the society we live in is not gender aware. Both Viktorija and Jurgita explain to experience gender equality because they themselves know it to be real. This does not imply that their perceptions are wrong; on the contrary, these are true and valid. However, measuring gender equality based only on personal experiences could present an incomplete picture, considering that individuals live in social structures and institutions, and that gender is known to be a social construction, formed distinctively in various cultures. To acknowledge that people are of different abilities and choose differently is also legitimate. Nevertheless, that would say little about the social structures people live in. Even more so, it deals little with how these structures have become societies as we know them to be today. Another facet to discuss is equality – what it is considered to be and what the frameworks where equality operates are. It is a positive reinforcement that both men and women can participate in the military, however, what does receiving jokes or not receiving "super" jobs in actuality mean? What also requires a more profound look is the famous "men are men"; the understanding that men will always be men and that there is something definite and unquestionable about such understanding; that there are things that are not considered to change and should thus be accepted and normalized.

War – What is of Human Nature and What is of Political Interest?

Defining war, widely (in eleven interviews out of eighteen) included equating the definition to other concepts, such as, inter-state conflicts or disagreements, in particular, exercising (military) power or influence. In four of these interviews war was also recognized as a process, i.e. moving from certain actions or stages to others. Two answers encompassed introducing nation and/ or territory to the definition. Additional three responses defined war through specific military actions (e.g. attack, defense). Some included associating war with politics and discussing the possibility of war. Furthermore, in several instances different types of wars were distinguished (e.g. information wars, cyberwarfare) also acknowledging that in the past wars used to be different. One other case defined war as a lack of agreement, compromise, common language and overrule of personal principals and ego. Some of these examples are provided bellow:

> "War. Conflicts between countries, conflicts solved using military actions" (Neringa, 20)

"These are disagreements between countries and nations, that transform into weapons and physical use of power" (Gabrielė, 25)

"Disagreement of two or more opponents, lack of compromise, common language; someone's principals stepping over someone else's. A bigger ego, proving power, and then conflicts, disagreements, wars happen, I imagine. Of course, we can only call this a war if certain powers are used, weaponry, and of course, there can be cyber wars, or wars like the Cold War […]" (Vesta, 20)

Interestingly enough, responses to the following question of why wars occur, were predominantly the same, except this time financial benefits (four answers) and gaining territory (four answers) were distinguished as the reasons why wars occur. Thus, the boundaries of what was defined as war and the actual causes of war were not distinguished, or carried little difference.

The remaining seven answers conceptualizing war, consisted of describing war as a "cruel thing" or "when people kill people". Four out of seven women expressed perplexing feelings as to why wars would occur in the first place, concern for human lives and hypothesized if war was to take place in the future:

"What is war...? This is a cruel thing, because people will die. Doesn't matter what nationality, they're still human beings. I hope that war will not happen and no one will die. I wouldn't want to kill anyone, but if this was needed, if there was a need to protect the motherland… What more can I say. I don't even want to think about it" (Jurgita, 19).

"War is… when people kill people, and, honestly, I don't really understand the purpose and I don't understand the people who start wars, who start attacking, because of one man's aims. And the crowd listens to that one man and I don't know why this is happening, because we're all human beings, we're all the same, no matter our race, skin color or anything else, and I don't understand, how a human being could hurt another human being? Under any circumstances, how is this possible? It's interesting what's going on in these people's heads" (Barbora, 23).

In these cases, war was measured, or better, perceived through (lost) human lives, suffering, war consequences and was even transmitted to their own personal self, in relation to thinking about war happening "at home", that is in Lithuania. Here, war was more relating to the notion of inherent human nature, as opposed to wars caused and defined by political interests, mentioned in other nine interviews. That territory was a reason why wars occur was also distinguished most commonly among the six cases, although similarly to the remaining eleven briefly discussed before, defining war and reasons of why wars happen were identified as the same, i.e. wars occur because of

"disagreements", yet "war" stands for" disagreement". What seemed to be a major concern in the interviews is that war poses a great threat to territorial integrity – territory is considered to be an irreplaceable value, perhaps even greater than certain others, as seen from the testimonies. This was mainly so because territorial integrity meant sovereignty and independence.

In the four interviews with women who had already completed their service, war was defined similarly as in the other fourteen, however, it must be acknowledged that in these interviews this particular question was discussed more extensively and in greater detail. Such could be noted in relations to contextual limitations acknowledged in the methodology section. Some other fascinating responses are provided bellow:

> "That is a very difficult and complex concept, because no matter how dull this will sound, there's no peace without war. War must take place once in a while, because in the time of peace, slowly, chaos starts to take over, and to control this chaos, war is needed, so that people would reunite against something, win and then live peacefully until chaos emerges again. War can also be considered as a means of prevention from human prevalence, I mean, multiplying, because we can become extinct only from diseases and catastrophes or by wars that we ourselves cause. There are no predators coming after us, same as we are coming after a population of wolves and foxes; no one is in control of our population" (Morta, 24)

> "[…] War is quite a cruel thing; civilians have to go and leave their families, even though they have nothing to do with this, because they didn't care about it. Someone had a disagreement with someone, someone shot someone, just like it happened at World War I. In reality, they don't care of how much we have, of how much territory does a state own, if it occupies something or not; they want to live peacefully and lead a simple life, instead of going to war and having to kill other people for no apparent reasons. But you have to kill them because otherwise they would kill you, and lead by these animal principles, you have to be in a cruel environment that changes you and then no desire to live remains […]" (Gintarė, 20)

The current two cases once more shifted further away from war simply being a political phenomenon and expanded these definitions. For instance, Morta's response draws a definition of war being an inevitable part of life, a natural and understandable event, however, a positive reinforcement for humanity to reflect on their experiences, thus a life learning experience. While people were recognized as powerful actors in the process in her answer, they were also noted to be a species, animals. Both answers dealt with the animal (human nature) side (e.g. "predators", "animal principles") of people to some extent, however, in total three out of eighteen women emphasized war as dehumanizing. In the second response, war is defined rather tragically, but the

central issue here is the human aspect; that after all war is about human beings – those who wage wars and those who are affected by them. However, the two responses also present certain differences – war is what eventually makes peace and war is something to be refrained from.

