



REPORT

WOMEN IN THE ESTONIAN DEFENCE FORCES

MOTIVATION, ATTITUDES, EXPERIENCE AND CHALLENGES

ANDRES SIPLANE | WITH A FOREWORD BY HANNES HANSO |

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FOREWORD

Women officers, NCOs and conscripts should become an ordinary sight, not an extraordinary phenomenon in Estonia. In the present-day context of high-tech national defence, there is no reason to differentiate between people on the basis of gender and to assume that defence is only men's work. Based on many countries that are setting a good example, we know that women are excellent and valuable contributors to national defence equal to men. I will always remember my conversation with my colleague Ms. Ine Sørreide, at that time Norway's Minister of Defence, who said that it made no difference to Norway whether they had male or female service personnel. What matters is what the person in the uniform can do. Undoubtedly, Estonia has great potential for improvement in this. Among other things, we need to change the attitudes in our society that do not favour the participation of women in the military. This is also the reason why we have to deal with this in a meaningful and systematic manner. The first steps have been taken; women have been eligible for voluntary conscript service since 2013. As Minister of Defence, I repealed all restrictions on the participation of women in conscript service in military units providing training. I also tripled the annual women's recruitment threshold from 30 to 108. This should not remain the upper limit; we have to achieve this objective and then move on from it, step by step. The purpose of our current Ten-Year National Defence Development Plan is to increase the number of conscripts and active servicemen—between 2017 and 2026, the number of conscripts should increase from 3,200 to 4,000. To implement this plan, we should waive our gender-based approach. I also think that there are not enough people in Estonia to exclude half of us from developing and actively participating in national defence. We need to find the most motivated people among ourselves; instruct and equip them. There is no rational basis for believing that the proportion of women among them will not be bigger than it is today. Studies show that the attitudes of society on this issue are becoming more favourable, and it is particularly pleasing that the more active involvement of women is supported by current service personnel. I would like to thank the ICDS and the Estonian Ministry of Defence for exploring this subject.

Hannes HANSO

Chairman of the National Defence Committee of the Riigikogu
Former Minister of Defence

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, I would like to thank all who participated in the survey. Active service personnel, with their many comments, showed that they care about the topics being addressed and thereby confirmed that studying the field carries importance.

A big help in terms of the technical solution of the survey was provided by the support team of the resource management software at the Headquarters of the Estonian Defence Forces. I want to thank Master Sergeant Meelis Morell in particular, thanks to whom the web-based questionnaire worked and the processable data entered by the respondents arrived at the right place.

I also send thanks to all researchers to whom women's issues are important and who helped to adjust the focus in this study. I primarily mean our colleagues at the Centre of Excellence for Strategic Sustainability at the University of Tartu. Thank you!

I shall certainly not forget to thank the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who provided a grant to publish this work in several languages, and the International Centre for Defence and Security, whose administrative and organisational support was so important in making it happen.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

During his career Andres Siplane worked in various positions related to social policy and social welfare both at the local and national government levels as well as in academia. In 2011-2014, he was the Head of the Support Centre of the Estonian Defence Forces and, from 2014, has served as an adviser for social affairs to the Estonian Ministry of Defence. He holds a BA (1999) and an MSc (2001) in social work from Tallinn University.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women have served in the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF) since their re-establishment. NATO members already held their first women-themed conference in 1961 in Copenhagen and adopted the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy in 2003.¹ Since 2013, the EDF also accept voluntary female conscripts. In conjunction with all these developments and progress in society, these topics are receiving more attention in Estonia.

As women serve in the EDF, it was decided to conduct a study to map the situation and attitudes, and gather thoughts for future development. The study method was a questionnaire and the sample included all active service personnel, regardless of gender, rank or service arm. Since the Estonian Ministry of Defence has conducted public opinion surveys on topics of national defence, including with regard to women serving in the EDF, for over ten years, it is possible to compare the opinions of active service personnel and society at large.

As the main result of the study, it can be pointed out that active service personnel regard the military career of women more favourably than society at large. While society is inclined to state that women have no place in the EDF after all, women do not suit all positions or that women should be at the home front, these kinds of statements were significantly less popular among active service personnel. Active servicewomen were, of course, most vehemently against such views. At the same time, the support for a voluntary conscript service for women is conspicuously high in society.

Since respondents were also offered the option to express their opinion via open-ended questions, it turned into a separate field of discussion whether women could manage equally well compared to men. The view that women really are not physically equal to men and cannot endure, for example, a manoeuvre the same way as men was naturally expressed. At the same time, it was pointed out that women have significantly higher motivation, which compensates for their lower physical strength. Needless to say, respondents also frequently expressed the opinion that, in the end, gender is not important, and professionalism, attitude, and being hard-working carry more significance.

The work experiences which active servicewomen have had so far were also studied. Generally, it was said that there have been a lot of positive experiences regarding their career choice, both in the EDF as well as in society at large. Nevertheless, work-related problems based on gender have also been experienced—as expected, unequal treatment due to gender was perceived differently by men and women. An inverse effect emerged: 2/3 of men have not noticed the unequal treatment of women and 2/3 of women have noticed it.

With a few exceptions, active service personnel favoured the greater involvement of women in the EDF. With respect to that, the EDF have to develop infrastructure, equipment, as well as rules, but as indicated by the respondents' answers, the readiness to do so is evident.

1. Anja Ebnöther and Aiko Holvikivi, *Factsheet on NATO Documents and Initiatives on Gender and Security* (Geneva: DCAF & Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defense Academies and Security Studies Institutes, 2015), https://pfp-consortium.org/index.php/item/download/81_982a71cc6212821e5cbd6771b94ad7d6 (accessed September 6, 2017).

INTRODUCTION

In 2017, Estonia's Minister of Defence approved the policy for increasing participation of women in military service. The policy anticipates various measures that seek to inform about military service opportunities and conditions; improve the service environment in the Estonian Defence Forces (EDF); enable women to serve in all military units; ensure their equal treatment with men in the assignment of positions as well as systematically collect and analyse feedback.²

To prevent misunderstanding, it is important to stress that the policy does not aim to increase the percentage of active servicewomen to a certain target number; the purpose is to improve access for women who want to contribute to national defence, if they so choose. At the same time, the objective to increase the percentage of women is indicated by the fact that the planned maximum number of female conscripts has increased from 24 in 2015 to 108 in 2018.³

In comparison, we can look at Norway's experience, where, in 1985, it was recognized that 1.2 percent of women active in service is too low, and an objective was set to increase that figure step-by-step. The so-called White Paper of 2006 set out to increase the percentage of women to 20% by 2020.⁴ In short, it can be predicted that this target will probably not be achieved because it is

currently near 9% (women make up a little over 9% of the active service personnel in Estonia too; NATO's average is 10.8%⁵).

