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Attracting more women in the compulsory military service in Switzerland: pursuit of equality or political statement?

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Attracting more women in the compulsory military service in Switzerland: pursuit of equality or political statement?

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Abstract

Twenty-seven years after the swiss military compulsory service officially allowed women to serve in the same position as men, their numbers remain scarce. They officially represent under one per cent of military forces. Meanwhile, several decision-makers call for a transformation of this balance, either to reach ten per cent of women in the ranks or to include them completely in the draft group. This research finds that women have played a key role in the military in the past 100 years and that they have been systematically invisibilised. The analysis shows that the military and the state in Switzerland is male centred (Peterson, 1992; Sjoberg, 2009), that women were prevented from gaining the status of an actor in the military practice despite filling that role, and that the military is highly dependent on women's unpaid labour. The analysis of women's presence and how it is reported to the public show that women comply with gendered norms rather to challenge them to be accepted in the military. Therefore, this research argues that a specific gender-sensitive policy would be necessary to attain the announced goals.

Keywords: *Feminist Security Studies, Switzerland, Military conscription, Gender.*

à Mamico et Grand-Maman, pour la force de caractère

à Alice, pour que tu puisses choisir ta propre vie

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Introduction

Opening

In Switzerland, the association Citizen Service will soon start collecting signatures for their campaign for the inclusion of women in mandatory conscription for the militia army (Service Citoyen, 2021). The militia army has played a key role in such a small country since its introduction in 1874. As a founding act, it was agreed that all men must serve in the militia army for about a year and present for a four-week annual duty. The militia organisational structure has covered multiple functions in society, such as creating a common culture in a multilingual State and providing the country with security. However, it was established with the exclusion of women from all participation. While the opportunity to serve in the military was informally given to women in 1995 in parallel to allowing men to perform civil service, women remain scarce within the ranks. The participation and representation of women in Switzerland's security is both a topic of interest and understudied from a Security Studies perspective, let alone a feminist one. The popular initiative to come represents a unique opportunity to analyse the policy and practices of security in Switzerland conjoined with the participation of women in security. This case will nevertheless be unprecedented and will challenge a core component of Switzerland's security. This research asks:

> *"How has policy around women's roles in the Swiss military evolved, and what issues and debates remain around women's inclusion in the military today?"*

Societal relevance

Compulsory military service plays a fundamental role in Swiss society. All men between 19 and 25 years of age must participate in military training. There are a few exceptions such as health conditions or choosing to participate in civil service (conscientious objector, introduced in 1995), but most young Swiss men go through roughly a year of military service and a yearly refresher training period until they

reach 30 years old. This compulsory tradition shapes men and society, to the exclusion of women. In 2004, women were legally given the right to participate on a voluntary basis (between 1995 and 2004, their participation was not yet formally integrated into law). To this day, they represent 0.9 per cent of military ranks (Cocher, 2021).

The department of defence of Switzerland is currently stating that its objective is to reach 10% of women in military ranks by 2030 (Defensio, 2021). In parallel, a citizen's initiative will propose an extension of the obligation to serve for women. These two debates show a societal interest in the question of women's participation in military service. However, the analyse of countries with similar systems in combination with Feminist Security Studies theories shows that such a transformation goes beyond a question of the number in ranks, and profoundly challenges the gender norms and social order.

As the military service shapes men and society, their values and behaviour, it excludes women and is based on domination, control, hypermasculinity, the inferiority of women, etc. Subsequently, the senior security roles are dominated by men formatted by the military, even though the current minister of the military is a woman (Viola Amherd, DDPS, 2020).

The reflection on the position of women in security in Switzerland and more specifically in the militia army emanate from distinct fractions of society, making it an engaging debate. Among the key actors that will influence the outcome of this discussion are the voting citizens, the cantons, the department of defence, lobby groups, political parties, etc.
Presently, the department of defence is examining four new models for the military, of which three imply the integration of women in the compulsory draft (Cocher, 2021). A modification of this scale that affects the constitution will eventually necessitate a vote through a referendum. Simultaneously, the association that conducts the project of the popular vote will campaign for the plebiscite of women's integration.

The officers' association has already issued their position in favour of extending the compulsory military service to women (Cocher, 2021) as a solution to ward off recruitment decline. It is expected that the military academy (which is an institution restricted to military personnel) will issue a statement and probably lobby in their interest.

Political parties play a dominant role in influencing the citizen's vote as well as the canton's vote which is determined by their political colour. The conservative political parties are traditionally protective of the idea of the role of women constrained within the domestic sphere, but they are also deeply attached to military tradition and its decline will represent a challenge for their positioning.

The civilian population will eventually express itself through a vote on the matter. Their voting behaviour will be influenced by the deeply rooted tradition of domination from men on women that persists through Swiss society, but will also be affected by the recent social movement for equality (such as "La grève des femmes" [Women's strike]). Nevertheless, the resistance will not necessarily come from men alone, since both genders participate in "the dual mythology of masculinity and femininity" (Burguieres in Dunn Cavelty et al., 2016).

Security policy and practices in Switzerland are conjointly issued by institutions such as defence, border control, and foreign affairs. The defence is directed by high-grades of the military, quasi-exclusively composed of men. The ongoing discussion about integrating women into the military will challenge the fundamental identity and practice of security.

According to a recent poll, Swiss society seems to be evolving towards a positive view of the idea of including women in the military. In January 2021, a survey by the research institute Link demonstrated that 67% of the population was favourable to the inclusion of women in mandatory military service (Tresch, 2021).

Although recent polls give a positive opinion on the widening of conscription to women, the implementation of such a measure will challenge some fundamental values in the practice and policies on security in Switzerland.

Nevertheless, presently women involved in the practice of security by joining the military are subjected to hyper-naturalisation of masculinist and domination norms (Bondolfi, 2020; Monay, 2018; Monay, 2017).

The scholars that looked into the gender construction of identity and hierarchy found that dichotomies such as strong masculinity/weak femininity, protector/protected, and

public sphere/domestic sphere regulate the security structure of the country (Stiehm, 1983; Blanchard, 2003; Sjoberg, 2009; Shepherd, 2008). These constructions can be found both in civil society and in the military. For example, countries that have long applied a compulsory draft for women and men, such as Israel show continuity in terms of structure between civil society and the military where similar patriarchal and male-centred values dominate the practice of security as well as the hierarchy in society. This research will later show that the military is in fact a generator of gendered structure.

In Switzerland, the debate is currently open about the inclusion of women as participants in the compulsory draft. While civil society shows signs of evolution in terms of gender norms and equality, the same transformations have not yet reached the military institution. This research concludes that such a transition challenges some core values of the military.

Switzerland is confronted with debunking its own myth when it comes to voting on security matters. Considering that the democratic structure provides that strategic security matters might be subject to popular vote, the key actors must produce convincing arguments, mostly directed to challenge long-lasting popular beliefs (DeVore & Staehli, 2011; Wichmann, 2009; Hagmann et al., 2018).

Academic relevance

Academically, studies on Swiss security practise remain scarce (Hagmann et al., 2018, p.3). The Centre for Security Studies in Zurich (CSS in ETHZ) which concentrates the most expertise in the domain published approximately 15 per cent of papers focused on the case of Switzerland since 1992, and none of them addresses questions of gender in the military ranks.

There are some recent publications on the military from a sociological perspective, but they focus mainly on gender performance (Monay, 2017, 2018). There is no existing analysis of the structure of the military and security strategy from a security studies perspective, let alone a feminist one.

The topic is timely and relevant considering that the department of defence is analysing several options for the future of the military, some of them including

women. In parallel, a section of society has expressed the will to bring about change through the popular initiative to come. From a societal perspective, it represents a unique situation. Traditionally, the military is considered independent of other institutions and hermetic to change. There is little civilian participation in political decisions on military matters. But the gendered debate around women's participation in the Swiss military is taking an unprecedented amplitude, and the security strategy of the State will be subject to the vote of the population and cantons. It is a sensitive subject matter that could beneficiate from FFS's analysis.

This paper has started by introducing the general topic of the research, providing a research question that justified its societal and academic relevance, followed by the present reading guide. Chapter two will concisely present the methodology chosen to answer the research question. Chapter three will begin with a presentation of the literature review with selected theories from Feminist Security Studies that will prove relevant to the question of women's inclusion in compulsory military service in Switzerland. Then, it will look into defence studies and terrorism studies, specifically about women in compulsory military service. Finally, a comparative study will be done to explore how the examples of Norway, Sweden and Israel can help inform the contemporary challenges present in Switzerland. Chapter four will provide the main case study of this research, analysing from an FSS perspective how (first) the debates and policies on the roles of women in the military have evolved during the 20th century and (second) what are the remaining challenges and policies currently at stake for the inclusion of women in this compulsory military service? Chapter five will conclude this research by providing an answer to the research question, summarising the limitation and proposing recommendations.

Methodology and Approach

To answer the research question, the research design will take the shape of a case study. According to Yin (2015), a case study design is most suitable when answering a "how" question about a phenomenon on which the researcher has little or no control despite its location in a recent or contemporary setting (p.32). Yin (2015) recommends the use of a case study research design when the phenomenon and its context are not clearly delineated and they highly influence each other. This situation applies to the implication of women in military service in Switzerland, which highly depends on the societal context and vice versa. The mandatory participation in military service for men is both shaping society and shaping citizens. It will focus on the 20th and 21st centuries, where major international conflicts and political movements have impacted the social structure of the country. The very end of the 18th and 19th centuries are left out due to feasibility, sources on women being scarce and difficult to access remotely. Despite extensive database searches where parliamentary debates are stored, women's concerns and aspirations are rarely mentioned due to their absence from federal political life. Switzerland's national archives might bring interesting material for further research. Nonetheless, the roles of women regarding the military at the beginning of the 20th century are considerably similar to the one contained in the policy adopted by Switzerland in 1874. The research will use relevant theory from Feminist Security Studies (FSS) and apply it to empirical evidence, using document analysis, interview and media analysis.