The tendency seen was a distinction of war as either something that is caused by political interests, motivation and something that is inherent in human beings, thus inevitable, albeit the two barely intersected. Decisions, such as making wars were perceived to be coming from top leaders, people in leading positions (e.g. a country leader), however this was not identified as male neither female. While some would naturally assume that women admitting themselves to military determines that they would also go to war if necessary, five women confirmed this statement, in discussing war and its causes. Out of all eighteen, seven women directly referred to Russia, in particular Russia's military actions in Ukraine. Some other responses included indirect observations, e.g. "when bigger countries attack smaller" or mentioning occupation as part of describing war. This is an interesting observation for several reasons. First, this illustrates a fear of the conflict spillover; not only because the conscription law was introduced in relation to war in Ukraine, but also because under these circumstances war bears a new meaning – while it stands for destruction and instability, military, profoundly connected to waging wars, presents a chance for restoration and ensuring security. In this way, being able to defend and protect becomes an empowering action, thus, another detail to consider for women joining the military voluntarily is the current war in Ukraine and the questions this war is encourages to raise. Becoming a part of the military is an empowering action in terms of one's "self", but also a national statement. It is empowering in terms of one's ability to decide and stand as an actor. Joining the military serves as a national statement both in the sense that it sends a message to the country (announcing one's dedication and ability to protect) and a message to the world (that the country is 'ready' to defend itself, because it has people that are dedicated to protecting it).

Moreover, it is equally important to reflect on where memory stands in this conversation. A significant number of women talking about Russia's military actions in their interview proves that Lithuania's historical past and present are highly connected to their understanding of not only war, but perhaps even military too. Some more profound questions could be constructed in order to delve into how women perceive their country's past and whether or not national grievances relate to their own

personal grievances, or how much the two connect. However, we may also argue that past grievances were not exactly acknowledged via feminist-curious lens, or that the lack of constructive approach to memory, witnessing, and testifying remains to be a contributing factor of how women feel about security.

Furthermore, what extended the discussion on imagining wars, was a question asking to share some personal thoughts and feelings on some of the ongoing wars in the world (See Appendix 3). As possible examples, war in Ukraine and Syria were provided in the question. The majority of women expressed feeling sadness and were once again raising questions, such as why wars would still be going on, or why wars would serve as a solution for anything. Some other women revealed feeling insecure or afraid and described the ongoing wars as "unfortunate", "unjust" or "tragic". Only in one case it was stated in interviewee that since being in the military, wars started to seem more realistic, because of being in the military environment. Some of the responses are provided bellow:

> "As for wars, I honestly don't understand how can something like that even happen. When you watch the news, from Ukraine, children are being killed; I can't comprehend these things. How can states collide? There should be more peace created everywhere. I am against war (Gabrielė, 25)

> "This is appalling and I don't understand, how could this even happen, I don't know. And when you think that something like that could be happening here, I don't know, it's really scary. It looks like a movie, when you watch TV, it doesn't seem real; why? We live here and everything is fine, but somewhere people are at war, somewhere people die. Horrible. You're watching this like a movie, because nothing is going on here, but there, you can't believe that, there people are suffering for real (Saulė, 19)

As seen in these excerpts, the media plays a certain role in how the women perceive war. In providing an access to information, the media also greatly forms a certain image of war and in some ways, contributes to the normalization of war, but also to growing certain fears or even reluctance to war in other cases. However, what is more complex to responses as such, is that while wars are troublesome to comprehend, coping with war in one's local environment poses much greater insecurities in comparison to wars taking place somewhere in a more distant proximity. Three women confirmed this notion to be true, claiming that while war was cruel, it was harder to fully relate to it because this did not involve personal loses, deaths or other grievances related to war, as opposed to personally experiencing war.

Another question aimed to understand whether women conscripts-volunteers perceived men and women to be affected by war differently. The majority (seven) did express that men and women were in fact affected by war differently, while four claimed the effects were the same and three expressed they did not know how to respond to the question. Among the seven who claimed the effects to differ, mainly believed so because "women were more sensitive" and thus, more affected by war, or in other cases, surprisingly because women were "dealing with pressure better than men". The reasons for why the consequences were set to not differ was once more, because it depended on individual and not gender-related facets, according to four women's responses. Therefore, how the women perceived gender roles and stereotypes also affected their perception of how women get affected by wars overall. Coverage of war is oftentimes great in scope or frequency, yet there is little consideration given to post-conflict or post-war related issues, especially when it comes to women or gender-based violence. This could be one of the reasons of why an extensive criticism of such issues is lacking in these responses. The current case provides insufficient knowledge as to where women in contexts carrying power (military) stand in terms of gender in post-conflict, post-war as well. Some excerpts of women discussing the question are provided bellow:

> "I think that women are affected more sensitively by war, because most often men go to war and they suffer. Women stay alone with children, for example. That is much more difficult. And to let a man go to the military… it's probably a tragedy" (Gabrielė, 25)

> "[…] War affects men and women differently because it would affect women more, after all, they're more sensitive. Women feel sorry more, to for example shoot someone, even though that would be the enemy, still. Women would not be put to the first fronts, because they would simply feel sorry. A woman is a sensitive, a gentler creature, so it would be more difficult for her to take part in war and see dead bodies everywhere, people dying. That would be more difficult […]" (Deimantė, 21)

Interestingly enough, some of these responses did reflect women's views on gender roles (e.g. most often men go to war, women would not be put to the first fronts) or at least the way the roles are constructed by society. However, one additional response brings us further to these social constructions, defining what women-like and men-like mean:

> "Most probably [men and women are affected by war differently] because the majority of women probably think this is a man's duty, and that

they [women] don't belong in the field. And actually, they're like life carriers; if all women died men could not extend the population, only women could do that. And men would probably view women in the field as a weakness, or something they would have to defend. If they [men] would see that women are not successful, they would question – whom to defend? If a situation occurs that women is on the left and a man is on the right, whom to defend more? So probably because a woman should survive one would need to defend the woman, even though one would know that it's more beneficial to defend another man, because he could defend others too" (Morta, 24)

This particular response brings back the discussion to the point of experiencing "gender anxiety". The reason why limitations to imagining war effects exist is precisely because of social preconceptions of what women and men are. As seen, in some cases women did get into discussing the social environment, which revealed that in certain times thinking about gender reminds of a vicious circle. One specific gender, leading choices that are not socially considered to be typical or appropriate cause a diversion of these norms that somehow defies the purpose of some institutions and cause confusion (e.g. whom to defend). If women chose military themselves and decide on taking the position as such, they are no longer the ones who need protection, they become the protectors. Same as in, if women and men are perceived to be those needing protection and those protecting, accordingly, it cannot be that the war effects would be the same, otherwise this would mean that such connections are not evaluated critically and *traditional* notions of what are men and women are incomplete.

The last question to examine in the current case is whether or not being in the military somehow changed the women's perception of peace or peacebuilding. Only two out of eighteen women said their perceptions changed; more precisely, they indicated that since joining the military they have developed a more profound view of the world and even the military itself. In few other cases women expressed that it rather "fostered love and pride in their state", or provided "a sense of security, knowing they were trained and ready".