In Norway, the reasons for seeking to increase the number of women in service were also clearly defined. The basis for that was the recognition that the priorities, values, interests, and experiences of men and women are different. So the objective of the greater involvement of women in Norway is to introduce new concepts, perspectives, and solutions that increase the efficiency and productivity of the organisation.⁶

The Australian Defence Force has also adopted several measures for the greater involvement of women, including a quota system. In Australia, too, the objective for the better involvement of women is to widen the talent pool and ensure the better representation of society in the armed forces. Special attention is paid to achieving a higher percentage of women at higher levels of management because this enhances the capabilities of the organisation and brings a diversity of ideas to the decision-making level.⁷ In involving women, the Australian Defence Forces have set the goal at 25% in the air force and navy, and 15% in the army, which are to be achieved by 2023.

The White Paper of the Irish Defence Forces, inter alia, also aims to increase the percentage of women in the forces and justifies this with the need to bring more understanding, in view of the needs and experiences of local women with war experience, to peacekeeping and the management of post-conflict situations.⁸ Although it has not been pointed out separately in the White Paper, the Minister of

2. Kaitseministeerium [The Ministry of Defence], *Poliitika naiste kaitseväeteenistuses osalemise võimaluste suurendamiseks* [Policy for increasing participation of women in military service] (Tallinn, 2017).
3. "2015. aasta kutsealuste ja naissoost isikute ning osaliselt 2016. ja 2017. aasta kutsealuste ajateenistusse asumise tähtajad ja nende arvuline jagunemine ajateenijate väljaõppega tegelevate struktuuriüksuste vahel ning ajateenistuse kestus" [The dates of call-up, length of service and share of women among military conscripts between the units providing military training in 2015 and partly in 2016 and 2017], *Riigi Teataja* [State Gazette], RT I, August 8, 2014, 15, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/108082014015> (accessed September 6, 2017); "2018. aasta kutsealuste ja naissoost isikute ning osaliselt 2020. aasta kutsealuste ajateenistusse asumise tähtajad ja nende arvuline jagunemine ajateenijate väljaõppega tegelevate struktuuriüksuste vahel ning ajateenistuse kestus" [The dates of call-up, length of service and share of women among military conscripts between the units providing military training in 2018 and until 2020], *Riigi Teataja* [State Gazette], RT I, October 19, 2016, 8, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/akt/119102016008> (accessed September 6, 2017).
4. Norwegian Ministry of Defence, *Okt rekruttering av kvinner til Forsvaret* [On recruitment of women to the Armed Forces] (Oslo, 2016), White Paper no 36.

5. NATO, *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives* (Brussels, 2015), https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_01/20170113_2015_NCGP_National_Reports_Summary.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).
6. Frank Steder Brundtland, "The way forward towards increased diversity and a greater proportion of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces" in *Military Women – The Achilles Heel in Defence Politics?*, ed. Frank Brundtland Steder (Oslo: Abstrakt, 2015), 265–281.
7. Department of Defence, *Women in the ADF Report 2013-2014*, Defence People Group (Canberra, 2014), www.defence.gov.au/Publications/WomenintheADReport.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).
8. Ministry of Defence, *White Paper on Defence* (Dublin, 2015), www.defence.ie/WebSite.nsf/WP2015E (accessed September 6, 2017).

Defence of Ireland has mentioned in the media while commenting on the document that the objective is to increase the percentage of women from the current 6.5% to 12%.⁹

The Canadian Armed Forces have set the target to raise the percentage of women in service to 25 (it is currently at 14%). The objective of the greater involvement of women is to ensure a better gender balance. The Auditor General of Canada has criticised this plan and pointed out that the Canadian Armed Forces lack a specific strategy of action to achieve that target because a mere intent to recruit more women each year cannot be called a strategy.¹⁰

An example from history can be drawn, whereby the involvement of women in military service served the objective to motivate male soldiers. In particular, the armed forces of Russia after the February Revolution were starting to lose the motivation to fight in the world war and, to serve as an example to men, Maria Bochkareva was allowed to form the Women's Battalion of Death, which was trained and then sent into combat.¹¹ However, the objective of motivating men was not achieved.

In the course of the 20th century, women acquired full civic and political rights such as suffrage and standing for election to public offices, while the principle of equal gender rights, treatment and opportunities became one of the paramount aspects of contemporary democratic societies. Transposing this principle into the military—long a preserve of men—became a major issue in the strategic personnel policies of the defence organisations. As a matter of principle and with a growing body of scientific evidence refuting the notion that female participation impinges upon military effectiveness, many countries have opened all military positions, including those in combat roles, to women. Still, the proportion of female

service members in the military personnel remains rather low across NATO and the EU.¹²

Increasing the percentage of women in service is a societal and political imperative which, by aligning the armed forces with broader societal trends and values framework, maintains the societal legitimacy of the armed forces. However, it is also a means to achieving functional goals related to the mission of the armed forces—enhancing military capability and ensuring better military defence for the country. Openness to greater participation of women in the military expands the pool of manpower available for defence and, consequently, the pool of talent, skills and competencies which the armed forces can draw upon in pursuit of their mission. The high performance motivation and professionalism of female military personnel also has a positive overall effect on the motivation and performance of military organisations.¹³

The main concern that emerges with the involvement of women is that, traditionally, the introduction of “weaker links” is thought to harm military capabilities.¹⁴ At the same time, it is pointed out that this concern is based on stereotypical images of hegemonic masculinity historically directly linked with military service, and when the percentage of women reaches 15 to 20 of the total personnel, servicewomen will become normality.¹⁵

Naturally, from a military standpoint, in the development of an organisation, one has to do everything necessary to make that organisation more efficient, and the matter of whether increasing the percentage of some target groups within the personnel of the organisation raises or lowers that efficiency is primarily a question of verifying scientific

9. Peter Murtagh, “Defence Forces target ‘sporty females’ for recruitment”, *The Irish Times*, April 14, 2016, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/defence-forces-target-sporty-females-for-recruitment-1.2609691> (accessed September 6, 2017).

10. Auditor General of Canada, *Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention* (Ottawa, 2017), http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/osh_20170503_e_42206.html (accessed September 6, 2017).

11. Helen Rappaport, *Caught in a Revolution. Petrograd, Russia 1917 – A World on the Edge* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2017).

12. NATO, *Summary of the National Reports*.

13. Frank Brundtland Steder, Annett Stornaes and Kari Stubberud, “Military Women – The Achilles Heel in Defence Politics?” in *Military Women – The Achilles Heel in Defence Politics?*, ed. Frank Brundtland Steder (Oslo: Abstrakt, 2015), 14–52.

14. Marcia Kovitz, “The roots of military masculinity” in *Military Masculinities: Identity and the State*, ed. Paul Higate (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003), 1–14, <http://www.worldcat.org/title/military-masculinities-identity-and-the-state/oclc/50042811> (accessed September 6, 2017).

