

CHALLENGES AND PERSPECTIVES IN WOMEN'S INTEGRATION INTO THE ARMED FORCES

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Abstract: Military operations in the modern world require versatility and variety of qualifications and resources that would secure peace and stability, as well as ensuring that peoples' needs are met in terms of security. Male and female needs and priorities often have different perspectives and can only be met through equal participation in the decision-making, policy-creating and enacting processes. Therefore, institutions need to generate conditions and opportunities for full integration of women, and thus enable the creation and enforcement of jointly created security policies. Such security structures will undoubtedly be better equipped to respond to the variety of security challenges, while contributing to a transformation of the military's image as an institution of war and violence, to an image of a peace-building institution. With these objectives in mind, security sector reforms need to be mindful of gender equality, as a crucial component of any democratic society.

This paper outlines the current state of women's integration into the European countries' armed forces, the challenges women face in the recruitment and integration processes, as well as the opportunities and the necessity of their participation on a more effective, more substantive level.

Keywords: Armed forces, women, integration, challenges, roles.

Introduction

Even though the gender representation analyses throughout the world population show that women and men equally share the world, still questions arise regarding the equal representation and opportunities for women and men in many spheres of social life. We witnessed how women fought for their rights and fair representation in many professional spheres and how the division of male and female professions loses its significance at a very rapid pace. This has allowed women to take their place even in those spheres which were traditionally considered men's, while achieving top results in those professions, developing and being elected to accountable positions. However, in these professions, they face many challenges and obstacles. This is most visible in the military profession because their participation in the armed forces and making decisions in the military structures is still disputable and wrapped up in controversy and polemics. There are many conventions, declarations, agreements, laws, and regulations which determine and regulate the rules for equal representation of women in all spheres, including the security sphere. But how much

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effort do countries put into implementing them in their institutions and observing them? How much are the modern armies open for women and their equal participation and roles together with men? Is there progress in the integration of gender equality principles in the armed forces of modern societies? Analysis is needed to answer these and many other questions regarding gender integration in the modern armed forces, while the answers are necessary because through them, we can get a clear picture of the social representation in the armed forces which further implies the level of removing the principal structural social inequality – the discrimination.

1. Overview of the movement of percentile representation of women in the armed forces

From a historical point of view, warfare has never been only a men's thing. Even though women generally didn't directly participate in the battles, they always had a specific role in the clashes. From the Old Testament to the rebels against Napoleon, there were only a few rebellions where women didn't have a distinct if not decisive role. However, throughout the history of warfare and armies, women got a more important role only in the nineteenth century. The beginning of the participation of women in the modern armed forces is related to the Crimean War in 1853 and the fascinating role of Florence Nightingale in the nursing of injured soldiers, which resulted in the foundation of the British Army Nursing Service in Britain's military in 1881. With this, the medical care of soldiers was institutionalized which is the basis for further development of specialized; exclusively women's help military units. During the First World War, the women's support roles expanded because of the freeing of the men from the fighting roles. In 1916, the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps was established where, for the first time, women entered the military service, with uniform and military salary, in the role of drivers, telephonists, cooks, administrative workers, nurses, and similar more challenging roles. This way of inclusion of women in the armed forces is applied in the American army in the First World War, through which (but not in it) 33.000 women served voluntarily, but without any war privileges. Most of the women participated in the Army and Navy Nurse Corps (22.000) as support units apart from the regular military composition, as well as in the role of administrative workers. (Miller, 1995.5) The more massive inclusion of women in the American army can be seen in the Second World War because of the release of men from fighting. In the support women's units between 1942 and 1943, there were 350.000 women in different non-combating roles, including pilot roles. (Mojkos, 1990. Miller, 1995, Harrel and Miller, 1997). In Great Britain, on the other side, 215.000 women were included in the Auxiliary Territorial Service in different support roles. (Jessup, 1996, 87). This means that, aside from the more massive inclusion of women in the armed forces, their roles are secondary and as a replacement for the men released from fighting roles. A gradual removal of the number of restrictions related to the participation of women in the armed forces and their roles in them was finally starting to take place only after the abolition of the military duty and the transition to wholly voluntary and professional participation in the armed forces (by the end of the '60s and throughout the '70s). A huge number of military duties became available to women, however, the participation restrictions for women in the military duties remained. The situation is similar with the military organizations where the level of social exclusivity/corporatism of the military profession is less expressed like, for example, in the military organizations of Israel and China. (Perlmutter, 1997)

With the transformation of the armed forces into professions (after the Cold War), the opportunity for women's participation in military organizations has increased, and the gender integration in the duties in them also increased. Despite the decline of the armed forces present in almost all NATO member states, the percentile participation of women in them has increased by 2020 from 30.000 in 1961 to 288.000 in 2001 (Nielsen, 2001). However, there are significant discrepancies between the states regarding the gender integration of the duties in the military organizations, so, in some countries, the combating roles are available to women (for example, Norway, Denmark), whereas in some these roles are restricted. (Smeric, 2004, 190).