-       "Hmm… [my opinion] neither changed nor didn't. I don't really think about peace. Until there's war, you don't think about peace, right? Until there's poverty, you don't need money (smiles). It's exactly the same. I didn't think about peace; I don't have anything to say.
-       But do you now? (Interviewer)
-       Now I would like there to be peace" (Emilija, 29)

Such is a telling response, because the mere existence of militaries is based on the belief that war is probable. This example is illustrating that perhaps Emilija was more driven by other goals, as opposed to primarily considering the probability of war, for joining the military. In the early stage of the interview, she also acknowledged to feeling very infatuated by the military since an early age, and also claimed to have found herself in the military.

Eight women claimed their experience of being in the military did not change their perceptions on peace or peace-building. Surprisingly, the answers did not include much on why these opinions remained the same, however, in few interviews, women revealed they were not thinking about peace that much, since they "did not experience war". Other examples included discussing some additional topics:

> "If you come to the military, it's not that you expect that one day you'll do peace. You know that someday you'll have to defend, and then you won't do peace, because you don't have a say in it. You're just a figure on a board, you'll go where they tell you to. As I said, military can't do peace, only the top leaders [in the military] can. If they send the soldiers, there'll be no peace. You won't stop and say 'now, there's peace!'. It's not us who got into a fight, it's the states; we're simply protecting the state […]" (Deimantė, 21)

> - "Has serving in the military somehow changed your opinion about peace or peacebuilding? (Interviewer)
> - No.
> - So, the way you have felt or thought is how you feel or think right now? (Interviewer)
> - Yeah.
> - Then what is your opinion about peace, peacebuilding? (Interviewer)
> - You see, it's just like I said, we are already at war with boys. How could they teach me anything about peace here? I'm already at war with someone" (Laura, 21)

> "I had my opinion and I still have it, and neither military nor something else will change that, and no one is spreading any ideologies here, that you have to think this way or that way. Here you have a full right to think the way you want to, unless, of course, your understanding of peace will somehow harm your service, others around you, or your point of view to the environment overall. Only in this case the military would teach you that you're not thinking the right way. But everybody who's here knows the importance of peace. Everybody knows that you don't come here to make war, you come to protect, to defend […]" (Vesta, 20)

All three responses present some insightful points. To begin with, Deimantė's answer describes serving as selfless – a position involving little personal decisions, and

following commands for the greater good. It can also be seen that peace is a matter of what top leaders create; peace is a creation of certain people in decision-making positions, but not a communal action or a stand. Laura's response revealed a totally different issue – somewhat of a critical approach to the system and how it impacts the environment in the military and the understanding of peace overall. In other words, her understanding of peace could have been affected because she had experienced and witnessed men-women relationships in the military to be competitive, rival. In this case, peace loses its place as the most important message, because of certain other issues in the military. Vesta's answer is a total opposite to Deimantė's, in terms of what military represents for them personally, however, in this particular example, peace is considered to be an already assumed valuable notion, that essentially does not require any further consideration, and what stands as more important is whether or not military holds the power to change this perception, or in other words, military's influence and image. In two interviews the women particularly reflected on how peace is perceived depending on gender. According to one response, "women were rooting for peace more", while the other is provided bellow:

> "Women have a different understanding of peace, compared to men. I think they could change a lot in the military system. Maybe to mitigate some things. After all, a woman is a gentler creature, while a man is a harsher, maybe even more prone to violence, if you can say it this way. A woman is a woman, no matter how good of a soldier she is, still, the understanding is different" (Erika, 19)

While the contribution of women is to some extent addressed in this point of view, it is mostly because of prescribed understanding of masculinity and femininity. "A woman is a woman" presents and approach that gender is given by nature, and thus, certain qualities are fixed and simply there in women. The juxtaposition of "good soldier" and "understanding" is also thought-provoking – no matter how hard a woman would try, she would still remain to be a woman, and accordingly, that would mean she could never be placed into the same position as her counterpart. A woman's understanding is not as valid and certain things are never to be changed.

The overall discussion of the questions presented, revealed little direct information on how much significance peace essentially carries for the women, however, essentially one can assume the opposite, i.e. peace does not take a significant part for considerations and reflections. Peace is also seen to be highly dependent on war, i.e.

one takes place at the expense of another. Discussing the notion of war has also seemed to be more extensive, in comparison to the current observation of peace. Perhaps the most significant idea is that "peace" represents "the absence of war" (negative peace). A majority of women did not consider peace that often and in cases they did, peace was described vaguely. Overall, peace acquires more meaning in times of war, as based on the responses, which is yet another compelling idea to reconsider.

Civilians and Military Equals State Security

Introducing another conceptualization was the question on how the women imagined state security and who or what was seen as responsible for it (see Appendix 3). The current question is an extension to the already discussed notions of war and peace, while it also touches upon military and other state institutions greatly. The majority of women (twelve), expressed that state security is a notion equating security, which is ensured by state institutions, such as the military, the police, the State Border Guard Service, the Ministry of National Defense, the State Security Department, and/ or those representing these institutions, such as the ministers or the President. Specifically, in eleven of these responses, state security was measured through the ability "to defend", "protect", "sustain" and "ensure" of these institutions or those part of such institutions:

> "State Security. It's when the state is safe. Some particular institutions established, in our case, the Ministry of National Defense, VSD[21], the state Security Department. Various institutions, where people who ensure the state security, work" (Viktorija, 24)

> "State security could be the military. And it protects the country [...] We, soldiers also contribute to the state security. In the time of war, we'll have to protect and defend" (Eglė, 18)

> "The way I see it, it's like the pyramid model – the responsible person who's leading is at the top, then all the structures that are responsible for coordination, for the creation and the development of the system go, and of course, then go the soldiers that are determined. They have determined, that this is a priority for them, that they want to fight for the motherland, that they, if needed, would give their lives, but that they don't want to be the simple civilians, who don't understand anything. They want to learn something, that along with protecting their motherland, their state, they could protect their families too. Then, as I see, the bottom level is the civilians. They still have to have some understanding about state security and a sense of patriotism, so not to say like some of our grandparents do,

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[21]VSD (Valstybės saugumo departamentas) in English stands for the State Security Department

that it was better to live in the USSR[22], and something like that. They don't have the understanding yet that there is a state identity, that we are a nation and that we all have to try that our state would be safe. And if a civilian understands that, he can then defend the state and himself feel safe. The military service, the police – these are the institutions that are quite important in the state structure and this is what guarantees us safety" (Gintarė, 20)