15. Dag Ellingsen, Ulla-Britt Lilleaas and Michael Kimmel, “Something is Working – But Why? Mixed Rooms in the Norwegian Army”, *Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, 24 (2016): 151–164, accessed September 6, 2017, doi: 10.1080/08038740.2016.1236037.

truth. It has to be taken into account that the involvement of women may, figuratively speaking, lower the overall number of kilograms to be carried around in the army, but if it increases the feeling of unity in society and societal legitimacy as well as improving defence willingness in general, it outweighs the concern for the cumulative kilograms to be carried. Furthermore, with a growing number of specialist roles in a technologically advanced armed forces requiring highly sophisticated technical skills, mental abilities and leadership rather than the sheer physical force to perform them, the involvement and participation of women is now a functional imperative as much as a societal one.¹⁶

The Estonian policy to increase women's opportunities to serve in the EDF bypasses this discussion and proceeds largely from the objective to give women better access to serve in the EDF, ensure the availability of information about service opportunities for those interested, and the capability of the EDF to accept women into service. At the same time, it is probable that, among other things, the percentage of women among conscripts and active service personnel also increases as a result of these actions. Understanding the motivation of women to join and serve in the military, appreciating their service experience and addressing the challenges of integrating them effectively into the work environment and overall mission and tasks of the EDF are important factors in the recruitment, retention and successful performance of women in the EDF. This report, based on a survey conducted in the EDF, highlights many pertinent issues and could serve as a basis for further continuous improvements in personnel policies, training programmes, leadership approaches and management practices in the EDF.



16. Ben Barry, "Women in Combat", *Survival*, Vol 55, no. 2 (2013): 19-30, accessed September 6, 2017, doi: 10.1080/00396338.2013.784461.

1. METHODOLOGY

The developments described in the previous chapter have brought about the need to map and gain a better understanding of the situation and attitudes in the EDF regarding the service of women and the establishment of wider opportunities for them to serve.

A decision was taken to perform the study via a questionnaire, and the survey was conducted anonymously within the intranet of the EDF. The study objective was to explore the experiences and attitudes of active service personnel based on gender differences.

The questionnaire focused on five sets of questions:

- Do the respondents support the service of women in the EDF?
- What kind of service conditions should women have in the EDF?
- What experiences does the respondent have with women serving in the EDF?
- What problems have been perceived?
- What are the respondent's recommendations for developing this topic?

It has to be stressed that the survey considered the involvement of women in the EDF in general, while the ranks, service arms or professions of the hypothetically involved women were not specified. In the case of some questions it was specified that only female conscripts are taken into account.

In addition to the 43 closed-ended questions included in the questionnaire, the respondents were provided with eight opportunities to freely explain their positions and opinions. For open-ended questions, the respondents explained and substantiated their positions a total of 2,808 times. In the case of questions important to the respondents, 2/3 of the total number of respondents answered the respective open-ended questions.

The sample was all-encompassing: the target group included all active personnel of the EDF, both men and women from all ranks, service arms and units. The questionnaire was open to respondents from 23 March 2017 to 16 April 2017. A total of 732 active service personnel responded to the questionnaire, including 123 women and 609 men. Therefore, the respondents represented 24% of the whole group, 23% of the men and 39% of the women.

Considering how much the opportunity to express themselves in free form was used, it has to be deemed that active service personnel care about and have great interest in the topic.

In presenting the results of the study, alongside the main data, gender characteristics were most often also included from among the most important characteristics that shape the respondents' views and opinions.

2. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Figure 1 shows the division of respondents by age. The figure indicates that the largest age group (age 31 to 45) has roughly the same number of respondents from both genders, but a larger percentage of women belong to an older age group (46 to 60).

Comparing the age of the respondents to the average age of the personnel active in the EDF, it has to be noted that the younger age group (18 to 30) is already a little under-represented. At the same time, it has been established that women are older than average in the group of veterans because they are more often medical personnel; it takes time to get a medical education, and therefore they enter service at an above-average age compared to active servicemen.¹⁷

The responses to questions about marital status showed that the percentage of those who were in a relationship was higher among men. The percentage of men who were

17. Andres Siplane, *Veteranide olukorrast* [On the Situation of Veterans] (Tallinn, 2016).

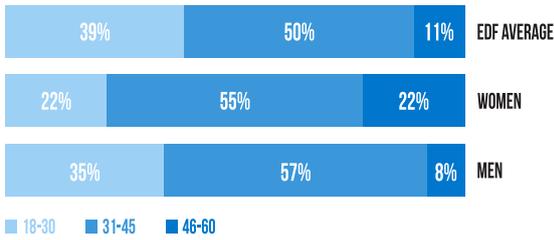


FIGURE 1. DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' AGE COMPARED TO THE AVERAGE AGE OF ACTIVE SERVICE PERSONNEL

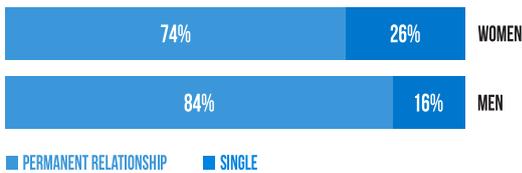


FIGURE 2. MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

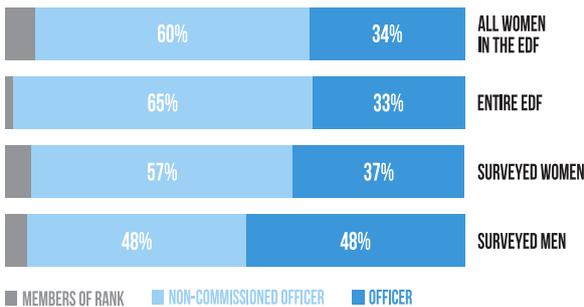


FIGURE 3. DISTRIBUTION OF RANKS AMONG THE RESPONDENTS AND IN THE EDF IN GENERAL

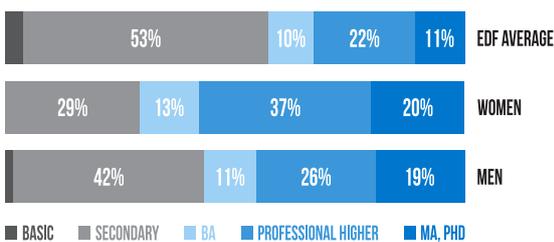


FIGURE 4. EDUCATIONAL LEVEL COMPARED BY GENDER

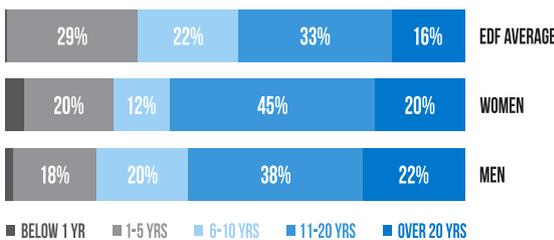


FIGURE 5. TIME SERVED IN THE EDF

married or in a permanent relationship was 84 and the corresponding percentage for women was 74 among the respondents (see Figure 2).

At first, one might assume that the larger percentage of single women might have been caused by being widowed in the older age group, but this is not the case. The lower percentage of women who are married or in a relationship compared to men is concentrated in the medium age group (31 to 45), which comprises single women almost to the extent of 40%.