In the period between 2001 and 2016, the most significant change in the percentile participation of women in the armed forces of the NATO member-states is happening in 2002 when the participation increased from 6.1% to 8.8%. This change can be related to the new security challenges after the terrorist attacks of September 11. From 2002 until 2016 there was a small, but continuous increase in the percentage of women's participation in the armed forces, which was 10.9% (FINABEL, 2018). There are huge differences between European countries in the percentage of women's representation in the armed forces, from 2.8% in Australia to 20% in Hungary. Some authors (Segal, 1998, Carreiras, 2008, Pinch et al, 2008) believe that these discrepancies are a result of the differences in the social structure, military variables and cultural factors in the countries. The social structure is proportionally connected with the women's participation in the labour market in the civil sectors, the level of male unemployment which reduces the opportunities of women's opportunities of joining the army as well as the women's housekeeping responsibilities (inversely proportional). The military variables are admitting national security (the increased threats increase the military duties of women). The cultural factor is related to the social gender construct and gender equality as a condition for eliminating the difficulties of participation in the armed forces. Unfortunately, in many European societies, the ideal military conception of physically and emotionally strong male war heroes still prevails. (Kronsell & Svedberg, 2011).

From 2016 to 2019, except for Albania, Lithuania, Slovenia and Turkey, in the NATO member-states, more or less, women's participation in the armed forces has increased, and the average rate equals 12% in 2019. Turkey has the lowest representation - 0.3%, then Italy - 4%, Montenegro - 6% and Poland - 7% and the highest representation is in Hungary -20%, Greece - 19%, USA - 17% and Bulgaria, Canada, France and Latvia -16%. In the other countries, the percentile participation is in the range between 8% and 15%. If we compared the percentile participation of women between 1998 and 2014, the overview would look like this:

Country	1999 %	2014 %	2019 %
Hungary	5,1	14,6	20,2
Greece	3,8	11,1	19
United States	13	15,2	16,9
Bulgaria	/	14,8	16,4

Country	1999 %	2014 %	2019 %
Canada	10,8	14,3	15,6
France	8,6	13,6	15,6
Latvia	/	16,5	15,5
Slovenia	/	13,9	14,6
Albania	/	13,2	13,8
Norway	5	15,5	13,8
Czech Republic	7,4	13,8	13
Spain	3,4	12,4	12,8
Croatia	/	10,4	12,5
Germany	1,1	10,5	12,3
Lithuania	/	9,8	12,3
Portugal	7,4	11,2	12
Slovakia	/	9,5	12
The Netherlands	7,7	9,3	11,1
United Kingdom	7,9	10,1	10,9
Estonia	/	11,2	9,6
Belgium	7,4	7,6	8,7
Denmark	5,5	5,2	8,3
Luxemburg	7,6	5,4	8,3
Republic of North Macedonia	/	7	7,8
Romania	/	5	7,4
Poland	0,3	3,7	6,9
Montenegro	/	4,3	5,9
Italy	0	3,8	5,8
Turkey	0	0,9	0,3

Evolution in the Representation of Full-Time Military Women by NATO Member Nations from 1999-2014-2019 (Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives, 2019)

There has also been an increase in the percentile participation of women in the armed forces of the NATO partner-states:

Country	2014 %	2019 %
Moldova	18	20,4
Australia	15,2	18,3
New Zealand	15,5	18
Sweden	7,9	9
Japan	5,7	7,3
Ireland	6,1	6,9
Bosnia and Herzegovina	6,2	6,5
Bulgaria	3,6	5,6
Serbia	5,6	6,2
Finland	2,3	3,8
Austria	2,5	3,6

Evolution in the Representation of Full-Time Military Women by NATO Partner Nations from 2014-2019 (Summary of the National Reports..., 2019)

From the overview, it can be seen that, although all members and partners of NATO have specific policies for the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men joining the armed forces, there are significant differences regarding the percentile participation of women, starting with Turkey with 0.3% up to Hungary with 20.2%. However, it is a positive fact that in all analysed countries there is increased percentile participation of women in the armed forces which indicates that in the following period this percentage will become even higher. Nonetheless, it is a fact that the number of women in the armed forces is still at a low level, especially if the constant need for new personnel is considered as well as the equal opportunities for recruiting the two genders.