A descriptive design is prescribed to provide an in-depth understanding of a social phenomenon. The social construction of gendered participation in the military service needs to be studied to understand the challenges faced by actors currently trying to transform it. The descriptive design will discourse analysis and policy analysis to better understand the challenges at stake.

A historical design is adequate to analyse the evolution of a social phenomenon that took place in the recent past (Yin, 2015). It will be used to look into the evolution of policies around women's roles in the military in Switzerland between the early 20th century and today, through the use of archival research from the national archives, analysis of parliamentary debates, and government reports on relevant decisions, and

media communication. This section will analyse policy evolution and the events that prompted them, using the framework provided in the literature review to identify and describe trends. This research will be looking for indicators of the type of events (conflicts, social movement) or procedures (citizen's initiative) that brought transformations as well as unsuccessful attempts.

The cross-sectional design will be applied to compare how other countries have dealt with comparable challenges, looking into the cases of Norway, Sweden and Israel which established universal military participation.

The literature review focuses specifically on academic and grey literature pertaining to the inclusion of women in security practices in general and more specifically military services. This literature review will be used to summarize the current literature on the inclusion of women in military service by applying it to similar countries. In the second time, this research will be mobilized to identify the origin of mandatory military service in Switzerland and how it has shaped the construction of Swiss society; and what are the values historically associated with the military, such as masculinity and citizenship with the particularity of a pillarised[1] multilingual, multicultural country?

This thesis has some limitations in terms of replicability for a different context. Since it focuses on Switzerland which is a country with a unique political system - it is unlikely to be replicable or extended to a different context even with valid findings. The specificity of the forces at stake influencing the decision-making procedure through referendums or popular votes in Switzerland creates a limitation in the possibility to evaluate and anticipate evolutions. This thesis also contains limitations due to the secretive nature of the military. This secretive aspect cannot be overcome when pursuing research based on public material, and some relevant confidential information might improve the accuracy and relevance of this research.

[1] Pillarisation of society describes the politico-denominational segregation, or the separation of a society into groups by religion and associated political beliefs.

Theoretical framework, literature review

This paper focuses on identifying and describing the policy discourses and practices around the role of women in the military in Switzerland. To do so, the broader body of knowledge that informs this question has to be presented and articulated to inform the research question. This chapter provides an overview of the literature pertaining to women in the military and the definitions of key concepts.

Before looking at Switzerland, it is necessary to review the broader academic and grey literature on women in security and more specifically women in the military. This literature will help inform where women are present and how their role has evolved until this day to better understand the contemporary debate around the inclusion of women in compulsory military service in Switzerland.

While the literature on women in the military, let alone in compulsory conscription remains scarce, the fields of Feminist Security Studies and Terrorism studies have produced valuable work in the past three decades and continue to expand.
These fields "try to locate women in relation to security, considering agency, power relations and structures, and interrogating gender binaries" (Cook, 2020, p.49). This paper will draw on these theories to better analyse and understand the current issues and debates around the inclusion of women in the military in Switzerland.

What is FSS

Since the establishment of the field in the '90s, distancing itself from the sole military and secretive conception of security (Balzacq, p.360), Feminist Security Studies have produced a dense and sharp contemporary analyse that filled the gaps of pre-existing Security Studies. Feminist Security Studies have been building on existing security studies and incorporating feminist thinkers and activists' criticism of central concepts of security studies.

The main contributions of FSS revolve around seven main tenets: first, it "question(s) the supposed nonexistence and irrelevance of women in international security

politics;" second, it "questions the extent to which women are secured by the state's protection in times of war and peace;" third, it "contests discourses wherein women are linked unreflectively with peace;" and fourthly, "feminists have troubled the assumption that gendered security practices address only women and have started to develop a variegated concept of masculinity to help explain security" (Cook, 2020, p.63). According to Sjoberg, FSS also questions (fifth) "what counts as a security issue, and to whom the concepts of security should be applied;" (six) "an understanding of the gendered nature of the values prized in the realm of international security," which "influences how scholars and policy-makers frame and interpret issues of national security;" and (seven) how gender plays out in "theory and practice of international security." She identified three ways this happens: first "conceptually, for understanding international security;" second, "in analyzing causes and predicting outcomes;" and third, in "thinking about solutions and promoting positive change in the security realm" (*Ibid*, p.63). While some of these theories derive from the international context, they can still inform the present research that questions the local participation in security through involvement in the military.

The study of this empirical case, despite being specific to a specific country and time, participates to bring insight into the participation of women in security practices. As argued by Sjoberg, Security Studies are struggling with the philosophical definition of the limits of the concept of security and the School of Copenhagen which was until recently predominant, landed on conceptual consideration of deepening and broadening of the concept (Buzan & Weaver), with the risks entailed by overstretching the concept. FSS provides the necessary analytical tools to conduct research based on concrete cases and offers relevant insight rather than theoretical speculations (Sjoberg, 2009). In this regard, this case study participates to fill the gap existing in research on women's participation in military practice in Switzerland but also adds to the body of knowledge on FFS.

The field of FSS is divided between scholars who argue for the neutrality of the field and are prone to commend separation from policymaking (e.g. Blanchard, Wibben), while others advocate for active collaboration with a concrete application of their research (Sjoberg, Tickner, Cook). The present research argues the latter, in so far as by remaining detached from the question of inclusion of women in the compulsory

military service in Switzerland, researchers also remain passive to the findings which show that excluding women from participating in the military also excludes them from certain aspects of society and rights.

Summary of relevant FSS lit & terrorism studies, definitions

This section discusses the origin and claims of FSS to present the relevant angle that it provides to understand the gender dynamics at stake, which is often absent from mainstream defence and security studies. The subsequent paragraphs will then look into the relevant literature pertaining to military service to provide adequate theories to analyse the presence of women in the swiss military service.

Early feminist scholars have introduced the concept of gender as a systematic analytical tool and demonstrated how gender deconstruction and the role of women help understand security (Oakley, 1972; Sjoberg, 2019). Ann Oakley (1972, Sex, gender and society) separates biological sex from gender as a social construct. She argues that gender identity is not determined by biology, but rather that it is developed through social and psychological mechanisms. Gender constructs assign a set of characteristics, behaviour and positions to biological sex, justifying the hierarchy of men on women with presupposed dichotomies such as strong/weak, protector/protected (Enloe, 1989; Butler, 1990; Sjoberg, 2018). This gender construction gives lieu to oppression, marginalisation and domination strategies against women (Balzacq, 2016). When security practitioners included women in the discussion (for example under the impulsion of the UN Resolution 1325), it was only in a position that links between women and peace, reinforcing the myth of passive and peaceful persons (and illustrating the striking absence of research on how women participate in political violence and war; Sylvester, 2010). It is demonstrated that war and gender shape each other (Goldstein, 2001). Since gender identity is shaped by practice, alterations in practice will modify the gender (Balzacq, 2016, p.371).

This first finding of FFS is that the Security field and the State are male-centred and not gender-neutral as was previously mistaken. (Peterson, 1992 ; Sjoberg, 2009, 2018 ; Balzacq, 2016).

Gasztold in her work on feminist perspective on terrorism, builds on existing research especially Habermas (1985), to put forward the inexistence of neutral knowledge and that by extension, decades of work systematically produced by men about a men's environment is unlikely to be exempted from bias. This is especially relevant in military science where women were and still mostly are excluded from decision-making while in reality playing a role, albeit considered peripheral (Enloe, 1989). Hence, the sources discussing women's place in the military are likely to contain said bias (androcentrism). In that regard, the tools provided by feminist scholars allow to overcome, extend and deepen knowledge in security studies. Gasztold goes further by arguing that "the origins, structure, and functioning of any security system without a gendered lens is incomplete and needs further reflection." (2020, p.53). It is the goal of this research to extend the knowledge of security practices in Switzerland by applying a gender perspective. The analysis chapter will look if women are present in security discourse and practices in Switzerland.

The second theme that can be isolated from FSS is that women are generally not viewed as security actors: they are structurally excluded from decision-making, policy and practice of security. They are generally perceived as benefiting from security. Åse (2019) argues that the myth which women do not need to take part in security practices because they are protected by men is inaccurate. There are specific ways in which women are threatened that failed to be taken into account and secured by security strategy. In parallel, their specific issues and participation are side-streamed (Newby & Sebag, 2021). Feminist security studies not only shed light on the exclusion of women but also on the intersectionality of gender with race, ethnicity, and class (Sylvester, 2010). The FSS highlights another type of discrepancy. The analysis chapter will research the involvement of women as actors in security discourses and practice.

For Switzerland specifically, it is also a reminder of the interdependence nature of security (Cohn, 2011), while the military tends to rely on their perceived autonomy. The next chapter will analyse the structural participation of both women and men in the functioning of the military service to evaluate how women are implicated and how their role is recognized in the public discourse.

FSS and military service

This part focuses more specifically on the literature in regards to military service. Three research axis can be derived and will be used as a research lens: 1. Military as a gendered and gendering institution; 2. Military service shaping citizenship; and 3. Military as a simplistic security concept.

Military as a gendered and gendering institution

This paragraph describes how the military is constructed based on a gender division of roles and how it creates these gendered identities by practice. This further informs on the effects of that the swiss military gendered division on women and men.