Compared to the entire EDF personnel, in terms of the distribution of ranks, non-commissioned officers seem to be a little under-represented and officers over-represented percentage-wise among the respondents (see Figure 3). At the same time, we can say that this has occurred mainly due to male respondents because the distribution of ranks among female responders coincides with the distribution of ranks among all women serving in the EDF.

Figure 4 includes the distribution of respondents based on their educational level. Service personnel with secondary and basic education are under-represented among the respondents. There are 57% of them in the EDF, but only 41% of them responded.

The average level of education acquired by women participating in the survey is higher than the EDF average as well as the average of the male respondents. Only 29% of the female respondents have marked secondary education as the highest level of education they have acquired. The sample included no women only with basic education. At the same time, there were more female respondents with professional higher education (this mostly means the profession of nurse) at bachelor, master and doctoral level than men—70% of women and 56% of men in total.

Observing the answers regarding time served in the EDF (see Figure 5), it has to be noted that individuals with a longer service period are a little over-represented in the sample.

Answering this question seems to cause some misunderstanding because evidently

some male respondents have not taken into account that their mandatory service is also included in their service period; consequently, 11 respondents thought that they had served under a year. Actually, only a total of 9 such men were in the EDF at the time of the survey.

The data provided above shows that the people responding to the questionnaire were a little older, had a higher rank, higher level of education, and longer service record than the average active service personnel. Those facts have to be taken into account when observing all the remaining data. At the same time, such a bias means that the respondents rather include military personnel with higher authority, who shape and influence the views and opinions of all the younger and lower ranking service personnel.

Less representatives of younger service personnel among the survey respondents might mean that they do not care about the topic that much or that it was technically more difficult (e.g. due to the nature of their service duties) for them to answer the survey questions.

3. ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN SERVING IN THE EDF

Since 2001, the Ministry of Defence has regularly ordered public opinion surveys on national defence. Since 2013, the population has also been asked whether women could be voluntary conscripts. At that time, almost 2/3 of the respondents were in favour (for example, 67% in October 2013 and 69% in March 2013).¹⁸

In previous years, the public was also asked whether conscript service should be mandatory for women. Generally, people opposed to this

18. Saar Poll OÜ, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse* [Public Opinion and National Defence] (Tallinn, October 2013), http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/avalik_arvamus_ja_riigikaitse_oktoober_2013.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017); Saar Poll OÜ, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse* [Public Opinion and National Defence] (Tallinn, March 2013), http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/avalik_arvamus_ja_riigikaitse_marts_2013.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).

idea—85% of respondents in 2009 and 89% in 2007 were against it.¹⁹ Unfortunately, at that time, the question about attitude towards voluntary conscript service for women was not included in the survey, and therefore it is not possible to see a longer trend with regard to that topic.

In the public opinion survey for 2017, society's support for voluntary conscript service for women had increased to 79%.²⁰ Mandatory conscript service for women gained only 3% support in society.

It is interesting to note that support for a voluntary conscript service for women among active service personnel was 2% lower than in society at large: 77%. Such a result, however, does not stem from an opposition to conscript service for women among active service personnel, but from the fact that active service personnel are much more supportive of mandatory conscript service for women (see Figure 6).

At the same time, attention should be paid to the fact that support for a mandatory conscript service for women was lower among active servicewomen compared to men (11% and 19%, respectively).

In the public opinion survey ordered by the Ministry of Defence as well as in this survey of active service personnel, the claim that women are not suited to fighting a war due to their nature and that national defence should remain a field for men was presented for assessment to the respondents (see Figure 7).

A total of 50% of the respondents in society in general were inclined to agree or rather agreed with that statement. The most radical

19. Tõnis Stamberg, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse* [Public Opinion and National Defence] (Tallinn: Turu-uuringute AS, January 2009), http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/avalik_arvamus_ja_riigikaitse_jaanuar_2009.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017); Tõnis Ormisson, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse* [Public Opinion and National Defence] (Tallinn: Turu-uuringute AS, July 2007), http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/avalik_arvamus_ja_riigikaitse_juuli_2007.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).

20. Juhana Kivirähk, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse* [Public Opinion and National Defence] (Tallinn: Turu-uuringute AS, Spring 2017), http://www.kaitseministeerium.ee/sites/default/files/elfinder/article_files/avalik_arvamus_ja_riigikaitse_marts_2017.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).

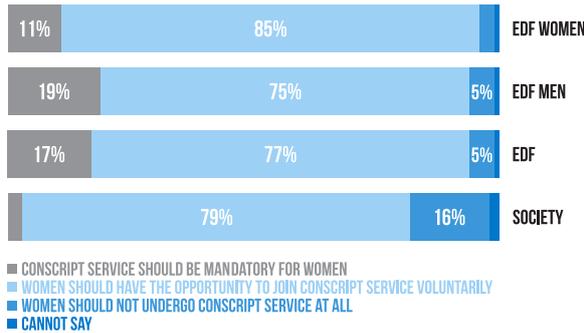


FIGURE 6. ATTITUDE TOWARDS CONSCRIPT SERVICE FOR WOMEN

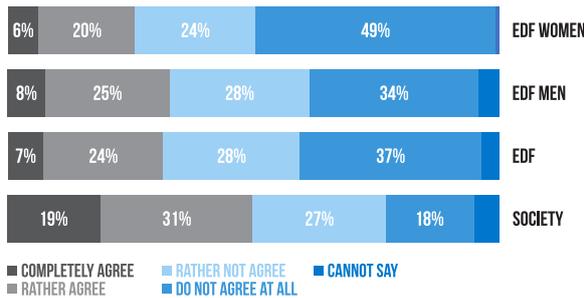


FIGURE 7. WOMEN ARE NOT SUITED FOR WAR DUE TO THEIR NATURE

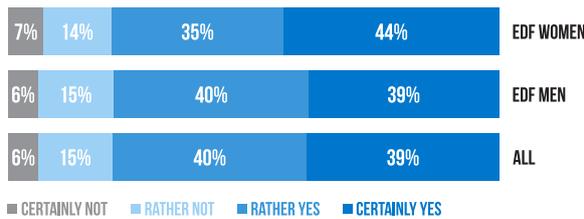


FIGURE 8. WOULD YOU RECOMMEND YOUR DAUGHTER TO UNDERGO CONSCRIPT SERVICE?

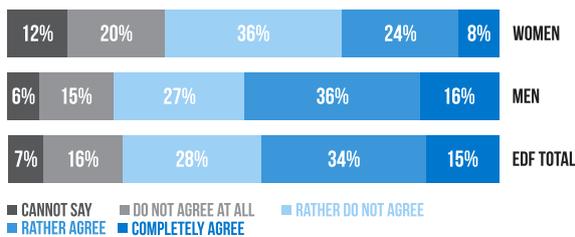


FIGURE 9. DOES MANDATORY CONSCRIPT SERVICE FOR WOMEN HAVE A POSITIVE INFLUENCE ON EQUAL TREATMENT IN SOCIETY?

opposition to that statement came from women in active service—49% of whom did not agree with that statement at all and 24% rather did not agree with it; therefore, a total of 73% did not agree. Since there were significantly more men among the respondents, they influenced the EDF average percentage of those who did not agree and rather did not agree with the statement, which turned out to be 65% (the percentage of those who did not agree was 45 in the public opinion survey).