Regarding the percentile participation of women in NATO operations, according to the reports brought forth in 2019 by the NATO member-states, it can be seen that the map's average is 7%. In 2019, out of all NATO members, 22 reported participation of women from the national contingents in the NATO operations, while the differences in women's engagement are significant and the same starts with 2% in Montenegro and goes up to 15% in Greece. (Summary of the National Reports..., 2019)

The statistics for the percentile participation of women in the armed forces of North Macedonia show that the modern army trends which put a lot of attention on women's participation in the military structures are also followed in our country. Slowly standing up against the stereotypes that the military profession is for men and women can't always carry out the tasks same as men are the statistics that 9.2% of the military personnel are women. This is really good progress compared to 2019 when the participation was 7.8%. There are also an increased number of women in high positions within the army and the Ministry of Defence, so, the number of women with the rank colonel was increased 3 times by 2020, and the percentage of women executives is 52%.

Year	Professional soldiers %	Officers %	Non-commissioned officer %	Civilians %
2008	2,3	7,9	11,3	50,3
2011	8,61	2,77	11,1	/
2018	5	13	11	38
2019	4,70	14,40	11	40,20
2020	5,45	15,50	11,18	37,47

Statistics for the participation of women in the Army of the Republic of North Macedonia (Annual Report, 2021)

There are an ever-increasing number of women applying to the military academy "General Mihailo Apostolski", so, in the academic year of 2020/2021, 33% of all candidates who have applied were women, which is 10% more compared to 2019 (Annual report for the progress of the equal opportunities, 2021).

Year	Candidates which have applied from the Republic of North Macedonia					Accepted cadets from the Republic of North Macedonia				
	Men	%	Women	%	Total	Men	%	Women	%	Total
2016	153	81	35	19	188	14	74	5	26	19
2017	91	64	52	36	143	13	56	10	44	23
2018	69	70	30	30	99	22	67	11	33	33
2019	46	77	14	23	60	19	68	9	32	28
2020	52	67	25	33	77	13	52	12	48	25

Comparative overview of the candidates who have applied and were accepted in the period (2016/2020)

From the overview, it can be seen that, compared to 2016, there is an increased number of candidates who have applied as well as candidates that have been accepted, which means that in 2021 the number of accepted men and women in the academy is almost equal – 52% men and 48% women. Given the fact that the Ministry of Defence strives for continuous increase of the participation of women in the Army, the missions and the job positions up to 30%, it is only logical that greater efforts should be made to complete these standards and follow the principles of gender equality in the process of recruiting and employing women on certain positions.

2. Challenges in the strengthening of gender integration in the armed forces

If we were to conduct an analysis of the prevalence of models of armed forces throughout history and take into account the role of women, we could clearly deduce that their role has been completely changes from a "total exclusion" to a "total integration". Nevertheless, a complete gender integration is only characteristic to some countries

(Canada, The Netherlands, South Africa), whereas in most countries it is only partially or minimally accepted due to the limited access of women to specific armed roles. The increased representation of women in the armed forces can be analysed as a recruitment response to specific economic, demographic, and technological conditions (Jessup, 1996., 85), that influence the changes in the military organization. At the same time, the level of military participation of women is has been increasing proportionally with the decreasing of war bonds in the total composition of armed forces. Therefore, the real reason for the acceptance of women in the armed forces is the abolishment of the general military obligation and the inability to provide enough recruiter for the needs of the military organizations (Haltinez, 1998, 12, 27, and 32). In the previous analysis, we could see that the number of women who join the armed forces has been increasing, slowly but continuously, in all countries - members of NATO. Certainly, this number is far from what we'd like it to be, however is it proportional to the number of recruitment applications submitted by women? The following table displays the percentage of women recruited in the armed forces and the number of applications in 2019 in the NATO member countries and partners.