In identifying what or who was responsible for state security, nine women out of twelve included civilians, i.e. the women perceived the case of carrying responsibility for state security as a communal action of the state structures distinguished, and the civilians. In two of these cases women provided specific examples in the history, in distinguishing the role of civilians. These are provided bellow:

"We can take January 13[th23] as an example, the events that took place and they did so much being civilians. If something like January the 13th occurs again, it would be great if the same happens again. Just like they stood next to the TV tower, and, say, the Baltic way has changed a lot. And if this happens again, it would also change things a lot. I don't know. In the case of calamity, [they] would help, support" (Karolina, 19)

"Civilians should also, well, they get involved, only because talking about January 13th, it was more like simple civilians and not the military were protecting […] if all civilians would not go for their country, betray and go to the other side or something like that, well, they do an important job by not betraying, not crossing to the other side. How do people become soldiers? From civilians, because it connects; civilians do a great deal" (Deimantė, 21)

The majority of responses included "civilians" in discussing the responsibility for state security. Gintarė's response describes the relationship of these state structures and the civilian in a form of hierarchy, not an interactive network of the two. In this particular answer, different types of civilians are distinguished as well – those who understand the importance of state security (military) and those who do not. The other two excerpts provided (Deimantė and Karolina) similarly discuss civilians who with their actions, take a stand and chose to follow the same goal as the military – protect and defend; those who "do not betray". Not only the state structures or the military are central to such conceptualization, but civilians, seemingly, take an important role as well. As seen in the answers provided, the civilian-military connection is perceived to

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[22]In this case, Gintarė used a saying *"Prie ruso buvo geriau"* which indirectly translates that it was better to live in the time and conditions of the Soviet Union
[23]In this case, Karolina is referring to the events of January 13, 1991 when Soviet tanks moved into a crowd of peaceful protesters next to the TV tower, where fourteen people were killed and over a hundred were wounded. This day is called the day of the Defenders or Freedom.

be strong and in fact there is little distance between the two, when it comes to accomplishing the goal of security. Since conscription exerts influence on the way people communicate about military and the overall connection between what is considered to be "military" and "civilian", it is equally important to understand, how this particular connection is perceived by the women in the military. A sense of trust is entitled to civilians, similarly to the institutions mentioned. But along the trust that is put into the notion of "good civilians", clear-cut responsibilities are drawn as well, as noted by the interviewees. Thus, the boundaries become such that every civilian grows into a soldier and every soldier grows into a civilian; one supports the other, and gives meaning to the other. However, this is especially so in the time where people feel insecure; the transition of civilian to military takes place when the people feel threatened, as expressed in the interviews. To put it shortly, what becomes state security in most of these responses is precisely this cooperation between the people and the system, yet in strictly defined ways.

The remaining six women described state security as "a state where people feel safe" (positive peace) and/ or "a state that is able to defend itself" (negative peace), without primarily equating state security to state institutions or officials, as opposed to the other twelve interviewees. Additionally, in three cases notions such as "patriotism", "language", "culture" and "roots" were also associated to state security. Only when asked about who or what was responsible for state security, three women included state institutions, nonetheless, all six stated that "everyone" was responsible for state security:

> "People, countrymen [are responsible for state security]. Citizens of the state. Everyone who lives in the state. Not necessarily in the state, but emigrants, too have their state and in some way always have to protect it" (Smiltė, 18)

> "Everyone, everyone is responsible for their state, their security, state security. Every citizen of Lithuania, I believe, is responsible for their country, Lithuania. Not depending if this person is a child, adult or an elder. This is patriotism […] Look at how united our country was when we stood in the Baltic Way, holding hands. What happened on January 13th? My mother was there, screaming, trying to protect everything with her own hands. God, I thought she would die there, when I was little (Emilija, 29)

Yet again, the distinction of what is military and civilian is presented as intersecting, although compelling perceptions such as "patriotism", "language", "culture" and "roots" are introduced. A tendency can be noticed that regardless of the

notion of what is state security, it is mostly perceived through exerting power or knowing that the country/ people are ready and capable of using it. Such sense of knowing or being aware of something as secure, strongly connects to having a military, naturally. Accordingly, this ability to use power is what creates stability and thus security. Not only being able to defend or protect being as civilians is seen as empowering, but communal civil actions is a great empowerment also, that accordingly sends a strong message to the world, and serves as a statement and self-reflection in how the women explain their understanding. Protecting one's family stands for protecting the state, and vice versa. Interestingly, imagining state security had little to do with understanding what is peace. Peace was not particularly acknowledged in none of these answers, and neither it was associated to "security", however, negative and positive peace was acknowledged as well. Nevertheless, a secure state is an independent and stable state, where values such as "roots", "language", "patriotism" thrive.

The final question to introduce is how the women perceive military in peace, more accurately, what roles military plays in peace and/ or peacebuilding (see Appendix 3). In this particular stage of the study, it can already be noticed that women adopt their military roles quite seriously, in the sense that they feel a part of the military greatly. In this way, the question not only aims to understand some further conceptualizations on peace, but also indirectly touches upon the purpose of military, as perceived by the women. This particular question received a wide range of responses and has proven to be challenging in finding a unanimous direction. The most prevalent reply (six answers) in this case was that the military's role in peace was to "help/ protect/ sustain", not only one's own country, but also other countries as well. This was true in instances where the women also mentioned peace operations in expressing their point of view to the question. Some other replies emphasized that military is only in action in times of war (three) or that military is specifically taking the position of defense only (four), while some claimed that in the time of peace, military sustains order (three). Some of the examples discussed are provided bellow:

> "If I'm correct, we are there for the times when we are needed; we train and learn so that in these times, chaos won't prevail, and that we simply know how to defend our country. So, do we create peace? I'm not sure, but we work and learn so that in a difficult time, chaos and disorder won't arise. So that everyone knows their duties, so that everyone does them and is able to protect. War doesn't start out of nowhere; it has catalysts and we are there to prevent further actions, processes. The military and all the

state have to sustain peace somehow. Some support the military, the military supports the civilians, and so it continues" (Viktorija, 24)

"Things like peace missions really emphasize the values taught in the military. For instance, we are taught about values like protecting, loving your neighbor[24]. Peace missions emphasize that a soldier can not only help his own, but other people too, and that he cares about everyone and that peace matters to him" (Smiltė, 18)

"[Military in peace missions/ peace] is a good thing. What is military overall? We have to protect, set an example, and complete certain tasks. Everything, all of the state is the military, because if something [happens] the military's there. If anything happens, the military will be there. Military's everywhere. This is why we are the military; we have to help people" (Jurgita, 19)