The question of whether the respondents would recommend conscript service to their daughter was answered with an absolute yes in 39% of the cases and rather yes in 40% of the cases (Figure 8). Significant differences between men and women cannot be discerned—the only detail is that 44% of women would absolutely recommend conscript service to their daughter, while the corresponding figure is 39% among men.

At the same time, attention should be paid to the fact that those 21% who did not recommend conscript service for their daughter were not opposed to conscript service for women as such. Thus, one servicewoman justified her stance with the conscript service being too undemanding, days being wasted away, the training not being sufficiently intense, which is the reason she would not recommend conscript service to her daughter. Two female respondents explained that if conscript service had a programme that considered women, they would recommend conscript service to their daughter.

With regard to the question of whether mandatory conscript service for all citizens of the Republic of Estonia regardless of gender

Yes, I would recommend conscript service to my daughter. Though, the years have shown that 80% of conscripts arrive here with the wrong objectives and reasons. One can understand this from their conduct and attitude. If my own daughter wished to enter conscript service, I would describe the situation thoroughly to her and let her then decide. A logical step forward for a female conscript would be the Officers' School or the Non-commissioned Officers' School. The EDF do not need time wasters.

Woman, officer, age group 31 to 45

We have the choice whether men defend both the country and women; or men and women defend the country together. With our small population, we don't have a better choice.

Man, officer, age group 46 to 60

would have a positive influence on the equal treatment of women in society in general, it is interesting to note that female respondents are inclined to rather not agree or not at all agree with that thought (a total of 56% of the respondents). At the same time, a slight majority of active servicemen found that it could be a method to implement equal treatment in society—52% of men rather or totally agreed with that statement (see Figure 9).

4. ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PERFORMANCE CAPABILITY OF WOMEN

Responding to the question of how the respondents rate the performance of women in fulfilling their duty in conscript service compared to men, on average, in 73% of cases it was thought that female conscripts perform their duties as well as men.

It is interesting to note that 14% of female respondents thought that women can manage better than men. At the same time, 24% of men assessed that women manage worse than men.

In some ways women manage better because they are more responsible. In the case of tasks requiring physical strength, one has to look at the capability of each individual separately, regardless of gender.

Man, non-commissioned officer, age group 46 to 60

Significant differences emerge when people who have been involved in instructing female conscripts and those who have not been involved separately are observed (see Figure 10).

Eighty-one per cent (81%) of the male respondents (n=468) had been involved in instructing women, of which 22% assessed that female conscripts manage worse than men. The percentage among men without that experience was 30%. It can be concluded from this that men without the respective experience are far more

There is no single right answer on who manages better. How much is the individual motivated, that's what counts. I have met a female conscript with no motivation at all because she entered conscript service since her father told her to. And at the same time I have come across a female conscript who wasn't in the same physical shape as men but had tremendous willpower, due to which she was head and shoulders above others.

Woman, officer, age group 18 to 30

pessimistic in that matter and being involved with the actual experience increases optimism in this field.

The opposite pattern emerged in the case of women who had been involved in instructing female conscripts. Four per cent (4%) of women with no experience in this matter believed that women would manage worse than men, and having had the experience, the percentage of women who favoured that statement increased to 10%.

At the same time, the experience of instructing female conscripts among female respondents also increased the percentage of those who said that female conscripts manage better than men. While 13% of the women without the experience thought so, gaining instructional experience

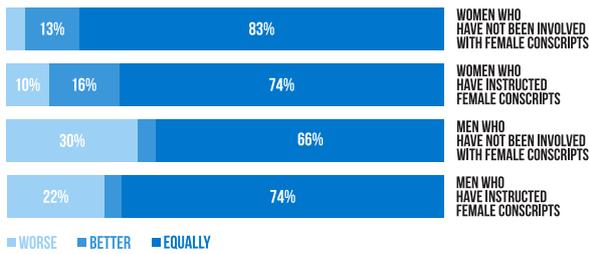


FIGURE 10. HOW WELL DO FEMALE CONSCRIPTS PERFORM THEIR DUTIES?

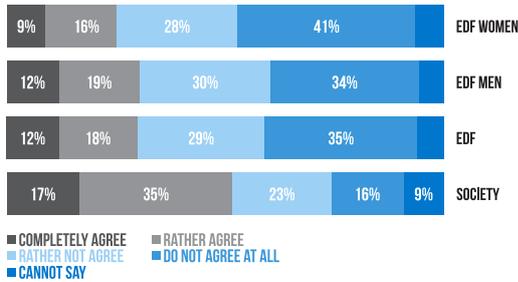


FIGURE 11. WOMEN MAY SERVE IN PEACETIME BUT NOT DURING WAR IN A COMBAT UNIT

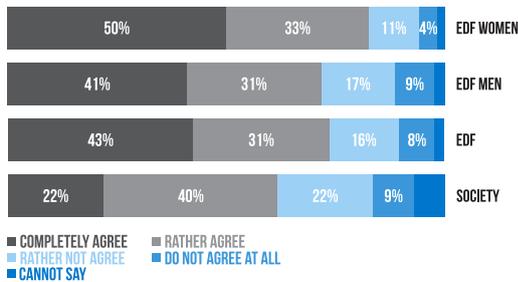


FIGURE 12. MOST WOMEN AND MEN ARE EQUALLY CAPABLE OF BEING INVOLVED IN NATIONAL DEFENCE

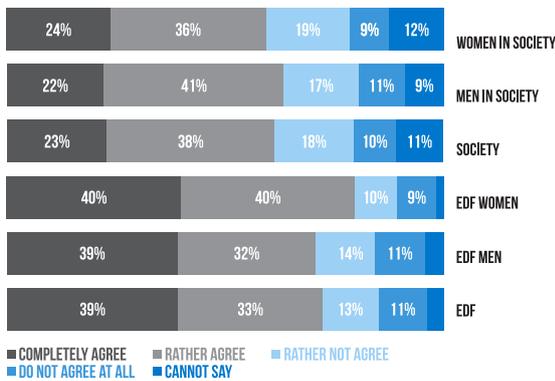


FIGURE 13. WOMEN MANAGE ALL DUTIES IN THE EDF IF THEY ARE ENSURED EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND REQUIREMENTS WITH MEN

raised the percentage to 16. The reliability of these indicators has to be taken with certain concessions because the size of the observed groups in absolute numbers was 62 respondents with an experience of instructing conscripts and 48 without that experience.

Explaining their viewpoints in free form, the prevailing point is that every person is different and a gendered approach cannot be applied. In the case of female conscripts, two ideas are primarily stressed: first, that women are inevitably weaker than men, and second, that women often have a stronger motivation to serve and they compensate physical shortcomings

Female conscripts have more willpower than the average male conscript. Currently, the only female squad leader is the best infantry squad leader in my unit.