Women and men's identities in the social and military system are built on an oppositional dichotomy. The prevalent premise is that combat is a man's duty, justified by body function differences and psychological differences that interpret women as less prone to aggression which is seen as a weakness (Cawkill et al., 2009). These differences between men and women are considered as given, a natural state of being: men would be natural fighters and defence is their monopoly function. A fit, hegemonic masculinity is set as the dominant norm. Appending to that premise lays the gendered myth of protection, where women are passive civilians to be protected (Åse, 2019). The women's role would be primarily the function of reproduction of the population (pregnancy) and care, auxiliary subordinate functions, support and submission to male counterparts. The gendered constructions of femininity and masculinity are hierarchized (Butler, 1990; Sjoberg, 2018). Since the military is associated with strength, winning, and hyper masculinisation, it affects choices of security policies. In parallel, women being associated with peace represents a challenge to martial dynamics.

As consequence, women's presence in the military entails that the measuring unit to which women have to conform is strong, aggressive, obedient masculinity, and military men often assess that women "cannot comply" with these requirements. It challenges the naturalization of domination structure due to biological criteria, with men supposedly being strong and women weak (Balzacq, 2016). This informs on the

challenge that women represent to gender norms by entering combat positions in the military. It will be used in the analysis to observe which behaviour is performed to comply with or challenge these gender norms.

Goldstein (2001) highlights that war and gender shape each other and Cook (2020) that the post-war period tends to reshape this relationship. Balzacq summarises previous findings, saying that gender contains subjective, symbolic, and institutional dimensions. Gender identity constitutes a personality in practice (collective and individual) (p.371). In this regard, universal military service represents a key experience that shapes gender in practice and the inclusion of women will challenge these institutions in return.

In practice, the gendered norms produced by the military institution can be divided into two main areas: the ones pertaining to the body (strength, fitness, resistance, control) and others to the mind (obedience, teamwork, aggression-prone). This will guide the analysis of the Swiss military to look for discourses pertaining these two subcategories to identify gendered norms.

Shaping citizenship

Lomsky-Feder & Sasson-Levy conducted an in-depth analysis of the compulsory military system in Israel. Some of their main findings are: that compulsory military service shapes the relationship with the state, as the military is the closest institution to the core of the state (see also Enloe, 1988); that "the encounters with the state are always shaped by gender ideologies and interests, which are especially pronounced in the military, a hyper-masculine organization. Thus, military service constructs a tight and conspicuous link between citizenship and gender" (Lomsky-Feder & Sasson-Levy, 2018, pp.1-2). The status in society is related to the military position, and more precisely the combat position. Therefore non-combatants are considered lesser citizens. They conclude that gender differentiation in the military service builds differentiated citizenship.

Balzacq further argues that the military entails oppression, marginalization and domination strategies on women (2016). The military institution which is citizen-shaping remained reluctant to evolve. The naturalization of domination structure due

to biological criteria of men strong, and women weak (Balzacq, 2016) informs the perception of women in the military, who have a marginal relationship to the state. An unequal position in the military is significant to an unequal position in society, which will reinforce each other. The military structure is patriarchal and reinforces women as subordinates, where combat soldier is the ultimate citizen and others (women) are below. While Israel's army is combatting and Switzerland has yet never actively fought, this theory will be used to analyse if Switzerland also hierarchises citizenship between men and women, depending on their participation in the military service.

Over-simplified concept

The realization of security is of interdependent nature (Cohn, 2011). The military itself does not have a monopoly on security, just as citizens are interdependent on each other. This concept includes all non-typical roles that are not usually considered in security debates. Until the integration of feminist work in security studies, the ongoing male-centred frame was mistaken for gender neutral (Sjoberg, 2009, 2018; Peterson, 1992; Balzacq, 2016) and has therefore excluded several aspects of the field. The military policies and debates in Switzerland are often simplistic (Moser, 2022), perpetuating the idea of a neutral and independent Switzerland, with the military as its sole and sufficient defence. It overlooks the interdependence nature of security in terms of security areas and functions. This will be applied to identify narrative inaccuracies in regard to security practices in a broader sense.

This comprehensive literature review was necessary to set the frame of the analysis developed in the next chapter. It will analyse the evolutions of policy & debates around the role of women in the military in Switzerland, to better understand and analyse the context and challenges of the contemporary debates around the inclusion of women in compulsory military service.

Women in the military: what does the broader literature say about policies and debates around women's roles in the military?

Looking at the broader literature about policy and debates around women's role in the military brings a broader perspective on the case of Switzerland, allowing us to compare and evaluate where Switzerland stands vis-à-vis countries facing comparable challenges.

There is a relevant body of literature that can be found on women in the military, but it is not frequently taken up in mainstream security studies and defence studies. The secretive nature of the military may prevent some research to be available to the general public. Nevertheless, the progressive increase of women's numbers in military ranks remains largely understudied. Contemporary debates found in the broader literature include but are not limited to whether women's inclusion in military forces influences efficiency and what are strategies to implement for successful integration. Sand & Fasting (2016) found military men perceive women as an asset in so far as they perform in a stereotypically feminine manner (social, organised and proper) while Cawkill et al. (2010) argue that contrary to previous views where women were kept out of close combat groups (the military's core function), no academic nor military proof can be found of a difference in the outcome. On the right strategy to implement to ensure unity between genders, Ellingsen (2016) argued that a mixed-gender dormitory training period had a positive influence on unity and mutual understanding, whereas Rones (2017) found that prolonged mixed dormitories reproduced gender stereotypes while a non-mixed training period allowed better performances for women.

The first debate that emanates is whether women's inclusion influences efficiency and outcome in military operations. Sand & Fasting (2016) examine masculinities in speech compared to the feminine experience of gender diversity in the Norwegian military. The researchers are sports sciences academics with a gender studies approach. By questioning military men's view on the integration of women into their battalions, the authors find that interviewees talk positively about having more women in the team while seeing them as more social, organised, and proper than men. This type of gender assumption, even if they do not necessarily qualify as negative, is

perpetuating gender stereotypes. Women's acceptance is likely to be linked to their conformity to a set of prerequisite gender stereotypes that do not relate to their function. Also, the researchers warn against the relative validity of those findings due to social desirability and interview bias that might exaggerate positive response, in a context where policy pushes toward a higher rate of women in ranks. Another finding is to expect women to bring improvement in the order, while the main task, which is defence, remains a men's function (p.10).

Despite the deep transformation of the requirements of military force after the cold war, where the emphasis is recently placed on flexibility and independence rather than physical strength, this idle remained in the common imaginary throughout the military ranks. The idea of being physically fit, which is a traditionally male attribute remains preponderant. Hegemonic masculinity seems to be perpetuated through the evolution of the military. As a consequence, women can only expect to be considered inferior hierarchically, since hegemonic masculine fitness is the dominant standard to conform to. This also impacts men who would not demonstrate the required features and will find themselves lower in the hierarchical value (Sand & Fasting, 2016, p.11).

Furthermore, Sand & Fasting find that women have to prove their legitimacy by performing beyond requirements, they experience a lack of respect, sexism, bullying, and harassment; they are not given equal opportunity to evolve professionally. Their physical capacity is frequently questioned beyond reason. These findings explain the reorientation of women out of the military and the gender gap in ranks statistics.

This literature suggests looking closely at the discourses and practices operated in the military in regards to gender to see in which terms women are described and expected to behave compared to their male comrades. From an FSS perspective, this paper shows a reproduction of gender stereotypes and gender roles rather than a transformation.

In 2010, The United Kingdom's ministry of defence commissioned their Defence Science and Technology Laboratory to find out if the presence of women in close combat teams was reducing effectiveness and outcome, as the 2002 report stated as the basis for enforcing restrictive legislation and keeping women away from combat positions. The authors based their research and conclusion on pre-existing academic work, surveys and field research. Contrary to the study of 2002 where women were said to be less physically capable, less likely to perform aggression and

psychologically different (less emotionally resilient), likely to disturb cohesion and more likely to commit faults or fail (Cawkill et al., p.7), the authors find no evidence of lowered efficiency, performance, morale, and unity in the (somewhat few) countries where women are integrated into a combat unit. The authors nonetheless underline the scarcity of data and analysis on an existing phenomenon. From an FSS perspective, this analysis shows the very recent evolution in how women were perceived as a threat to military efficiency by some high-ranked decision-makers, justifying the exclusion of women from combat roles. These two research underline the need for further research to cope with pertaining stereotypes.

The second existing debate is about what should be done for the successful integration of women in the military. This research stems from the gender studies department of the University of Oslo in collaboration with the social sciences of New York University, focusing on the Norwegian military. Hegemonic masculinity and sexual harassment toward women appear to be a standard of what Ellingsen et al. (2016) call solidarity masculinity in the military. While the common practice is to separate men and women, this study finds that shared sleeping rooms reduce sexual harassment, and create a gender-neutrality and solidarity between men and women. The authors however emphasise that these findings only have limited value, and take place as secondary socialisation in an already gender-equal society. While it could be a tool to overcome sexist behaviour and harassment, it might not alone constitute a sufficient mechanism to break the glass ceiling and gendered roles in the military.

Rones (2017), from the defence research establishments of Norway, refutes this hypothesis as a longer-term strategy. In a longer study of the same group, she finds that in the longer term, this organisational strategy reinforces gender stereotypes and prevents women from having a chance to succeed, when the first mistake is used as a proffer that they are not capable of performing the same tasks than men previously did. Rones finds that on the contrary, a short-term gender separation provides women with the opportunity to perform without judgement and acquire the necessary skills to perform their duties. This study does not contradict the possibility of a positive impact of a short-term mixed dormitory context but shows that it is not sustainable to attain gender equality and support women's performance in the military. These findings corroborate FFS's observations that military institutions tend to reproduce society's

bias and hierarchy (Gasztold, 2016, 2020). Rones finds that specific strategies must be implemented to ensure a maximisation of women's competencies in their desired field rather than in assigned inferior tasks.