Country	Average representation on women amongst applicants - %	Average representation of women amongst successful recruits - %	Success rate of recruited women applicants - %
Greece	41	29	9
Australia	37	24	6
Canada	28	17	8
New Zealand	28	22	7
Bulgaria	23	19	36
United States	23	19	54
Sweden	22	15	33
France	21	16	44
Italy	21	15	6
Portugal	21	15	19
Slovakia	21	19	/
Croatia	20	20	60
Czech Republic	19	14	41
Hungary	19	17	/
Japan	18	16	19
Latvia	18	18	44
Germany	17	15	33
Poland	17	14	42

Country	Average representation on women amongst applicants - %	Average representation of women amongst successful recruits - %	Success rate of recruited women applicants - %
Bosnia and Herzegovina	15	14	21
Montenegro	15	17	61
Spain	15	/	/
Belgium	14	12	34
The Netherland	14	15	/
Slovenia	13	15	60
Ireland	12	6	3
Albania	11	9	52
Republic of North Macedonia	9	9	63
Luxembourg	8	9	100
Finland	4	4	82
Lithuania	4	4	51
Austria	2	1	27
Georgia	2	5	/
Denmark	/	22	/
United Kingdom	/	12	/
Average %	18	16	41

Summary of the National Reports..., 2019

From the table, one could see that the percentage of women applicants to join the armed forces of the member countries and partners of NATO is 18% of the total number, compared to 82% male applicants. This indicates that the problem is not only in the making and implementation of politics of equal opportunities and gender equality in the armed forces, but also in the motivation of women to apply. Nevertheless, there are significant differences between the countries that indicate that these politics do not have the same influence in all places, or that not much care has been taken to properly implement them. The third column displays the percentage of recruited women from the total number of women applicants. The range is quite high; however the average of all countries is 41%, compared to 46% for recruited male applicants (Summary of the National Reports..., 2019).

In order to understand the weak motivation in women to participate in the armed forces, we have to focus on the things that motivate or unmotivated them to apply. A lot of research has been done and all results show that women share the same motivational factors

as men, however they cannot always identify themselves as part of the military organization. The motivational factors are the following:

1. Salary and social benefits that are more equal in terms of gender in the military service than those in the civil sector;
2. The opportunity to gain education during their service;
3. The opportunity to climb up the career ladder during their service;
4. Dignity and self-respect associated with fidelity to the goals militarily organization in which they have the opportunity to help others and make positive changes within their environment.
5. Travel and adventure.

If women share the same motivational factors with man, then what is the thing that makes it harder for them to identify themselves as a part of the military organization and demotivates them to take part in it? First, it is the low level of knowledge about the military forces (the employer, the organization, and its reputation) that contributes to the fact that women find it more difficult to feel like they are a part of it, hence this role is not attractive enough for them. Second, it is the physical characteristics of women, such as menstruation and pregnancy, which have been considered limitations since the dawn of time, as obstacles that limit the abilities of women in their military performance. This perpetual problem causes strong emotional reactions due to the injustice, which is a result of a generalization of the standards of physical preparedness and training. The physical performances of women are a significant source of perception of inequality. Because of the prejudice related to gender, women in the armed forces are in constant search of validation, and if a woman passes a test that some men cannot, it is always presumed that she had been given preference and that she had not been evaluated following the same parameters (FINABEL, 2018). However, despite the pressure to always match the men in the military organization, despite the number of difficulties that they are facing, the percentage of women that leave the army is not that great, compared to the percentage of men, which means that women successfully endure this pressure. Third, the balance between the private and professional life, pregnancy and maternal leave, the working atmosphere, which is harsh towards women, as well as sexual harassment, cause problems in the everyday life of women in the forces, which results in leaving the army early. The cultural and social pressure related to the family issues is greater towards women, who are often criticized for leaving their children for the army. They get a lot of criticism and comments even from their spouses, which cause clashes in the family, especially during the period which is critical for their professional development in the army. The parental leave is still unbalanced in many countries, and is mostly only maternal, thus forcing only one partner (the woman) to give up her career. There are also some positive examples in some countries (such as the Netherlands), unfortunately the current policies are still an obstacle for the professional development of women in the army. When it comes to pregnancy, there are some policies in the member countries of NATO, that protect pregnant women from working on the field or working on difficult positions, but still some basic problems remain unsolved (such as, female uniforms that are not designed in accordance with the female body during pregnancy) because of which, their authority and reputation have been damaged in the military collective. Moreover, the issue of appropriation of the work position to fit both genders, this creating an atmosphere of equality and balance among the privacy of women