Man, non-commissioned officer, age group 18 to 30

with stronger motivation. The view that women are often better disciplined than men was also expressed. Attention was also drawn to the fact that a unit leader has to take the personnel into account as a team and base the assignment of tasks on individual capabilities.

The abovementioned public opinion survey can be also compared to the respondents' replies in view of the statement that women may manage equally with men in peacetime, but they should not serve in combat units during war.²¹

21. Juhan Kivirähk, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse*.

The general picture in terms of performing duties within the conscript service is relatively even. There are men with different physical capabilities the same way as there are women. There are also both men and women who have weak nerves. The task at hand does certainly play an important role. For example, I cannot imagine being a machine gunner or on an anti-tank grenade launcher. I don't doubt my marksmanship or weapon-handling, but my ability to keep up with the unit on manoeuvres.

Woman, non-commissioned officer, age group 18 to 30

While 52% of the respondents in society were inclined to support that statement, 30% of the respondents among active service personnel either totally or partly agreed with that; at the same time, for one supporter of the statement, there were two active service personnel who did not agree with it (see Figure 11).

Only 25% of respondents among active servicewomen agreed with that the statement. At the same time, female respondents also expressed the strongest opposition to it: 41% did not agree with that statement at all and 28% rather did not agree (overall 69% of the female respondents were opposed to it).

Upon asking the same question in a gentler manner in reverse—presenting the claim that most women and men are equally capable of being involved in national defence (see Figure 12)—we also see a larger group of respondents who supported the involvement of women.

If public opinion as a whole showed previously that 52% of women should not serve in a combat unit during war, in the case of this statement, 62% agreed that most women and men are equally capable of being involved in national defence.

Seventy-four per cent (74%) of respondents who are active service personnel rather or totally agreed with that statement, and in the case of active servicewomen the number was as high as 83%.

Figure 13 compares the distribution of positions expressed in the public opinion survey and by active service personnel regarding the claim that women manage all duties in the EDF if they are ensured equal opportunities and requirements with men.

This figure also confirms the results indicated in the previous figure that show 3/4 among the active service personnel and 3/5 in society in general believe that women can manage in the EDF.

It is interesting to note that the women answering the public opinion survey are more conservative than average (in society in general 61% agreed with the statement and 60% of

women agreed) and active servicewomen were more optimistic than average (the average level of agreement in the EDF was at 72% and the same indicator among active servicewomen was at 80%).

5. OPINIONS ON THE SERVICE CONDITIONS OF WOMEN

As has been pointed out in the previous chapters, the respondents often have the notion that women are physically weaker, but at the same time it is greatly stressed that women should not be obstructed from entering active service because of that. It may be that women should serve in the EDF under different conditions. If yes, what should those conditions be?

The question of whether conscript service for women should be conducted under the same programme as that for men was included in the public opinion survey as well as in this study (Figure 14).²²

The fact that this question, which concerns a specific professional field, is presented in one case to professionals (active service personnel) and in the second case to non-professionals (public opinion) must also be considered here. Therefore, an expert assessment is sought in the first instance, and in the second instance, a general opinion is sought from a person that has no knowledge of the professional context. It is likely that in the case of public opinion, the distribution of the different answers will be on the same basis as they would be distributed for questions regarding some other matter of gender equality and equal treatment; in other words, very much determined by their general lack of awareness of military service and gender issues.

At the same time, people familiar with the profession are inclined to support the view that conscript service for women should be conducted under the same conditions as that for men. True, support for that position among female respondents is below average—the

22. Juhan Kivirähk, *Avalik arvamus ja riigikaitse*.

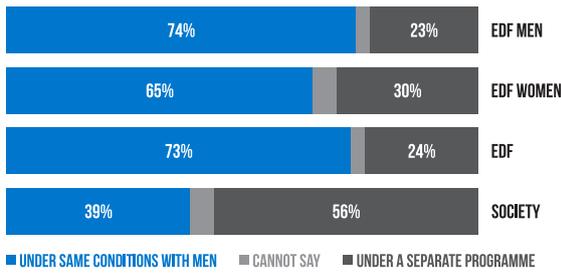


FIGURE 14. SHOULD CONSCRIPT SERVICE FOR WOMEN BE CONDUCTED UNDER THE SAME PROGRAMME AS THAT FOR MEN?

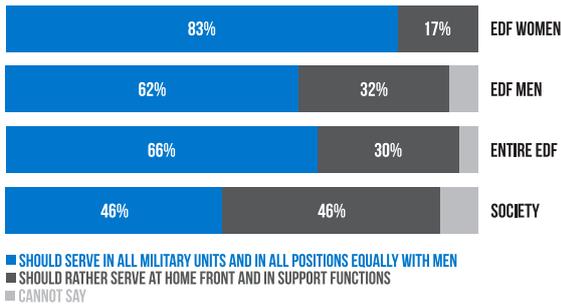


FIGURE 15. IN WHAT POSITIONS SHOULD WOMEN SERVE?

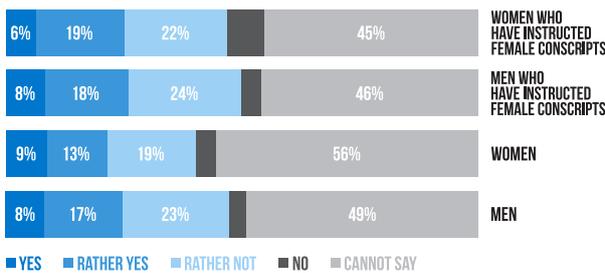


FIGURE 16. IN YOUR OPINION, DO DISPUTES OCCUR MORE FREQUENTLY WITH FEMALE CONSCRIPTS COMPARED TO MALE CONSCRIPTS REGARDING APPOINTMENT TO A WARTIME POSITION?

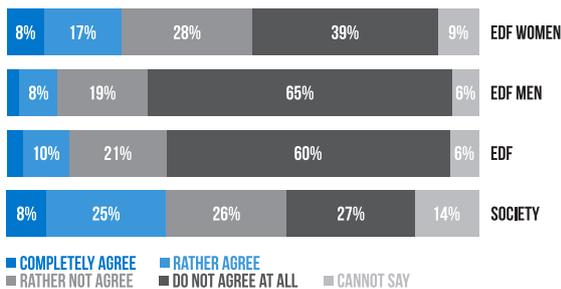


FIGURE 17. DO REQUIREMENTS HAVE TO BE LOWERED FOR WOMEN AND SHOULD QUOTAS BE APPLIED?

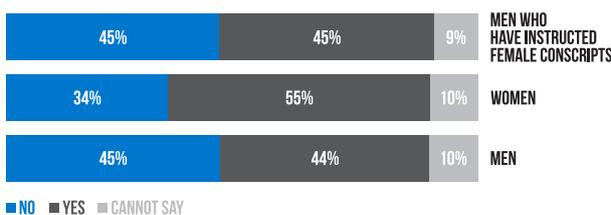


FIGURE 18. IN YOUR OPINION, SHOULD ACCOMMODATION AND OTHER DOMESTIC CONDITIONS FOR FEMALE CONSCRIPTS BE ORGANISED DIFFERENTLY THAN FOR MEN?

percentage of supporters in the entire EDF is at 73%, but only 65% among women serving in the EDF.