Debates about the inclusion of women in the military that can be found in the broader literature suggest that negative gender stereotypes tend to be reproduced inside the military (Gasztold, 2020; Sand & Fasting, 2016) and that specific strategies need to be implemented to mitigate suboptimal integration (Rones, 2017). They also suggest that no evidence is found of a lesser efficiency when the integration of women is done successfully (Cawkil et al., 2010) In addition, gender studies academics indicate that the military benefits from a gender-sensitive strategy to increase overall performance (Cawkil et al., 2010).
The next section will examine which challenges and recommendations can be found in other comparable countries with compulsory mixed-gendered military service.

Brief examination: Israel and Norway and Sweden: What does the literature tell us about the inclusion of women in mandatory military service?

This section will review the policy developments and contemporary debates around the presence of women in military services in three comparable countries to see if and how they reflect the situation of Switzerland and can inform it. Whether women have been part of the military for a longer time (Israel) or due to more recent evolution (Norway, Sweden), similar challenges may be observed in their inclusion. They can be categorised around 7 axes:

1. women are allowed to join as long as the core function of combat remains a men's task;
2. women's bodies are problematic, they are different (male is the reference) and necessitate costly adaptation of supplies and facilities;
3. women's mind is different, they are peaceful and not prone to aggression;
4. women are seen as responsible for not being able to integrate fully into the military;
5. commandment's culture has to be altered due to women's presence;
6. they remain the weak group to protect, not the co-protector;

7. Status in society and citizenship is related to the military position, and more precisely the one of combat position;

About a dozen countries across the world are known to draft women and men for compulsory military services, with variations. Israel, Eritrea, Mali, Morocco, North Korea and Tunisia conscripts women and men in their military service. Norway, Sweden, Benin, Cape Verde and Mozambique, conscripts women and men are known to apply a "selective service", where they select the relevant personnel for their needs (Desilver, 2019). The selection of cases is imposed by the accessibility and reliability of sources. As it is still a minor phenomenon, in-depth studies are necessary. Also, the military is close-knitted to the State and its culture, therefore, necessitates comprehension of the general context of the country, which restrains the limits of this comparison.

Norway

Norway introduced universal conscription in 2015. Women were allowed to work in the military since 1985, but as late as 2015 they only represented 10 per cent of the total force (Norwegian Armed Forces, *in* Sand). Gender equality is a political goal in Norway, supported by legislation, participation quotas and general political culture (*Ibid*). Still, this gender balance has not broken through in the military. Sand & Fasting (2016) point out that most studies regarding the determinants for this imbalance focused on women's impressions during military service, rather than on men's behaviour and masculinity. This analyse draws attention to the importance of the frame for academic study and the recurrent tendency to search for the determinants of failures in women's "incompatibility". This framing is present in Switzerland as well (main analysis). Sand & Fasting find that men see the inclusion of women as non-problematic, provided that they conform to a specific set of characteristics (women should be more social, organised and proper). Also, the core fighting function of the military would remain a men's task.

Women started to be considered an asset for international missions of peace-keeping, in line with the eighties' peace-keeping campaigns of the UN. Up to 2015 upon

extending conscription to women, the military was bearing genderised norms and values.

According to Dalaaker (2017) in his speech to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the choice to extend conscription to women is twofold. The first argument is ethical: "in all parts of society women and men have - and should have - equal rights, obligations and opportunities"; the second is strategic: the military needs to recruit the most capable participants and cannot afford to exclude half of the countries' potential soldiers based on gender. But in practice, "while all Norwegian citizens must register, no one is forced to serve against their will; in any given year, only about one-in-six registrants actually end up being conscripted" (Desilver, 2019). Also, despite the fact that women are officially authorized to serve in the military on a voluntary basis since 1985 (Karamé, 2001), the recent introduction of women in the compulsory draft came with challenges.

This case seamlessly corresponds to the framework developed by Cook (2020) regarding women's inclusion in the US military counterterrorism agency. She observes that the discourse around the integration of women revolve around three main points: their democratic right to participate, the resource that they represent (50% of the population and their differences (operational and innovation potential, p.35). Cooks' framework consistently corresponds to the discourse analysed for all the countries considered in the present study. It highlights the potential for generalisation of findings regarding specific case studies in regards to gender dynamics in the military.

Colonel Odd Inge Botillen states that the three main challenges to this transformation relate to the necessity to adapt the equipment to female bodies, the transformation of facilities to ensure gender division, and the necessity to adapt organizational and leadership culture (2017). About the latter, the Non-profit SecurityWomen found that sexist behaviour, sexist language and sexualisation of female recruits are still a barrier to equality in the ranks (SecurityWomen, 2021) and might prevent women from continuing a career in the military after the compulsory period. It is relevant to point out how military representatives lessen the problematic sexist culture as an organizational challenge without acknowledging the symbolic violence of the interactions. These three arguments are found recurrently in other countries. The Norwegian defence department presents a determination to implement innovative

structures to follow through with its goal to reach better gender equality within the military.

Sweden

Sweden is considered a model of gender equality due to its political goal to reach such a balance. However, it is not yet achieved within the military institution. Sweden has implemented and maintained male compulsory military service for over a century (Persson & Sundevall, p.2). By doing so, the State has closely shaped citizenship, democracy and gender relations. Women were excluded from any military participation until 1975, when they were gradually allowed in restricted positions, following an implementation scheme to avoid rejection from their male counterparts. The general society rebranded itself as gender-equal through the implementation of equality policy, legislation and practices, but the military remained impermeable to these evolutions.

Sweden ended male compulsory military service in 2010 but reinstated it in 2017. On this occasion, women were incorporated into the drafted group from which suitable recruits would be selected (Desilver). This decision made Sweden the second country worldwide to recruit men and women for similar positions (Persson & Sundevall, p.1). As will be developed in the next point Israel does not equally draft men and women, contrary to common belief.

Persson and Sundevall (2019) find that the process of inclusion that started in the sixties was setting men as the standard and measuring women against it; that "Women service members were simultaneously perceived both as a problem and as a solution to a range of problems in the organization" and that "Women's 'different' bodies were considered problematic, while staff shortages and demands for specific personnel qualities rendered the 'woman soldier' a solution, in particular in relation to international missions."(p.1). The authors, who published the first academic research on gender in military conscription in Sweden, find that the debates on women's presence in the military followed the general political fluctuations of Sweden on gender, with the rebranding of the country as a model for gender equality in the seventies. Women were gradually allowed in non-combat positions, as combat remained intrinsically considered a man's duty (Persson and Sundevall, 2019, p.6).

The concerns raised by military departments were to question if women would fit in a "man's world", with concerns related to body type, strength, period, pregnancy, breastfeeding, and potential miscarriage. They depict the archetype where men are naturally suitable fighters when women are civilians to be protected.

Similarly to Norway, the challenges considered were also about equipment and facility. In regard to costs of researching the compatibility of certain positions with pregnancies (submariners, pilots), these positions remained reserved to men on the account of women's bodies being incompatible with this men's environment, Also, organizational and commandment culture was found to be sexist and early women recruits faced sexual harassment on a daily basis (Persson and Sundevall, 2019, pp.7-8). This paragraph highlights how women are perceived as a problem and a solution when it comes to including them in military service to solve recruits' number scarcity.

Israel

Israel has a reputation for equality in the military due to the enrolment of both men and women since its creation. However, the next paragraph will analyse how this is not representative of gender equality.

In 1948 when the State of Israel was created, the decision was made to incorporate all citizens into the military, regardless of gender. Despite its reputation, Tsahal, the Israeli people's army is far from being an equalizing institution. Citizens of 18 years of age, Jewish and Druze, are conscripted while Christians, Muslims and Circassians can volunteer. Men and women enrol for a different duration and stay in the reserve until different ages. Women are released from duty at 24 years old after 24 months of service, while men remain on duty until 50 years of age after serving for 32 to 48 months (Yuval-Davis, pp. 99-100). Besides, fundamentalists Jewish are de facto exempted from serving, as well as women getting married or pregnant.

The structure and distribution of roles within the military institution is representative of the patriarchal and gendered constructions of society, where women are assigned to a subordinate position, mostly in secretarial roles, in functions of care, support or training (Engell & Alam, 2019, pp.153-154, Goldstein, p.10). They are still representing the weakest part of the population that needs protection from stronger

men. Here, the recruitment of men and women did not challenge the protector/protected dichotomies until recent debates on the inclusion of women in combat battalions. Enloe argues that the incorporation of women in the military has more to do with a strategy to render them complicit and less likely to protest – the occupation of Palestine (Enloe, 2017, pp. 73-75).

In 1995, the IDF opened combat positions for women. According to Tsahal, 2,100 women were serving in combat units in 2016 (Tsahal, 2017). It is unclear from the available literature if they are effectively operating close combat soldiers or part of a unit that is assigned to it. The Israeli military expressed that they are aiming at integrating more women in combat positions as requested by some female soldiers, but do not expect a significant rise (*Ibid*). To this day, 91% of the positions are open to women but the exact number of female citizens who are actually filling the typically masculine position is unknown. Women in "masculine" military roles remain the exception.

Lomsky-Feder and Sasson-Levy find that compulsory military service functions as secondary socialization, where women learn their "marginal place in relation to the state, where citizenship is a gendered and hierarchic normative concept.

Scholars (Golan, Sjoberg, Sasson-Levy) converge on the finding that despite enrolling both women and men in compulsory military service, this institution is far from being egalitarian: "this central and socializing institution . . . is the quintessence of a patriarchal institution, reinforcing and perpetuating the stereotypical role of women as subordinate." (Golan *in* Sjoberg, p.197).