According to the women, the military certainly holds particular roles, however, numerous answers were missing the conceptualization of peace in trying to understand military's roles or stand in peace. In these instances, the military's roles were believed to be conditional, i.e. only in the time of war would military interfere, yet how peace becomes as we know it, and in what ways the military respectively contributes to these processes are not necessarily distinguished in the interviews. The remaining answers included discussing some additional positions military adopts, for instance, that in time of peace military "encourages love for one's motherland", "continues to prepare" or that it "should invest in security". Few women considered military as a sign of "how strong the state is" and that this sends a message of "having the resources to protect". Military was even acknowledged as "selfless" or setting an example in showing to people that "peace is better":

The way I imagine, I see it or at least what I hope for, is that military is a weapon from one point of view and not, from another. In the worst case it is a weapon, but in time of peace military is people. They know what to do in the worst case, right? Well, in the case of war. They know how to act, where to start from, what to do, the actions. But in time of peace they sustain peace, they fight for peace, even if in the way of war, but they fight for what? For peace, for order […] If there was some public action for peace, the military would get there right away, I can guarantee that, because no one wants to die. That's logical. Everybody wants to keep the peace" (Emilija, 29)

"Military's role in peace is to simply show that if needed, war can happen, but that it's better to live in peace. No soldier wants war to happen and only dreams of peace and tries to show people that it is better to live in

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[24] The phrase used by the interviewee "*Mylėti artimą*" is of religious origin. The direct English translation is "*Love thy neighbor*"

peace instead of war. I don't think that military is for waging wars. Military is for keeping peace" (Erika, 19)

"In the time of peace, military should probably invest into security further, be interested in the newest technology, scientific advancement, so that they could utilize it in case of calamity. Public relations should, well, not exactly public relations, but they should sustain peace, so that war wouldn't break out, so that soldiers wouldn't need to go to war, so that the information war would be as minimized as possible. And if war is already going on, so that it would be stopped as soon as possible. The top commanders are those who should try to agree on ceasefire. Information war is probably never-ending, but it should be stopped from igniting further conflicts, so that soldiers in their actions wouldn't' ignite further conflicts, so that they would communicate with the people they are defending decently" (Morta, 24)

The excerpts provided show a further distinction between military in times of war and peace. Similarly to the ones briefly mentioned before, they aim to differentiate between military's dedication for peace and it's needed sacrifices in times of war, the process of working for peace, yet again, is relatively missing in such conceptualizations. How does military sustain peace? Morta's response delves deeper into identifying the possible tasks, even introducing power (the tasks and duties of the top commanders versus the soldiers) into this perception. Interestingly, the women describe a certain "human" aspect, of military in peace, e.g. "military is people", "soldiers dream of peace". From what is seen in most of the interviews, military is described as a preventive means. In some examples, prevention is possible because a state has a military or sufficient military resources and that this inevitably serves as a warning, a statement for other countries (See Erika, 19). Smiltė, Jurgita and Viktorija's responses also discuss military in a social, communal context.

Summary of the Analysis

As based on the research questions raised, the collected data has showed that military presented different opportunities, as described by the women. In most cases, their service could be perceived as an obligation (duty to fulfil for the country; a duty to protect and to defend) while the remaining women saw joining the military as an advantageous option, choice, or a rather unanticipated decision. Overall, the way how women perceive the military is related to a strong sense of belonging to the same imagined community (nation), and feeling a sense of responsibility for its existence and future. In several cases it was noticed that women also saw themselves working for other state institutions, thus serving for the country in other ways. In nearly all

interviews, women described receiving positive reactions, which validated the significance of their choices and produced a sense of pride and assurance. Such could also be extended to how important and noble serving in the military is perceived to be, as based on the reactions the women have received regardless if those who serve are women. Overall, being able to serve in the military, i.e. take the position of protecting, defending, was empowering for women. In this way, they become actors in significant processes at home, and see themselves as capable.

One third of answers described state security as a condition of "feeling safe". The state institutions in nearly all eighteen cases were primarily acknowledged to be responsible for ensuring and maintaining state security. However, "civilians" were included in all conceptualizations of who or what ensures and maintains security, thus forming a notion were state security is a consensus of both the state and the people. The two are primarily united by common purposes in trying for the common good. Civilians and soldiers were also perceived to be alike in their goals or duties. While discussing of civilians in states security, multiple interviews touched on significant historical details of the country, where civilians were part of socio-political processes. Therefore, civilian and military relationship in most cases was perceived to be profound.

In all cases, war was either described as an occurrence of human nature, and thus, an inherent part of human experience, or something caused by political motives and interests, and decided by the leading political parties. War was a loss of human life and suffering, while also a threat to territorial integrity. As expressed by many women, war is the sacrifice they could make for the country, however, many women simultaneously questioned the purpose of war, acknowledged "killing", and were strongly criticizing it altogether. In discussing war, half of women alluded to current political climate, and the war in Ukraine.

Half of the women believed that men and women experience war affects were differently. In these cases, it was mainly because women and men were innately different (e.g. mentally stronger vs. weaker). The remaining claimed gender had little to do with war affects, since these were individual-related. However, no responses included discussing gender-based violence (e.g. rape) in post-conflict or war contexts; no commentary on women peacekeepers or women's contribution in post-conflict areas was provided. This is partially because of mainstream preconceptions that men and women are inherently different beings, which more than half women expressed.

One third of answers concluded that the military's role in peace was to help, protect and sustain peace, not only in one's own country, but also other countries as well. Additionally, nearly one third believed military roles to be conditional, i.e. the military only acts in time of war, or resorts to defense only. Peace was also seen to be highly dependent on war, i.e. one takes place at the expense of another. Half of the women claimed their service did not change their opinions about peace, however, some believed to reflect more on peace, and considered war as possible.

Nearly all women believed that the military was able to provide them with prospective career opportunities after their service. Military was acknowledged as a place for improvement – a prevailing reason for joining that women indicated, was wishing to challenge themselves or make themselves stronger, both mentally and physically. This is partially seen because of how the societal norms of what a woman is that strength becomes a paramount facet for a woman to gain, especially in the present context. In several cases, serving in the military was identified to stand as a statement that women are capable of protecting, defending and overall are active and involved in state processes. Women are equally applauded and criticized for their decisions to join the military. Receiving positive reactions, had mostly to do with their perceived-to-be noble choice of service and dedication for the country. In cases where their participation in the military was questioned, it was mainly because of mainstream concepts and societal construction of women, and what was considered feminine or what jobs were appropriate for women. Half of the women identified both male and female figures as influential, encouraging and supportive, in their journeys and decision to serve in the military. Some of these role models were also personally related to the military, and both male and female figures.