and their work with the male colleagues. Unfortunately, the dilemma whether it is better for women to be put into facilities separately from their male colleagues, or together with them still remains unresolved. The former leaves room for greater privacy, whereas the latter, opens more opportunities for friendships and desexualisation, but also sexual harassment. Fourth, the armed forces are still an organization where men dominate, and women only serve in auxiliary forces. The professional segregation of women in the army still exists and the differences in the functions that men and women have support this statement. It has been observed that usually women are more represented in the medical service (23.5% of the total number of women in the armed forces, whereas men make up 3.8% of the intake), as well as in the "Others" category that includes various positions (in the defence ministries, instructors, military police, environmental protection units), which is vague and makes it harder to form a clear picture of what the roles of women are. The combat roles are in the category "Infantry" and it clearly indicates that women are less included in the specific combat roles. Actually, only 11 European countries (EU members) let women have combat roles: Romania, France, Germany, Denmark, The Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Estonia, Finland, Lithuania, and the United Kingdom (FINABEL, 2018). This affects their opportunities to rank up for which in most countries that are members of NATO, one needs to complete certain combat roles, which are unavailable to women (formally or informally). There is a more equal inclusion of women in the roles of combat support and in the auxiliary services. Fifth, the role of women as peace makers in the international operations underlines the need of greater inclusion of women in the armed forces in all areas. The situations in Iran and Afghanistan demonstrated that women soldiers positively influence peacekeeping, especially when it comes to trust among the local women and children, who are the main victims of male violence and abuse during war conflicts. Their ability as mediators is crucial in the collection of confidential information from the local communities, which is key to the successful completion of the mission. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that in the near future there will be gender equality in peacekeeping missions. Within the military circles, the prevailing opinion is that women threaten the effectiveness and cohesion of the forces in international operations and that they are having a hard time adapting to the living circumstances in the new environments (hygiene, privacy etc.) However, it has to be emphasized that this opinion is not in accordance with the research that shows that the presence of women has no negative influence on the cohesion and effectiveness of the mission. The only negative influence is the lack of legal representation and equality in the units (FINABEL, 2018). Another problem that women face in peacekeeping missions is sexual harassment which is rarely reported due to the lack of trust and fear of negative consequences to their career. In the European Union, the political focus and academic research on sexual harassment of women in the armed forces is still not developed enough as is the case in the USA, where it is a crucial political priority. (FINABEL, 2018). Sexual harassment damages the physical and mental health of women and also influences the organization as a whole (leaving the army, negative opinions about the job, decreased level of fulfilment and motivation for the job, decreased organizational dedication etc. due to which women are less taken into consideration when the teams and the peacekeeping operation units are being formed. Therefore, even though women soldiers are useful and their importance is crucial for peacekeeping operations, gender equality remains only a wish of the European countries that will not come true until a new strategic vision is created related to reforms in the military sector.

3. Perspectives for greater inclusion of women in the armed forces

From the overview of the representation of women in the armed forces and the challenges they face, it is clear that there is a trend of increasing the percentile participation of women both in the armed forces and in the armed operations. The opportunities to move forward in their career have increased, due to the raised awareness of the countries and their preparedness to support women in the army through the existing support networks, new policies on parental leave, as well as protection of women from sexual harassment. In the member countries of NATO, there are gender focus points that train gender advisors, there are also courses and trainings where other methods are being implemented, for the purpose of greater inclusion of women in the army and their protection. In 2019, there were 222 gender-based trainings that trained 207 gender advisors in the member countries of NATO. However, this was not enough, as more needs to be done to improve and implement these practices. Moreover, there needs to be greater confidence in the process of approaching the known challenges. It is of key importance that the countries include gender perspectives in all phases, starting from the recruitment campaigns that need to be aimed at women in order to increase their number among the applicants. Next, in the phases of planning the development of the armed forces, creating and implementing national programs on the gender perspective in the armed forces, planning and implementing training, as well as planning operations. The first phase is of crucial importance, since given our above-presented overview, it is clear that the greatest obstacle to the lack of inclusion of women in the armed forces is the small number of women applicants, which means that they are not being encouraged to apply. The reason for this may be the feeling of insecurity and inequality in the military environment. Therefore, more work needs to be done to address this issue, and to create and implement policies (make the public aware of them) that will grant gender equality and security in the military environment.