The status granted to participants in the military is determined by the relationship to combat, with combat soldiers being the ultimate reference. Besides, women are associated with a lack of aggressiveness and peace in general which is devaluated in Israeli society (Ibid). Golan argues that the gendering of the military "affects choices of security policies" (Ibid).

> *"The different recruitment structure shapes divergent contracts between women and the military. In a compulsory military, enlistment is by law, and service is*

perceived through the republican civil contract, which emphasizes contribution to the state. On the macro level, a compulsory military that enlists a significant portion of the population (such as in Israel and Turkey) represents and intensifies the militarization of citizenship and shapes the boundaries of civic belonging. Therefore, in militaristic societies such as Israel, the combat soldier embodies the ultimate citizen. As a result, even when women are conscripted, the linkage between militarism and citizenship creates a differential and hierarchical citizenship structure that benefits men." (Sasson Levy, p.139).

Besides, the "citizen" is a restricted Jewish-Zionist profile that erases many identities from Israeli citizenship (Sasson-Levy *in* Woodward & Duncanson). This element points out the selective nature of the conscription, which differentiates between citizens following a set of criteria and excluding the other. In other countries, it might draw the line between residents with temporary permits, asylum seekers, nationals, etc.

This section highlights the tendency of military institutions to reproduce the patriarchal hierarchy present in society, and that women are destined to occupy the same subordinate positions. When women are taking combat positions which are considered the core function of the military, it still creates debates and remains an exception.

This section has generated general findings pertaining to women's inclusion in compulsory military service by studying countries that present this structure from an FSS angle. These findings will be considered to analyse the situation in Switzerland.

Case study: Switzerland's military service

How have the policies around women's roles in the military evolved in Switzerland? What has prompted this?

This first section of the analysis will analyse the developments in policies and practice regarding the roles of women in the military, based on the theoretical framework discussed in the previous chapter. It will focus on the 20th century, where major international conflicts and political movements have impacted the social structure of the country. The very end of the 18th and the 19th centuries are left out due to feasibility, sources on women being scarce and difficult to access remotely. Despite extensive database searches where parliamentary debates are stored, women's concerns and aspirations are rarely mentioned due to their absence from federal political life. Switzerland's national archives might bring interesting material for further research. Nonetheless, the roles of women regarding the military at the beginning of the 20th century are considerably similar to the one contained in the policy adopted by Switzerland in 1874.

This section will analyse six key points to help better understand the contemporary situation and the challenges faced by the integration of women into military service:

1. To see if the creation of men's compulsory military service has created a hierarchy in citizenship and how women have actively and consistently participated in the functioning of the military service by providing free work and if so, how this is expressed in current military service;
2. second, how WWI prompted the creation of self-organised support networks for the support of the military's functioning, illustrating the interdependence of security practice and reliance on women's participation;
3. third, how women were officially drafted as military during WWII but as a sub-group;
4. fourth, how military women became an inconvenience for decision-makers by challenging narrative & organisation with their own presence;

5. fifth, how feminist movements and pro-integration movements failed to unite in the pursuit of political rights and further deepened the gap between women and the military;
6. sixth, how legislators finally gave women the right to participate on a voluntary basis but did implement basic necessary adaptations in commandment culture and equipment to allow women's realistic participation.

Creation of the Swiss confederation, citizen in arms: the division of citizenship

The creation of compulsory military service for men in Switzerland was concomitant to the period of the creation of the modern federal State as it still topographically and politically exists to this day. To put it briefly, Switzerland is a small country surrounded by large empires, hence the structure of citizens in uniform, because the country couldn't spare forces and the population was not big enough to have a professional army. Despite the military structure of Switzerland, the country has not once participated in armed conflict since the creation of the State in its contemporary form. Despite several periods of instability, occupation (French, 1798 to 1802, Kriesi & Trechsel, 2008, p.2), and internal war (Sonderbund, 1847, Ibid, p.3), modern Switzerland took shape in that period. In 1848, the first Federal Constitution was approved. In 1874 compulsory military service was introduced. The political fluctuations of the 19th century had no significant impact on the position of women. Kriesi & Trechsel wrote the English language reference academic book on the Politics of Switzerland, the construction of the country and its political institutions. It presents a detailed history of the political institutions, including the military for which where no mentions of women are made. It makes few mentions of women altogether, mostly to note their minority participation in political institutions in modern days. Their work only start citing women as part-takers of political institutions and public life with the right to vote in 1971.

This book presents a male-centred study and mistakes it for a neutral and universal representation of participation in political life and military institutions (Peterson, 1992; Sjoberg, 2009, 2018; Balzacq, 2016; Gsztold, 2016, 2020). It presents itself as the reference but only informs a minority of institutionalised actors of military and political institutions and leave-out a considerable part of the population. It participates to render women invisible as part of public life and entails that their lives in solely

contained in the domestic sphere. This book praises the stability of democracy in Switzerland through the coexistence of a pillarized society through religious, cultural and language differences, while in reality it describes the long-lasting oppression and renders women invisible, while they are refused civil rights and the acknowledgement of their essential participation to society.

In contrast, Andrée Weitzel (1979) wrote an analysis of the experience of women participating in the military since the beginning of the 20th century. Her decades of experience as a woman in the Swiss military and her rank make her a valuable and reliable source. She was commissioned by the government to write a report on the situation of women in the military, and she paints a very different picture of women's implication in political and military institutions.

Weitzel argues that upon its creation in Switzerland, the obligation to serve divided the population by gender (1979, p.222). Men were and remain compelled to attend military training, carry out refresher courses and remain part of the reserve army until their mid-thirties. By introducing this act, the State leaves in theory undefined the task of women (who are not granted any political rights or citizenship) but implies their active participation by performing unpaid and unrecognised work to support this military system. It bases the functioning of military service on pre-existing social structures that imply exploitation and invisibilisation of Women. They are expected to fulfil roles such as domestic work, reproductive and care work, replace men during their military duties, and provide maintenance services such as uniform creation, laundry, psychological support, food, etc. At that moment, the trust that women would uniformly and indisputably perform these tasks has based the current on values that expected women to act in this way (ibid). Weitzel points out the invisibilisation of women and their crucial role in security.

Weitzel can be considered an early Feminist Security Studies author as she develops the four central points that are recurrent in FSS literature and relevant to Switzerland. As Cook describes on FSS, Weitzel "locate(s) women in relations to security, considering agency, power relations and structures, and interrogating gender binaries" (Cook, 2020, p.49). Weitzel describes the gendered functions attributed through military gendered division (1), how it shapes citizenship (2), questions the repartition of security provider/securitized (3) and criticizes the simplistic conceptualisation of defence in place (4). Weitzel, like Lomsky-Feder & Sasson-Levy (2018, pp.1-2) argues that gender-based compulsory military service creates division in citizenship

and political rights, as those are considered a reward for participation in defence. Butler (1990) and Sjoberg (2018) add that the gendered constructions of femininity and masculinity are hierarchized. Balzacq further argues that this military division entails oppression, marginalization and domination strategies of women (2016). Weitzel preceded Cohn in observing that the realization of security is of interdependent nature. The military itself does not have a monopoly on security, just as citizens are interdependent on each other. This concept includes all non-typical roles that are not usually considered in security debates (Cohn, 2011).
The next paragraph will examine how WWI has prompted a transformation of this structure.

WWI and the self-organisation of women's network of military support activities

The threat of conflict between the neighbouring countries impacted the organisation of the society in Switzerland. Despite its proclaimed neutrality, the country was feeling the pressure of ongoing armed conflicts and it prompted several self-organised groups of women to provide free support services to the military.
According to Weitzel's report, during WWI, hundreds of women self-organised in networks to provide organised support to the army, on top of organising the replacement of men displaced in preventive defence positions.
The "lessive de guerre" [laudry of the military] and "foyer du soldat" [soldier's foyer] were two networks in which women who identified the need for support took care of the laundry and shelter of all military personnel, should they be displaced or not have relatives to support them with this task (ASMZ, 2019, Weitzel, 1979). Despite contributing to the functioning of the army in a way that was then more visible to the public, it was still done in a volunteer manner. Once it became apparent that the volume of work that these networks were executing necessitated bigger infrastructures, it was taken into the command of the military.

Weitzel also points out the importance of the behaviour and resistance of all women that were caring for families, the elderly, and replacing men on farms or other professional positions (Wetizel, 1978, p.224).
These initiatives that showed efficient crisis management started to set the path for the creation of the complementary service that would be opened by military

institutions a few years later, absorbing the efficient networks that women created to support the functioning of the military.

This shows on the one hand that women have been part of public life and actively participating in essential tasks for the functioning of the military service at least since the beginning of the 20th century which confirms Åse's findings that women do not passively beneficiate from security (2019). On the other hand, this shows that when the military acknowledge the necessity and utility of these networks, they decided to integrate them into the military to take control of those networks but did not make them fully part of the military. Instead, they invented a category of military support service where women would continue to work for free, and did not challenge the status quo.

The next paragraph will examine how this trend was furthered during WWII when women were fully enrolled in the military, but not granted the same status as their male counterparts.

WWII and the integration of women as military members

In the early stages of WWII, it appeared that the numbers of men in the military *stricto sensu* would be insufficient and the government called for women to volunteer. Weitzel did so and received training, took an oath and was posted in air-security positions during the war. She was in all respect a military but started receiving a stipend only after one year of enrolment.

The women's complementary service was created as a subsidiary service to the military. Andrée Weitzel operated in radar and plane detection. She remained active in the army after the end of the war. She was facing rejection and patriarchal behaviour (in a context where women were still refused political rights).