Military stands for strength or power in many various ways, for a significant number of women expressed wanting to become stronger, or to test themselves, as regarding joining the military. Military was the place to become a stronger, better "self", since strength was greatly considered to be an important asset. Women viewed themselves as powerful actors and equal contenders to serve in the military and take their service as natural occurrence. In this way, they also indirectly criticize the traditional assumption of a soldier primarily being defined in terms of his/her masculine strength.

Women and men relationship in the military can be regarded as a troublesome issue. This is partially because of lack of gender awareness and education, consistent

acknowledgement of gender and a reluctance to discuss gender. A common *law* prevails that there are only soldiers, but not men or women in the military. Furthermore, gender identities need to be negotiated for women in numerous cases, to feel integrated in the military society. This involves portraying "masculine" traits and practices, and not identifying as women or feminists. However, most of their actions seemed to be that of feminist thought. Unfair treatment (insulting, hurtful remarks) was noted to be highly normalized, yet in several cases problematic to address, let alone to relive and experience. Women had difficulties in naming what inequality or discrimination meant for them, since in many instances they were contradicting themselves. Discrimination did not seem to appear as a profound concept, extending to multiple dimensions, such as legal, social, or political, and the fact that women were allowed to enter military, served as sufficient evidence, assuring gender-equality was already set. Even in cases where women expressed to having received hurtful, discouraging or insulting comments this was not necessarily identified as inequality or discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The final chapter of the study requires a brief mention of some of the action calling for incorporating women into the military and, therefore, building a military that is more gender-aware and inclusive. This is highly supported and encouraged by UNSCR 1325 and NATO, that identify women as actors in peace-building and negotiations, conflict resolution and prevention, peacekeeping, post-conflict reconstruction, and promote gender equality and participation of women, respectfully. It should come as a critical consideration of the current case as well, in regard to goals and requirements raised by NATO to every member-state. However, this particular case discussed in the study requires another substantial factor to be considered. The current political climate, specifically, the war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, were the reasons why conscription was essentially reinstated in Lithuania. Following the change, transitions within the military and in the society are, naturally, taking place. A greater power and trust are bestowed upon the military, to influence and participate in state processes. For these main factors mentioned, the effort in Lithuania to build a military following international standards deserves a greater attention. Moreover, the current case also provides a critical ground on which to evaluate national effort for gender awareness and inclusion in state institutions such as the military, in respect to global political and social commitments.

This thesis presents the first analysis of conceptualizing military, war, peace and state-security by women conscripts-volunteers of Lithuania since the 2015-announced conscription. It also acknowledges women's experiences and perceptions of serving in the military. In order to carry out this study, eighteen semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with Lithuanian conscripts-volunteers. Four these were held with women who had completed their service and fourteen with women who at the time of the interviews were serving in the military. The questions were organized, and aimed to find out how these women construct notions of state security, war, military's role in peace, and war effects. Furthermore, the research also aimed to discover how women perceive relationships with their peers, their potential careers in the military, and personal journeys of experiencing military.

In connection to the contextual frame and the data acquired, it is possible to have a discussion on how state institutions, such as militaries, use the imagery of women to sustain the national value system. Here, *imagery* refers to strict appropriateness of what

is believed to be *woman* or *woman-like*. Such imagery is a static, nature-defined representation (as commonly described by the research participants) that eventually becomes a gender myth, hindering both women and men from becoming functional members of society, which includes traditional imagery of masculinity as well. However, it is also a symbolism of what *woman* and *woman-like* means, that serves as a justification and reasoning behind numerous military acts and policies, not just in Lithuania, but internationally as well. This is mainly because women and children, or how Enloe (1983) coined, "womenandchildren" are those worthy to be protected. Women are those symbolizing the nation and its future. These national value systems are precisely what sustains the military, and eventually, defines the relationship between military and nation, which is all taking place by utilizing the imagery of woman. In this way, women are only to be protected, but not those who are able to protect. Even though women in the military have strong views on what peace means, little was discussed on war affects, concerning unique gender experiences in post-war or post-conflict environments, or, in particular, women taking part in peacekeeping missions and participating in peacebuilding as representatives, decision-makers, etc. It was also noted that women themselves have internalized and naturalized the challenges within the military system and, therefore, gradual militarization as well.

Another case of taking advantage of this imagery is how women are positioned in the military. In the current case, they are not bound by conscription but rather by their will to submit to it by volunteering. However, this does not necessarily translate into full inclusion (neither by their male peers nor by their superiors), nor does it translate to how valuable they are believed to be, or if eventually, they are taken (seriously) as women performing the Duty. The military belief that only soldiers form military, but not men and women, is sustaining inequality as opposed to encouraging it, although it is quite the opposite, as seen in the research. That is simply because there cannot be equality without fully acknowledging that gender does in fact exist, and that gender is paramount to how human beings identify themselves. By rejecting gender, the system also rejects experiences and challenges related to it, and, therefore, normalizes any potential issue in the military, starting from peer-pressure and discrimination, to available career options and representation.

It is also worth questioning how much space there is in the military, to form an intellectual debate on the issues discussed, especially if considering how selfless the duty of a soldier is perceived to be. Having women in the military initially offers an

inclusive model of society, yet, as discussed in this research, how women react to peer-pressure and in some cases, discrimination, reveals that little objection and questioning has been voiced and directed at the system for its misuse of equality and inclusiveness. That is, while women in the military are positioned to mainly serve the purpose of presenting forward-thinking, women themselves are rather passive in challenging this position.

In addition, based on the responses given by the interviewees, the rationale behind protecting the nation must equally be challenged, raising questions as to why a (strong) military is necessarily a representation of state security and stability. Women who joined this study have expressed a rather traditional understanding of militaries offering security, yet not discussing other aspects of having military-free sustainable peace, neither truly criticizing conscription. Similarly, a question of how significant gender in state and state processes is, should be debated. If gender-awareness was a substantial value in society, military and other state institutions could then also be challenged. Notwithstanding, a deeper understanding of how one perceives gender should receive enough attention, space and education in the country and the military, since the current gender understanding of women in the military is very contradictory, vague and limited, as given in the responses.

Military, while following somewhat of an inclusive consideration of gender on paper, is not challenging, but rather supporting the traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. No evident steps are taken to establish equality, thus women's roles in the military are narrowed down to building an attractive frontage. On a different note, women in the military are used to justify that there is supposed gender-awareness and inclusion, advertised by and established in the military, which is also promoting militarization and the military itself. That is, they believe that gender equality exists. Notwithstanding, this non-critical approach of the system by the women working inside, is also not challenging the vague definitions and understanding of what it actually means for men and women to be considered and live as equals, and not be discriminated for their gender. Noticeably, it would be incomplete to measure equality and discrimination in the national institutions (including military), simply by the fact that both are able to join them. An extension of how they are viewed by and in these institutions, procedures and laws protecting their rights in these institutions, and a consideration of their voices and experiences are much needed measurements of equality.