The viewpoints presented in the next figure (Figure 15) about the recommended positions for women were also included both in the public opinion survey and active service personnel survey. While in society at large, 46% of the respondents favoured the view that women should serve equally with men in all military units and in all positions, among active servicewomen, the percentage in favour of that viewpoint was 83. At the same time, one has to take into account that the alternative statement was in support of approving the assignment of traditional roles for women, and it was expected that respondents would protest against that. It is also remarkable that there were no respondents among servicewomen who declined to express their opinion on that matter.

Since women who have been in conscript service have complained that after their conscript service they were only assigned to rear units, active service personnel were asked whether they think disputes occur more frequently with female conscripts compared to male conscripts regarding appointment to a wartime position.

A remarkably large percentage of respondents among active service personnel, both among those who have been involved with conscripts and those who have not, did not form an opinion in this matter (see Figure 16).

At the same time, all the observed groups included many who did not agree with that assessment. Yet, almost a quarter of the respondents in all groups saw that the matter was a problem.

To ensure equal rights and equal treatment in different fields, quotas and thresholds are often applied to certain target groups. The topic of quotas is certainly sensitive and evokes different emotions. In a military organisation, raising such a question is understandably controversial because it inevitably leads to another question: will the enemy also, in this case, lower requirements and apply quotas?

Women should live in the same room with men, and not be accommodated somewhere else. Living in the same room they will be more in touch with information concerning the platoon and the platoon will have a stronger sense of unity. When I was a conscript, I had experience of both, so therefore I think that living together with your squad or platoon is a better option.

Woman, officer, age group 18 to 30

In the case of this wording, public opinion was divided relatively evenly between different points of view (see Figure 17). In the case of the EDF, 14% agreed or rather agreed with that approach (81% held the opposite view). Among active servicewomen as much as 25% were in favour of quotas and lowered requirements, while 67% held the opposite view.

It is important to stress that the respondents were not offered a certain model for lowering requirements or the application of gender

Female conscripts should have separate washing facilities and restrooms. In the dormitory, a private corner should be available for female conscripts to change clothes, etc., if possible.

Man, member of rank, age group 18 to 30

quotas. The respondents were primarily asked their fundamental opinion regarding such measures.

In the case of the question of whether accommodation and other domestic conditions for female conscripts should be organised differently than for men (see Figure 18), the prevailing position among women was positive (55%). At the same time, it is interesting to note that the answers from men were distributed relatively evenly between positive and negative answers and the answers of men were not significantly influenced by the fact of whether the respondent had been involved in instructing female conscripts.

Here, the respondents were given the opportunity to explain their views at length. The

supporters of creating different accommodation and domestic conditions for women agreed that women should have the option of performing hygiene procedures separately from men. Viewpoints diverged in the case of sleeping areas—both the option of a separate corner and room in the barracks for women found support. At the same time it was stressed that in certain situations, men and women have to sleep in the same room anyway.

The main arguments offered by those respondents who were against establishing separate conditions for female conscripts were that by separating women they would also be cut off from the common information space and this damages the functioning of the team. The argument that, if we are already talking about equality, let us have equality in everything was also used. At the same time, the representatives of this group also held the view that women should have separate washing and restroom facilities.

6. WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES IN SERVICE

Figure 19 features the female respondents' assessment of their service experience on a ten-point scale. One (1), the lowest number on the scale, marks the respondent's agreement with the statement "I have had a lot of negative experiences while on active service due to my gender" and number 10 marks agreement with the statement "I have had a lot of positive experiences while on active service due to my gender". The distribution of answers is provided in the figure with an absolute number.

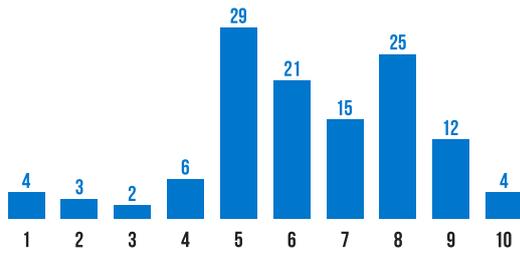


FIGURE 19. HOW WOULD YOU AS A WOMAN RATE YOUR SERVICE?

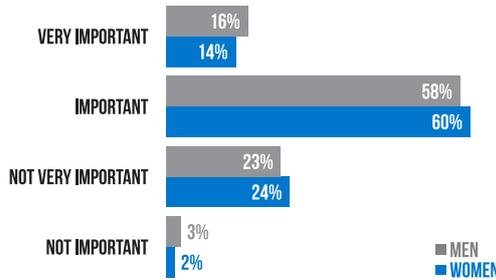


FIGURE 20. HOW IMPORTANT IS MOVING UPWARDS ON THE CAREER LADDER IN THE EDF FOR YOU?

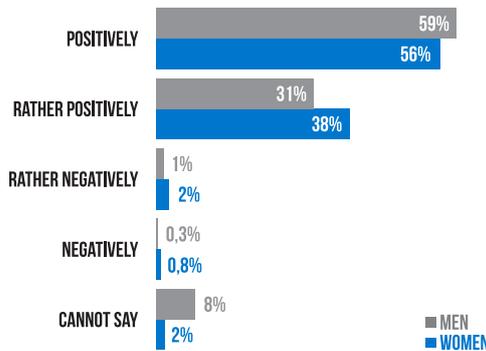


FIGURE 21. HOW DO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS VIEW YOUR EMPLOYMENT WITHIN THE EDF?

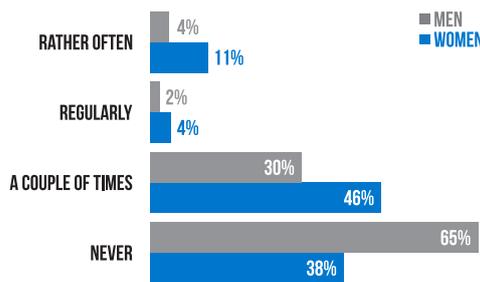


FIGURE 22. HAVE YOU NOTICED THAT A FEMALE COLLEAGUE OF YOURS HAS BEEN TREATED UNEQUALLY AT WORK BECAUSE SHE IS A WOMAN?

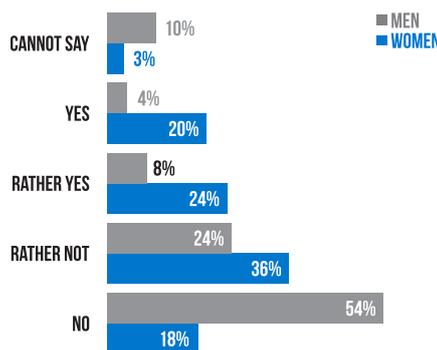


FIGURE 23. HOW DO YOU FEEL. HAS THE ASPECT OF GENDER HAD ANY EFFECT ON YOUR WORK OR CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN THE EDF?