During WWII, women replaced displaced military men in all sorts of positions for which they were not prepared, and this without salary, financial compensation, or insurance. The farmer's wives also played a major role in working in place of their displaced husbands or replacing scarce workers to maintain food supplies. At the beginning of WWII, women were mobilised and integrated mostly in care but also as drivers. Women self-organised in networks, and were ready to mobilise themselves during WW2, including as drivers for ambulances and drivers using their personal

cars. All this work was unpaid, contrary to personnel incorporated in the military who are granted status, recognition, insurance and stipend. In 1939 women and men were called to volunteer in the Complementary service and thousands responded to that call, despite not having political rights. The situation called for the emergency reorganisation of society. The Women's complementary service was created but fighting remained a men's task, women were to be placed in any position to free up males to be mobilised. More than 18,000 women were instructed and became military members stricto sensu, trained in positions such as aeroplane detection and signalling (in land and mountains), communications, war canine section, publicity and propaganda, countryside security, arsenal, but also more typically gendered functions such as administration, kitchen, seamstress, soldier's shelter. Nevertheless, women had to pay for their own uniforms that arrived only two years later, they were unequipped for the harsh conditions of their posts in the mountains, spent months without being paid, and when the case, only a ridiculous amount. Weitzel highlights the strong camaraderie relationship, feeling of belonging and strength that derived from these years. While Goldstein (2001) argues that war and gender shape each other, the commanding department of the military made sure that women's more visible participation was not going to influence gender norms, considering that the whole economy was relying on women's free work.

The national fund for soldier support commissioned the movie Gilberte de Courgenay which became a reference, and portray the true story of a young woman performing psychological support, and care work on top of providing food to entire regiments. She was portrayed as selfless, not complaining, hiding her emotions, and caring for others' happiness before hers (Goldberg, 2014). This contrast reveals a political agenda to maintain women in a subsidiary position that will become even more visible in the post-war years.

Post-war: a narrative conflict

At the end of the WWII conflict, w omen's complementary Service Chief Schudel was ordered to write a proposition to the Federal counsel and Military department to permanently integrate this service into military functions. The medical contingent was transferred to the Red Cross organisation. Male politicians took years of debates to determine the future of military women that now appeared as a burden to them

(Weitzel, 1979). Many women who participated in military effort feared a situation similar to post WWI, where the participation of women was quickly forgotten and they were asked to regain housework positions, despite their qualifications, experience and valuable wartime contribution. (Nabholz-Haidegger, p.21).

The delay and exclusion of women in the discussion (due to their exclusion of political instances) reveals a determination to maintain the narrative of gender-based hierarchy in Swiss society. Indeed, the central argument to refuse civil rights to women in Switzerland was that it was direct retribution for the participation in national defence through military service. Naturally, the presence of 18,000 women in military functions became a headache to politicians who were dedicated to enforcing the status quo. In 1971, men finally voted on granting women the federal right to vote (it was already granted on the communal and cantonal levels in some regions such as Vaud, Kriesi & Trechsel, 2008, p.56).

In 1979, Weitzel was commissioned to write a report on the possibility of integrating women into the military. Her report proposed 18 different models, where most of them incorporated women as civilian peacemakers, corresponding to the 80s women, peace, and security trend. The reception of her work, though commissioned by the state was difficult and it took two years for her work to be translated to be available in German to other parts of the political arena (Switzerland has four official languages, but the majority of the federal political life takes place in Bern in german). The women's group “Combattantes pour la Paix” [female peace fighters] rejected this report through public intervention, seeing it as a risk of the subjection of women in a militarised world where they would be dominated by sexist military males.

In parliamentary debates, Amalia Christinat mentions that the possibility to incorporate women in the military was de facto a decision concerning women only, and asked for this decision to be voted by women only instead of decided by male high-ranks discussion behind closed doors. Her request was left unanswered by the parliament (Christinat, 1983).

In 1986, the Women’s Service of the Army which was previously a subsidiary service (complementary women’s service) becomes part of the military.

Failure to unite: pro-integration vs feminists

While military women were advocating for their recognition and raising their ratio, feminist movements were demonstrating for the obtainment of civil rights and the amelioration of their status in society, aiming for equality. However, these two types of movements did not join forces and some feminist movements perceived the work of Weitzel and other military women as a threat to women's autonomy. They saw the integration in the military of women's self-organised support networks as an act of invisibilisation of their work, taking away a certain autonomy (Nabholz-Haidegger, p.21).

Feminist movements saw the integration of women into compulsory military service as additional domination by macho males instead as an opportunity for equality.

In the summary of the political year of 1980, it is explained as an unfortunate confluence of militant groups that perceived each other as hostile, even though the women's sections of major political parties expressed their support for an extension of the roles of women in defence. The journal posits that the Weitzel report was perceived as pro-military and patriarchal, while feminist movements sought freedom from these institutions for themselves and their male co-citizens, in unity with peace movements (Année Politique Suisse, 1981).

Weitzel describes herself as an advocate of women's participation in public society, in her case through participation in military service. She describes her early years in service during the war as challenging and difficult but also fulfilling and a source of a lifelong bond between her and her comrades, as well as a sense of belonging to the country. The word feminist is not used in her publications, but she was an open advocate for equal opportunities for women (Weitzel, 1979). From an FSS perspective, her position can be analysed as secondary socialisation into male gendered norms where she managed to incorporate enough male gendered values (strength, resistance to stress, to harsh conditions, Bolliger, 1984) to be (relatively) accepted by her peers in her early years, while also portraying stereotypical female traits (gentle, kind, caring for other, smiling, Bolliger, 1984) in her later career to avoid further challenging the military institution.

This failure to unite between pro-military integration and feminist groups is symptomatic of the difficulty to bring about change in Switzerland and the necessity of a clear theoretical background coupled with efficient communication to engender unity.

In 1983, the feminist journal “Frauenfrage” questioned the position of military decision-makers toward women. They deplore the inferior status of women in the military and further question if making military service compulsory for women and men will result in women having to force themselves into masculine roles, with men remaining the reference. In contrast, the authors advocate for restructuring and transformation of the military service where roles could be reinvented, not only allowing women to fit into the masculine hegemonic model (Belser et al., 1983). This interrogation rightfully echoes FSS scholar's work (Balzacq, 2016; Peterson & Sundevall, 2019) and the takeaways of the analyse of other gender-neutral compulsory military services (Norway, Sweden, Israel) where women have to adapt to a male-dominated environment that proves hermetic to changes prompted by women’s inclusion.

In 1995, after years of pressure on the government, the pacifist movement obtained the creation of civil service for conscientious objectors who refused to carry weapons, and the momentum was used to grant women the right to volunteer for military service.

Legally equal

As of 2004, women were legally given the right to volunteer for all positions, should they meet the minimum requirements necessary for the position. To this day, they only account for 0.9% of military ranks (Cocher, 2021).

This section brought up the history and challenges that lie under the present debate to make women part of the target population required to perform military service. The second section will analyse the position of the different actors, their arguments and what assumptions are part of the debate.

Contemporary debates and issues around the inclusion of women in compulsory military service

The second section of this analysis will apply the FFS theoretical framework to analyse the contemporary debates and policies in regard to the inclusion of women in the military.

Switzerland has been engaging with the debate of women and military service on a recurring basis during the period analysed in this research, namely from WWI until the present day. This is largely due to the political and social nature of Switzerland.
The country functions with a democratic consensus government, where decisions are debated between political parties that represent most politico-religious groups present in society before being subjected to the popular vote (Kriesi & Trechsel, 2008). This political system allows for most of society to be heard and included but results in a notable slowness for change if an agreement cannot be found. Besides, bringing about political change requires significant resources from the population that wishes to subject a topic to vote. As a result, the question of women's participation in the military service has been brought into the political arena in a cyclic manner, resulting either in gradual changes or in being dismissed (Service Citoyen, 2022a). It is also in the nature of this political system that an upcoming votation gives space and attention to the debate in the media, but that once the momentum of the votation is passed the actors engaged in the conversation will remain relatively silent until the next cycle.
A media analysis shows that the debate is also occasionally revived by public statements from military officials or the ministry of defence but mainly without creating momentum for the evolution of the debate (Moser, 2022; DeVore, 2015).

According to recent polls, the Swiss population seems to be evolving towards a positive view of the inclusion of women in the military.
Nevertheless, this change triggers the fundamental gendered division of society as Weitzel noted in the '70s in her report about the inclusion of women in the military (Weitzel, 1978) and Bondolfi in her law dissertation research on the fundamental unconstitutionality of such a division (DeVore, 2015), the gendered hierarchy in the society in Switzerland. Both authors raise attention to the fact that this division has been justified on a presupposed natural division between protectors and protected, and

that it shaped the hierarchy of citizenship in Switzerland. The following paragraph will analyse the discourse, policies and debates that remain to this day around the question of the inclusion of women in the military according to the FSS theoretical framework developed in precedent chapters.

Since 2004, all functions and divisions are open to women (Defensio, 2021). In practice, in 2021 only 1516 women participate to military service which represents 0.9% of the forces. In its communication, the department of defence announces that "Armée 2030", the frame guideline for the direction of the military in the coming years announces that they want to reach 10% of women.

This section will analyse the contemporary debates from an FSS perspective as well as the diverse actor's positions.

Inclusion where

Compulsory military service plays a fundamental role in Swiss society. All men who are judged fit for the task must participate in military training once they turn 18 years old. There are a few exceptions such as health conditions or choosing to participate in civil service (a rather recent option), but the vast majority of young Swiss men complete eighteen weeks of military service and six iterations of an annual refresher course. This compulsory tradition is considered shapes men and society but at the exclusion of women. As the military service shapes men and society, their values and behaviour, it excludes women and is based on domination, control, hyper-masculinity, the inferiority of women, etc. Swiss society presents a strict dichotomy based on constructs of gender (Oakley, 1972), with a heteronormative and patriarchal structure (Monay, 2017). While this might appear as a superficial take on the research context, scholars (Peterson, 1992; Sjoberg, 2009, 2018; Balzacq, 2016) insist on the importance of considering that the State is a male-centred institution that governs society.