Lastly, future research regarding the topic should most importantly be carried out through an intersectional lens, inquiring on women's experiences of class, race, ethnicity, and, by all means, in relation to gender. A possible extension to the study could be delving into men-women relationships in the military in greater detail, and civil-military relationship post-2015 military conscription in Lithuania. Additionally, it would seem to be of great importance to address women regarding their opinions on current humanitarian crises in the world, and refugee-related issues. Last but not least, how masculinity is constructed in the military and how men experience these constructions, through a gender analysis is much needed.

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Appendix 1

Sabancı University
Consent to Participate in a Research Study

Study Title: The Narratives of Women Conscripts-Volunteers of the Post-2015 Military Conscription in Lithuania – Imagining Military, Nation, and Peace[25]

Principal Investigator: Greta Armonaitytė
Interviewer: Greta Armonaitytė

During the data collection period in the research, you will be asked to answer certain questions, relating to your experiences in the military, such as potential reasons or factors for joining the military, thoughts and feelings about being part of the military. Consequently, you will be asked questions regarding the concepts of peace, war, military and identity.

There are no foreseen risks or discomfort involved in participating in this study, however, if you feel that some questions are of sensitive nature and too personal, you are allowed to skip those and continue or stop the interview.

Your personal identification or any other personal data will be kept confidential and will not be accessed by other individuals. Your first name and age will be the only personal details provided in the published form of the study, however, you may also provide a fake name and use it throughout the research and thus your real identity will not be disclosed. If you do not wish to provide your signature for the consent form, a certain other mark or an oral consent (given by you when the interview begins) can be provided instead and will be considered as acceptable and valid.

The duration of your participation is not limited, and can be adjusted according to your needs and convenience.

Your participation is voluntary, and you will receive no financial or any other kinds of benefits for the participation in the research. You will be informed once the research is published and upon your request be provided with an access to a digital copy of the completed manuscript.

You may withdraw from the study at any time, up until the published form of the research.

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[25] The initial title, as provided in the consent form was "The Narratives of Women Conscripts-Volunteers of the Post-2015 Military Conscription in Lithuania – Imagining Military, Nation, and Peace

If you believe that your rights have been violated in any way, please contact Volkan Özgöz, Director of Research and Graduate Policy at Sabancı University at (216) 483-9834 or by email at vozguz@sabanciuniv.edu.

By signing this consent form, you are indicating your consent to participate in this study.

Agree to be audio taped: ❏ Yes ❏ No

Participants name and surname…………………………………………………………….

Participants signature…………………………………

Date………………

Appendix 2

Orhanlı
81474 Tuzla/ Istanbul – Turkey
Telefon/ Phone:+90 (0216) 483 9000
Faks/ Facsimile:+90 (0216) 483 9005

İletişim Merkezi/ Communication
Center:
Bankalar Caddesi 2
80020 Karaköy / İstanbul – Turkey
Telefon / Phone:+90 (0212) 292 4939
Faks / Facsimile:+90 (0212) 252 3293
www.sabanciuniv.edu

Sabancı Universitetas
Sutikimas dalyvauti moksliniame tyrime

Tyrimo pavadinimas: Moterų šauktinių-savanorių naratyvos po 2015-ųjų privalomosios karinės tarnybos įstatymo paskelbimo Lietuvoje – kariuomenės, tautos ir taikos supratimas

Mokslinio darbo vadovas: Greta Armonaitytė
Pokalbio-apklausos vykdytojas: Greta Armonaitytė

Interviu metu būsite paprašyta žodžiu atsakyti į klausimus, susijusius su jūsų dalyvavimo kariuomenėje patirtimi – galimas priežastis ir faktorius lėmusius ar kitaip skatinusius pasirinkti savanorišką karinę tarnybą, jūsų asmeninę patirtį ir pastebėjimus. Jums pateikti klausimai taip pat bus susiję su taikos, karo, kariuomenės ir identiteto koncepcijomis ir jūsų asmeniniu šių reiškinių suvokimu.

Nėra numatytų rizikos ar diskomforto faktorių, susijusių su jūsų dalyvavimu tyrime, tačiau jūs turite teisę neatsakyti į interviu klausimus, jei šie klausimai yra jautrūs, asmeniniai ar nepriimtini, ir nuspręsti sustabdyti, ar toliau tęsti, interviu ar jūsų dalyvavimą tyrime.

Jūsų asmeninė informacija (išskyrus jūsų vardą ir amžių) bus žinoma tik tyrimo vykdytojai, nebus publikuojama tyrime ar kitaip aptariama su pašaliniais asmenimis. Jūs turite teisę nepateikti savo tikrojo vardo tyrime ir jūsų tikroji tapatybė nebus atskleista viešai. Jums tai pat suteikiama galimybė duoti žodinį sutikimą, prasidėjus interviu ar pateikti kitokią žymę šioje sutikimo dalyvauti tyrime formoje, jei atsisakote pateikti savo parašą.

Tyrimas nenustato jokios interviu trukmės, t.y. interviu laikas su pokalbio-interviu vykdytoja nėra ribojamas. Tyrimas nereikalauja specialaus pasirengimo.

Jūsų dalyvavimas yra savanoriškas ir neatlygintinas. Jūs galite atsisakyti dalyvauti tyrime bet kuriame tyrimo eigos etape. Jūs sulauksite pranešimo ir galėsite susipažinti su tyrimo rezultatais jam pasibaigus.

Jei manote, kad dalyvaujant tyrime kaip nors buvo pažeistos jūsų teisės, prašome susisiekti su Volkan Özgöz, Sabancı Universiteto Tyrimų Etikos Komisijos skyriaus direktoriumi, numeriu (216) 483-9834 arba el.paštu vozguz@sabanciuniv.edu.