The normative arrangement and implementation of a gender perspective in the defence of the Republic of North Macedonia are aligned with NATO's politics and agenda for women and defence. In the Law for service in the army and the Law for defence, gender components are introduced as well as gender structure in the Ministry of Defence and the Army. That contributes to increasing gender sensitivity and continual improvement of gender equality in the Army. By 2022 the percentile participation of women in the Army increased to 10.15%, as per category: women-officers – 16.54%, non-commissioned officers – 10.98%, professional soldiers – 5.54%, women-civil personnel – 33.99%. In the Ministry of Defence half of the executive positions are held by women. In the international missions in 2021, out of the total military personnel in the Army, 6.5% are women, which is good progress if we take into consideration that in 2020 the participation of women was 1.7% (Annual report, MD, 2022). But, although this trend of greater inclusion of women in the Army is positive, it is still not satisfactory and it should continue with progress towards continual improvement in the 5 crucial strategic goals defined by the Second National Action Plan: Leadership, Participation, Facilitation, Protection and Coordination, education and training. It's important to continue with the realization of events and activities (forums, panel discussions, conferences, training, development of new strategies and politics for gender perspective, lectures, workshops, projects, etc.) which will be used to complete the goals and provide support to women in all phases and aspects, while at the same time respecting the principle of equal opportunities

for men and women. The Ministry of Defence emphasizes the popularization of the military profession for whose purpose, a special working group has been formed, and that is going to focus on finding good applicants for the Army, especially women. It is crucial for women to get encouraged and overcome the stereotypes that the military profession is for men only. Therefore, despite these policies, it is also important to create policies for career development in the Army, for support of the various needs of women and men, synchronizing their private and professional life, protection from harassment, discrimination and mobbing etc. In the Long-term defence capability development plan 2022-2031, one can find content that refers to the gender perspective, which is also present in the Rulebook for choice and enrolment of candidates in the military profession, in the budget plan, the Strategy of education and training and other documents that consist the normative work of the defence. Despite the numerous trainings for protection and approaches for comprehensive and effective protection of men and women in cases of harassment at the working place, there is also a Regional Handbook for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, and Abuse in the Ministry of Defence and the armed forces of the countries in the West Balkan region. The manual should contribute to increasing the visibility, identifying, preventing, and sanctioning all cases of gender-based discrimination, which gives us hope that in the following period there will be strengthening of the work of the inside mechanisms to implement the policies of gender equality and equal opportunities and effective protection from all kinds of harassment and abuse (Annual report, MO, 2021). It is crucial that the implementation of all plans and documents is continuous and that the planned dynamics are followed because the main problem does not lie in the creation of plans and strategies, but in their implementation in real-life situations.

Conclusion

From the conducted analysis, there are a few conclusions to be drawn:

First, the transformation of the armed forces from massive to professional initiated increased participation of women in military organizations. The percentile participation of women in the total military personnel is continually increasing, so in 2019 the average participation in the NATO member-states was 12%.

Second, despite the trend of increasing the percentile participation of women in the armed forces of the NATO member-states, the participation is far from satisfying; there are significant differences between countries, starting from Turkey with 0.3% participation to Hungary with 20.2% participation.

Third, the average recruitment of women against men in 2019 (16%) in the NATO member-states is proportionate to the total number of women's applications in the same year (18%), which means that women's low motivation for applying for military service is one of the main reasons for their insufficient participation in the armed forces.

Fourth, research shows that women share the same motivational factors as men; however, they hardly identify themselves with the military organization. Reasons for this are a low level of knowledge of the armed forces, a physical performance that is the basis for the inequality, difficulties related to balancing between personal and professional life, male domination that leaves space for women mainly in the support ranks, and lack of equal

participation and equality in the peace corps as well as sexual and other types of harassment which still lacks enough attention.

Five, it is positive that there is an increased awareness and readiness to provide women with the needed support in the army through the formal support networks, new politics for parental leave and women's protection, gender training, and incorporating the gender perspectives in the recruitment campaigns, trainings and the planning of operations. This kind of support can positively impact on greater integration of women in the armed forces because it will increase the feeling of equality with men in the military environment and the feeling of security therein. Moreover, this would be important motivational factor for women's application for recruitment and self-confidence to take their place in the armed forces.

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