As the next paragraph will develop, multiple actors are currently discussing the inclusion of women as part of compulsory military service or compulsory civil service. The debates revolve around the question if women should be compelled to serve in the military service, and if so under what status, or should the military transform to create civil service and include women in the latter?

Key actors

The main actors that are currently active in the debates or will influence the outcome around the inclusion of women in the military are the military decision-makers (high-ranked officials), the association of military officers, the department of defence (DDPS), the Citizen Service initiative group, the Swiss population and academic researchers. The next paragraphs will analyse their discourse and positioning from an FSS perspective.

Within the military, a plurality of positions

In 2020, the Swiss military launched a campaign called "security, also a women's business" that aimed at increasing the number of women who volunteer in the military service (Armée Suisse, 2020). The military department claims that its goal is to have 10% of women in the military by 2030, while it is currently at 0.6% (*Ibid*).

This campaign is visible on the website of the military and contains text, pictures and video. The content is directed at women between 18 and 24 years old. The recruitment website presents a selection of the characteristics that the military requires from women: "ready for a challenge, be team-oriented, sportive and fit, know what you want and want something new", it also states that being fit, capable to focus and well coordinated are necessary assets for women. In comparison, the text destined to men explains that they will all be incorporated unless they show serious physical or mental health issues that might prevent them from being able to perform without deteriorating their or others' health. The main content of the campaign is composed of video clips portraying women who enrolled in the military in a cinematographic war-like environment. The voiceover that expresses what women can expect in the military states: "I work as hard as men, providing the same performances", "of course women stick out but we all have to perform in the same way, there is no special treatment for woman and successfully executing the mission is what matters", "many think that women cannot be in combat position and I had to prove myself more than man", "military taught me to organise and care for others", "women are in separate dormitories which I was uncomfortable with because this special treatment entails organisational challenge for the military", "nevertheless I was always welcomed and accepted by male comrades", "women in the military are confronted with major

prejudices, some men are sceptical and do not trust me", "civilians judge me and say that I am a tomboy but people close to me know it isn't true" (Armée Suisse, 2020). According to the relevant literature cited in the preceding chapters, it appears through the communication strategy of the military that the status quo remains, and should women decide to volunteer to do military service, they will be confronted with stereotypical rejection and it is their responsibility to adapt. Indeed, the male body, behaviour and characteristics are the norm that women will have to conform to. The measuring unit to which women have to conform is a strong man, aggressive and obedient to hierarchy. As the presence of women will challenge certain naturalization of domination structure due to biological criteria (men are strong protectors and women are weak, Balzacq, 2016), they will have to mould their behaviour into the ones of their male peers. Women's body is seen as different and needs to be separated physically from men. In this case, women carry the responsibility of their difference as well as the price that the military structure has to pay for their presence by providing separate facilities (Persson & Sundeval, 2019).

The experience of Norway and Sweden shows that women who enrol in compulsory military service tend to be confronted with an institution and male peers who are hermetic to the evolution of the gendered distribution of roles and that it requires a conscious strategy from the military to ensure that women can perform in the military without having to conform to male stereotype and face a level of rejection that would drive many to leave the force.

"The defence ministry speculates that few (women) end up in the military for lack of knowledge about what the institution has to offer (Wong Sak Hoi, 2022). This posture is characteristic of what Sand & Fasting (2016) describe as the incompatibility of women to military service. Whether it is because they lack knowledge about what the military can bring them, or lack motivation, strength resistance, the discourse is only directed to women's incapacity to integrate themselves into the military institution, rather than to question which factors keep them away from it. In the present case, their right to join as a volunteer is recent and remained anecdotal.

In contrast to the statement expressed by the ministry of defence, the status of military

uniform and equipment might present a different angle on the preparedness of the military to accommodate the presence of women in its ranks. In 2021, Armasuisse (who provides the military equipment in Switzerland) announced that they were test-proofing equipment adapted to gender, since to this day women use men's equipment for clothing, shoes, bulletproof vest, backpacks, etc. (Swissinfo, 2021). If an ill-adapted uniform cannot be the sole reason for the lack of success of the military to recruit women, it is emblematic of the mindset where women have to adapt, without complaints. Two military women who remain anonymous answered the journal "Femina" and expressed the contempt that they are facing when discussing their uniform issues with the armoury, where they are told that the military is not a beauty contest (Courrier International, 2021).

Within the military domain, another position can be found in the Swiss Society of Officers. This political group formed by Swiss officers does not make decisions within the military but they influence the political debate and the military decision-makers. They issued a statement in 2021 stating their view on the matter by saying that the Swiss military ranks are too low and that the country cannot afford to waste 50% of its potential. They support that it is time for men and women to have equal rights and duties (Cocher, 2021). From an FSS perspective, they view women as the problem and the solution simultaneously. The number in ranks are too low because women were perceived as different and therefore not participating, and drafting women is also the solution since they represent a considerable reserve of citizens currently exempted from the draft (Persson & Sundevall, 2019, pp. 7-8).

In 2021, the federal department of defence (military institution) stated that they were considering four new models of military services which would include current debates (women's participation and more civil service) and necessary evolutions (new types of threat, digitisation), three of which include an obligation to serve for women (Cocher, 2021). This statement shows an acknowledgement of the current debate but does not represent a guarantee of evolution. These topics have been discussed in public and parliamentary debates in the past already but did not lead to modifications (Service Citoyen, 2022a). These models are similar to the proposition launched by the group Citizen Service, but there is no collaboration between the two parties (DDPS, 2022; Rotten, 2022)

In the meantime, the department of defence hosts a focus group in charge of analysing the situation and will provide several conclusions in the future. In march 2022 they published a first report in which they analyse the current situation. On the one hand, they state that the extension of the duty to serve in the military would only derive from an attempt to improve gender equality, but on the other hand, it is the title of the report to look into the option of tapping into the national reservoir of women to solve the problem of decreasing number of recruits.

In their preliminary analyse, they find that imposing civil service or military service duties on women would be adding a function that keeps them away from the workforce (which is considered problematic with maternity leave in Switzerland) and away from their domestic responsibility (where they are irreplaceable according to this analyse). It takes the stand of trying to prevent women from being even more disadvantaged than they already are due to maternity leave (DDPS, 2022a, p.14).

Balzacq (2016) argues that gender construction in all forms, including and importantly the way it is structured in the military results in oppression, marginalisation & domination strategies against women. In that regard, the current statement that claims that women should first acquire equal rights in other more important aspects of their lives (such as equal pay, shared parental duties, and domestic labour) can be analysed as an instrument that maintains domination and a false argument for equality.

This argumentation highlights that women are still expected to fulfil stereotypical functions such as reproduction (it entails that most women do make children), and parental functions (the question of who replaces men during their military service is rarely mentioned). This highlights the interdependence nature of security (Cohn, 2011), where the military tends to pursue a narrative in which it is an autonomous and hermetic institution.

It is considered that the separation of the military on the basis of sex is a necessity and will therefore engender supplementary costs (DDPS, 2022a, p.29)

Citizen's Service, changing the borders

Switzerland's political system allows citizens to propose modifications to the constitution or discussions on important topics in society, provided that they can prove the relevance of their topic (by collecting signature which shows a common interest of a certain portion of the population). Currently, the organisation Citizen's Service is collecting signatures to propose a modification of the military and civil service.

Their proposition is to enforce equality, solidarity, and social cohesion through the implementation of an obligation to serve for all genders, whether in military service, civil service, civil protection, or other recognized organisations of public interest.

This proposition challenges the gendered construction of citizenship in Switzerland on several points. First, it will extend the responsibility to serve in the military to women, questioning the dichotomy between protector and protected.

For SC, men and women would be obliged to perform a citizen service, enforcing gender equality. When looking at the example of Israel in particular and more recently Norway and Sweden, there is no evidence that suggests that the integration of women would result in gender equality if no measures are implemented to ensure a transformation of military culture. As demonstrated in chapter 3, military institution tends to reproduce society's hierarchy and sexism (QUOTE)

Service Citoyen aims at softening the military borders while rethinking the service duty primarily as a service to the community and the environment by putting "the Human & nature at the centre of what we care for" while keeping the military service as a necessity to the provision of security. Switzerland shows to be strongly attached to having a clear core group of military, and previous addition to its core functions was organised as parallel services ("Croix Rouge" [red cross], "Service féminin complémentaire" [womens' complementary service], "Service Civil" [Civil Service]). Constraining all the population to a service results in high numbers of available citizens whose majority will effectuate a civil service, making the military service a secondary institution. While FSS does not provide specific tools to analyse the likelihood of this transformation, it can help assess that the military decision-makers have been extremely protective of their institution and hermetic to change, which allows expressing doubts about the success of such a proposition. It will require a

strong political message and understanding between all major decision-makers of society.

SC projects that “each Swiss resident can contribute to the common good, take responsibilities & participate according to their capacity, including the ones currently excluded from the system”. This statement includes the preconception that the population that does not effectuate a military service does not contribute to society, or at least is not recognized for it. Considering the political goal of the project, it is safe to assume that the goal is to re-evaluate other types of participation in society, providing a frame, status and recognition for it. The literature in FSS and examples studied earlier show that this transformation should be coupled with a specific gender-equalizing policy to avoid the reproduction of a gendered hierarchy.

And last, SC aims to establish a service that creates links and reinforces the feeling of belonging in society. It would dilute the hierarchy and citizenship that is reserved for a core men group or citizen in arms to the entirety of the population.