Pasirašydama šią sutikimo formą, nurodote, kad sutinkate dalyvauti minėtame tyrime. Sutinku, kad interviu metu mano liudijimai būtų įrašyti naudojantis garso įrašymo priemonėmis: ❑ Taip ❑ Ne

Dalyvės vardas ir pavardė
…………………………………………………………………….....
Dalyvės parašas……………………...................
Data……………………

Appendix 3

Tema/ Theme	Klausimai	Questions
Introductory, Background/ Įžanginiai klausimai	1. Ar galėtum šiek tiek papasakoti apie save – kiek tau metų, iš kur esi kilusi? Atskleisti gali tiek, kiek tau pačiai patogu apie save kalbėti 2. Kiek laiko jau praėjo nuo tavo savanoriškos tarnybos? 2a) Jei dar vis esi kariuomenėje, kada pradėjai ir ketini baigti savo tarnybą?	1. Could you share a little bit about yourself – your age, residence? You may only reveal the details you are most comfortable to share. 2. How much time has passed since the completion of your voluntary military service? 2a) If you are still in the military, when did the service start and when is it going to finish?
Women's experiences in the military/ Moterų patirtis kariuomenėje	3. Kokios buvo tavo idėjos apie kariuomenę arba karinę tarnybą dar prieš pradedant savąją tarnybą? 3a) Kokių minčių turėjai apie moteris kariuomenėje? 4. Kada ir/ ar kokia buvo akimirka kai pradėjai rimtai svarstyti apie savanorišką karinę tarnybą? Kaip tuo metu jauteisi? 5. Kas sekė po to, t.y. kokius žingsnius žengei prieš pradėdama savo savanorišką tarnybą? (Pvz. fizinis pasirengimas, karinės tarnybos ir darbo ar motinystės suderinimas) 6. Ar yra koks nors asmuo, istorija ar situacija paskatinusi tave apsvarstyti arba/ ir vėliau pasirinkti karinę tarnybą? 6a) Kokie veiksniai galėjo daryti įtaką tavo sprendimui? 7. Ar yra kas nors tavo šeimoje arba draugų rate (socialiniame rate) kas praeityje priklausė/ šiuo metu priklauso kariuomenei? 7a) Ar šis žmogus taip pat šauktinis-savanoris? 7b) Gal galėtum papasakoti apie šį žmogų šiek tiek daugiau? 8. Ar jauteisi palaikoma arba/ ir suprasta savo artimųjų (socialiniame rate) priėmusį tokį sprendimą? 9. Kokių įdomių, neįprastų, palaikančių ar nemalonių reakcijų	3. What were your ideas regarding the military or military service before you have started your service? 3a) What were your ideas regarding women in the military? 4. When or what was the pivotal moment when you started seriously considering voluntary military service? How did you feel? 5. What followed after, i.e. what were the steps that you took in prior to starting your voluntary service? (e.g. physical preparation, motherhood, work arrangements) 6. Is there a person, story, or situation that encouraged you to consider and/ or eventually chose military service? 6a) What factors do you think were influential in making this decision? 7. Is there anyone in your family and/or your friends (social circle) who was/ is in the military? 7a) Is this person also a conscript-volunteer? 7b) Could you tell more about this person? 8. Would you say that you felt supported and/ or understood in making this decision by some of the closest to you (social circle)? 9. What were some of the most interesting, unusual, supportive or hurtful etc. remarks that you have

	esi sulauksi dėl savo sprendimo? 10. Kokia buvo tavo pirmoji diena karinėje tarnyboje? Kaip tą dieną jauteisi? 10a) Kaip jautiesi dabar? 11. Kiek moterų iš viso buvo/ yra tavo batalione, kuopoje arba būryje tarnaujančių kartu su tavimi? 12. Kaip tavo kolegos-vyrai jautėsi/ jaučiasi dėl to, kad kariuomenėje buvo/ yra kartu su jais savanoriškai tarnaujančių moterų?	received because of your decision? 10. How did you feel on the first day of your military service? How did you feel? 10a) How do you feel now? 11. How many other women were there/ are there in the infantry/ troop/ platoon serving with you? 12. How did/ do your male peers feel about seeing women voluntarily joining the military and serving together with them?
Women conceptualizing peace, war, and military/ Klausimai, kaip moterys suvokia taiką, karą ir kariuomenę	13. Tavo supratimu, kas yra karas? 13a) Dėl ko kyla karai? 14. Tavo supratimu, kas yra valstybinis saugumas? 14a) Kas atsakingas už valstybinį saugumą? 15. Kokį vaidmenį kariuomenė atlieka taikoje? (Pvz. Taikos misijose, taikos kūrime) 16. Ar moterys ir vyrai yra skirtingai paveikti karo? Kodėl arba kodėl ne? 17. Kaip jautiesi arba ką manai apie šiuo metu tebesitęsiančius karus pasaulyje? (Pvz. Ukrainoje, Sirijoje) 18. Ar buvimas kariuomenėje kaip nors pakeitė tavo supratimą apie taiką arba taikos kūrimą? Kodėl ir kaip arba kodėl ne?	13. How would you define war? 13a) Why do wars occur? 14. How would you define state security? 14a) Who or what is responsible for state security? 15. What role does military play in peace? (e.g. peace missions, peacebuilding) 16. Are women and men affected by war differently? Why/ why not? 17. How do you feel/ what do you think about some of the ongoing wars in the world today? (e.g. Ukraine, Syria) 18. Did being in the military somehow change your perception regarding peace or peacebuilding? How and why/ why not?
Women perceiving and experiencing gender/ Klausimai, kaip moterys suvokia ir išgyvena lytį	19. Kokios karjeros galimybės tavęs laukia kariuomenėje šiandien? 20. Kokių iššūkių gali kilti dėl žmogaus lyties? 20a) Ar Lietuvoje egzistuoja lyčių lygybė? 20b) Ar kariuomenėje egzistuoja lyčių lygybė? 21. „Moterys kariuomenėje" – kokią žinutę tai siunčia Lietuvai? 22. Ar esi laiminga dėl savo pasirinkimo savanoriškai tarnauti kariuomenėje? Kodėl arba kodėl ne?	19. What could be some of the potential career opportunities in the military available for you today? 20. What challenges can arise because of one's gender? 20a) Is there gender equality in Lithuania? 20b) Is there gender equality in the military? 21. "Women in the Military" – what kind of message does it send to Lithuania? 22. Overall, are you happy with your decision to voluntarily serve in the military? Why/Why not?
Closing the Interview/	Ar yra dar kas nors, kuo norėtum pasidalinti, kas nors kas nebuvo	Is there anything you would like to share, something that wasn't asked

Interviu užbaigimas	paklausta ar paminėta?	or mentioned?

Appendix 4

Research Participants		
Infantry 1		
Number	**Name**	**Age**
1.	Barbora	23
2.	Erika	19
3.	Ieva	28
4.	Jurgita	19
5.	Karolina	19
6.	Neringa	20
7.	Saulė	19
8.	Smiltė	18
Infantry 2		
9.	Akva	19
10.	Deimantė	21
11.	Eglė	18
12.	Gabrielė	25
13.	Laura	21
14.	Vesta	20
Women who have completed military service		
15.	Emilija	29
16.	Gintarė	20
17.	Viktorija	24
18.	Morta	24