Government

The executive body (Federal Council) gave a mandate to the ministry of defence to propose a solution to the decrease in numbers by 2024, and they say to be considering the inclusion of women in the military draft as a potential solution. The possibility of drafting women is prompted primarily by the lack of recruits and not by a political wish to equalize society (Wong Sak Hoi, 2022).

There are risks when targeting to include a certain percentage of women in an institution without conducting a root analysis of its structure.

Kanter (1970) describes that when female tokens are placed in an organisation to cope with gender disbalance, these women are experiencing high levels of stress, isolation, and lack of network and have to prove themselves more than men to justify their position. Her field research was conducted in the industry but the highly masculinized environment is similar enough to extend to military organisation. She stresses that women (or any subgroup) have to reach a critical point of 15 to 20 per cent of the total group for the institution to evolve into a more gender-neutral one. Also, FSS researchers like Sylvester (2010) state that there is a tendency to automatically associate women with peace, and also reproduce gendered hierarchy by directing

women towards typically gendered positions such as nurse, cook, logistics administrative support (Wong Sak Hoi, 2022).

In 2015, the previous minister of Defence Ueli Maurer was arguing during parliamentary debate that more women should be conscripted to "motivate the troops", as their exotism in the military might attract the attention of men (DeVore, 2015). There is little to say about this position from an FSS perspective, except that sexism and sexualisation of women is a common and tolerated posture for military officials to express, illustrating the common military environment.

Population (because they will vote on it)

In Switzerland, the population can bring important topics to the discussion in the political arena through the instrument called the popular vote, and the government is required to submit major changes to the national vote (the ones affecting the Federal Constitution). While it is considered a powerful instrument of democracy, it is also slowing down evolution at times. The outcome of the vote is always unpredictable and bringing about major changes requires considerable efforts in communication, funds, and successful political figures to unite a pillarised population towards change (Kriesi & Trechsel, 2008).

In that regard, the population represents a major actor in the inclusion of women in the military. A vast range of factors that cannot be summarised here come into consideration to predict the outcome of such a vote.

Academia

There is scant academic research on gender roles in the military service in Switzerland, let alone normative academia. There is however a relevant publication from a social science and gender studies research that corroborates the analysis provided in the present research.

Monay (2018) finds that currently women who volunteer for the military service in Switzerland get socialised to the masculine domination: "Indeed, confronted to this monosexual and heteronormative universe, they have to deal with a frame that portrays military women as "misfits" or even "intruders". Through ethnographic observations and interviews, (she) aims to analyze how they legitimize their place in

the ranks of the military while incorporating the global domination of men over women." (p.45). Her findings corroborate Egnell & Alam's conclusion on the effects of a patriarchal and sexist military environment in Israel: "the young people enlisting in the army at age eighteen serve for at least two years, during the period of their lives when they are most impressionable in regard to the formation of their social identity, in general, and their gender identity, in particular. Thus, the policies and practices of inclusion and exclusion of women, the meaning attached to them, and the methods of coping used by women and policymakers go far beyond the period of military service, and as such, these policies and practices play a central role in shaping Israeli society" (2019, p.153).

Szvircsev Tresch, who teaches military sociology at the military academy, regularly issues surveys about the population's opinion on topics pertaining to the military and finds that in 2021, 67% of the respondents were in favour of compulsory military service for men and women which is 14 points higher than in 2015 (Szvircsev Tresch, 2021).

The point of the present research is not to speculate on the determinants of this evolution, but it might be signs of generalised interest in the topic.

The present chapter has looked into the debates and policy evolutions that led to the contemporary discussion on the inclusion of women in the military and analysed it from an FSS perspective. The next chapter will synthesise the many findings to answer the research question, consider the limitations of the present analyse and propose recommendations.

Conclusion

This research has asked how policy around women's roles in the Swiss military evolved, and what issues and debates remain around women's inclusion in the military today.

The analyse of the evolution of policies and practise from an FSS angle reveals an invisibilisation of women from the military where they have been active as soldiers as early as WWII, and in support positions (care, logistics, maintenance, social work) directly linked and organised in the fringe of the military since WWI, but most importantly as the tenant of main labour providers in society, replacing men in all functions that allowed their displacement for military duties in addition to their own responsibilities.

The delay and exclusion of women in the discussion (due to their exclusion of political instances) reveals a determination to maintain the narrative of gender-based hierarchy in Swiss society. Indeed, the central argument to refuse civil rights to women in Switzerland was that it was direct retribution for the participation in national defence through military service. Naturally, the presence of 18,000 women in military functions became a headache to politicians who were dedicated to enforcing the status quo. The military service shaped gender identity and their hierarchy. The exclusion of women from military service shapes their subsidiary relationship with the State and a hierarchy in citizenship.

The analysis shows that the military and the state in Switzerland is male centred (Peterson, 1992; Sjoberg, 2009), that women were prevented from gaining the status of actor in the military practice despite filling that role, and that the military is highly dependent on women's unpaid labour. The analysis of women's presence and how it is reported to the public show that women comply with gendered norms rather than challenge them to be accepted in the military.

The gap to bridge in regards to gender equality in Switzerland is considerable compared to countries with similar military systems. It is significant of the long-lasting oppression and invisibilisation of women who were refused basic civil rights until the seventies and the acknowledgement of their essential participation in society.

In Switzerland, the gendered functions attributed through military gendered division shape citizenship, question the repartition of security provider/securitized and criticise

the simplistic conceptualisation of defence in place. Weitzel, like Lomsky-Feder & Sasson-Levy (2018, pp.1-2) argues that gender-based compulsory military service creates division in citizenship and political rights, as those are considered a reward for participation in defence. Butler (1990) and Sjoberg (2018) add that the gendered constructions of femininity and masculinity are hierarchised. Balzacq further argues that this military division entails oppression, marginalization and domination strategies of women (2016). Weitzel preceded Cohn in observing that the realization of security is of interdependent nature. The military itself does not have a monopoly on security, just as citizens are interdependent on each other. This concept includes all non-typical roles that are not usually considered in security debates (Cohn, 2011).

Early feminists questioned the position of military decision-makers toward women. They deplore the inferior status of women in the military and further question if making military service compulsory for women and men will result in women having to force themselves into masculine roles, with men remaining the reference. In contrast, the authors advocate for restructuring and transformation of the military service where roles could be reinvented, not only allowing women to fit into the masculine hegemonic model (Belser et al., 1983). This interrogation rightfully echoes FSS scholar's work and the takeaways of the analyse of other gender-neutral compulsory military services (Norway, Sweden, Israel) where women have to adapt to a male-dominated environment that proves hermetic to changes prompted by women's inclusion. However, there is no evidence showing that the participants of the contemporary debate has taken these findings into consideration and prepared a strategy to successfully integrate women into the military.

While according to recent polls, the Swiss population seems to be evolving toward a positive view of the inclusion of women in the military, there is little to no sign of preparedness from the department of defence to implement the necessary restructuring to make such a transition possible.

The failure to unite between feminist and pro-inclusion movements in the eighties is symptomatic of the difficulty to bring about change in Switzerland and the necessity of a clear theoretical background coupled with efficient communication to engender unity. It highlights the diversity of stakeholders that needs to be united in order to engender institutional change.

The findings of Sand & Fasting regarding the Norwegian military service stated that women have to prove their legitimacy by performing beyond requirements, they

experience a lack of respect, sexism, bullying, and harassment; they are not given equal opportunity to evolve professionally. Their physical capacity is frequently questioned beyond reason. This literature suggests looking closely at the discourses and practices operated in the military in regards to gender to see in which terms women are described and expected to behave compared to their male comrades. The same findings were derived from the study of the case of Switzerland. From an FSS perspective, this paper shows that the military creates a reproduction and reinforcement of gender stereotypes and gender roles rather than a transformation of norms that gives a chance to women to perform at their best capacity.

Limitations, recommendations

This study was limited by the scarcity of sources accessible remotely and a more in-depth qualitative study within the military might give practical indications on the strategies to adopt for a more inclusive military system. The resources available in terms of language and time have also limited this study to a Eurocentric approach. It would have been interesting to look into communist countries and more distant cultures. All sources remain profoundly heteronomative, also assuming gender binarity and staying hermetic to recent societal movements and demands in terms of gender norms.

Gender construct holds a key position in the military organisation, determining the male/female dichotomy with attributes such as protector/protected, strong/weak, and public/private. This construction has been observed in the military culture of the four countries reviewed in the present study and also appears in the broader literature reviewed on military studies, defence studies, and FFS. The argument behind this gendered organisation is a reference to a "natural" and "traditional" order.
However, in 2017, Price et al. found that the Birka chamber grave of a Viking war chief contained the body of a female and not a male as it was assumed to be since its excavation in 1878. The 10th-century high-ranked warrior was thoroughly studied over the 20th century and held an important role in research and history in Sweden (Price et al., 2019). The finding that this warrior was female generated intense public debate and scepticism, leading to second thorough research to settle the case. This scientifical discovery, albeit exceptional, questions the roots of the contemporary

gender division in the military in Sweden and elsewhere by challenging its naturalist arguments. While such discovery does not lead to a spontaneous reconsideration of gender division and gender hierarchy, it does advocate for the revision of societal norms.

In the case of Switzerland, the national narrative played a central role in the construction of the state and *de facto* societal and marital norms. The study of the Weizel report already provides a different testimony on the participation of women in the military than what the military institution provides as their official history. In-depth historical research could provide a richer history of women in Switzerland. To further expand the present research, it would be relevant to study the gendered division in swiss society from an economic perspective to deepen the understanding of the benefits that were drawn from the exclusion of women from political rights and recognition in military participation, as it restricted the volume of citizens that were entitled to financial compensation for their work (salary, stipend, insurance).

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