This figure can be interpreted in two ways: in a professional organisation, gender affiliation should bear no importance, and therefore answers should preferably be close to medium values; in other words, people should not have had either positive or negative experiences due to their gender. Such was the opinion of 50 women out of 120 who answered the question.

The second group, which was of almost equal size (n=56), chose the scale’s four highest values, meaning that they have had a lot of positive experiences due to their gender in their opinion. This indicator could also be interpreted as commendable, since in integrating a minority group into an organisation one has to take the specifics of the minority into account to a certain extent.

Even though it could be presumed that other values (e.g. family, home, children) are more important than a military career for women, Figure 20 shows that a career in the EDF is equally important to both men and women. In both groups, a total of 74% of the respondents consider this important or very important.

It is interesting to note that for 24% of both male and female respondents, a military career is not important. Here, the characteristic of rank does not play a decisive role—such individuals are equally represented in all ranks. Age, education, and marital status were also not decisive.

The only characteristic that influenced whether furthering one’s career in the EDF was deemed important was (by a couple of per cent) the number of years served. Respondent groups with longer service records (who had served 11 to 20, and over 20 years) tended to view the furthering of one’s career as less important. At the same time, there was no gender-based difference in those groups—interest in furthering their career disappears for men and women equally among people with longer service records.

Female respondents felt more than average that family and friends regard their service in the EDF rather positively or positively. Female respondents felt such an attitude in 94% of cases (see Figure 21).

My family is very proud of me. When my friends introduce me to someone new, they always mention that I serve in the EDF. The reaction of new people is always rather similar: their face lightens up and they are amazed.

Woman, officer, age group 18 to 30

Male respondents felt such an attitude in 90% of cases. At the same time, there were a significant number of men who could not say how family and friends regarded their career choice (8% or 47 respondents).

One female respondent thought that family and friends have a negative attitude towards her career, and four thought that it is regarded rather negatively (total of 4%). Among men, such assessment was provided by 2 and 9 respectively (total of 1%).

When the respondents were provided the opportunity to explain how they perceive the attitude of their family, the women who felt that their family members regard their career choice negatively, described that according to their kin's view, the EDF are a big waste of taxpayers' money, that a military career and family are not compatible, and that women are not allowed to have a career in the EDF.

The women whose family regard their career positively explained that the EDF are regarded as a good employer, serving the nation is respected, people are surprised by such a career choice in a positive way, and the posture of men straightens when they meet such a woman. (The latter observation seems to be a distant echo of historical times when women in uniform were deemed a motivating factor to men—among some members of contemporary Estonian society this still appears to be the case).

In the case of men, it was mainly explained that their family was proud of a man who has chosen such a career. The second keyword that was often used was “cool”—in the opinion of the respondents, their family perceives that a military career is cool. It was also stressed that the reputation of the EDF is good in society and people care about topics related to national defence.

Addressing only female respondents, the survey asked whether the respondent has felt that she has been treated unequally at work due to being a woman: 37% of the respondents said that they have never felt that way, 50% have felt it a few times, 12% relatively often, and 1% regularly.

While the previous question was reflexive, we then asked whether the respondent has generally noticed that a female colleague has been treated unequally at work due to being a woman. We asked the question from men, too, and in this case, greater gender-based differences emerged (see Figure 22).

While among men, 65% have not noticed such behaviour, the corresponding number is only 38% among women. While among men, 35% of the respondents had noticed such unequal treatment, among women, the figure reached 62%. Therefore, a certain inverse effect emerged: 2/3 of men have not noticed the unequal treatment of women and 2/3 of women have noticed it. Within this, 11% of women thought that such unequal treatment takes place fairly often.

While 37% of women answered that they had not felt they were being treated unequally in view of the previous question, in the case of this question, 38% of the respondents agreed. Yet, those two respondent groups coincide with each other only by three-quarters; for example, two respondents who have not experienced unequal treatment themselves pointed out that they have noticed it regularly with other women, and ten pointed out that they have noticed it a couple of times.

Viewing things from the opposite direction, 12 female respondents found that even though they have not noticed unequal treatment in the case of their female colleagues, they

I remember from earlier times that men were preferably sent on training and field exercises with limited vacancies, but women were promoted faster to the rank of Corporal than men, for example.

Man, non-commissioned officer, age group 31 to 45

have experienced it themselves a couple of times. Yet, that group did not include women who had felt unequal treatment regularly or relatively often.

The reader may now think that unequal treatment may also mean more favourable treatment than usual, but this perception has been disproven by the open-ended answers of the respondents. Female respondents clarify that by unequal treatment they mean

I have had situations where I achieve a good result in something (a better result than most men) and I am told that I achieved that result/good feedback/good grade only because I am a woman. Even though I worked just as hard as men or even harder.

Woman, officer, age group 18 to 30

women being deemed inferior, not taking the viewpoints of women into account, not inviting women to events outside work, changing the subject of a conversation in the presence of women, setting requirements to do much more work to achieve a rank, and continuously associating the professional conduct and decisions of women with their gender.

For the next question, it was important to know whether the aspect of gender has somehow affected the respondent's work and career. Among men, 12% of the respondents agreed or inclined to agree, and among women, as many as 44% agreed or rather agreed with that statement.

Viewing this question, one has to consider that in a professional organisation, the aspect of gender should not factor in building a career.

This question may as well prompt the thought that if gender has had a positive influence on someone's career, the situation may be acceptable. Unfortunately, the women who represent this point of view belong to the same group who had rather described negative experiences in their open-ended answers to the previous question.

7. ON NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

The respondents were asked 12 questions related to possible work-related gender-based negative experiences. Upon viewing the obtained results to the survey, one has to take into account that this is an organisation dominated by men; and therefore, an experience that is the same in name is clearly different for men and women. The most important results will be hereby provided in separate figures and the less important ones are provided in a table at the end of the chapter.

Comments about their figure or looks have been heard by half of the female respondents (see Figure 24); the same has been experienced by 35% of the men.²³ Of course, in the case of this data the question is what this experience means. That would need a separate analysis in a qualitative study.

23. In the British Army, a similar question gained a positive answer from 22% of men and 39% of women. See: British Army, *Speak out. Sexual Harassment Report 2015* (London, 2015), <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/british-army-sexual-harassment-report-2015> (accessed September 6, 2017).

When a similar question was posed in the US Military with the specification of whether anybody has made sexual remarks about the respondent's looks, there were 2.01% responders among men and 8.7% among women. See: Coreen Farris, Lisa H. Jaycox, Andrew R. Morral and Tarry L. Schell, "Performance of the Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination Module" in *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military: Volume 4. Investigations of Potential Bias in Estimates from the 2014 RAND Military Workplace Study*, ed. Andrew R. Morral, Kristie L. Gore, Terry L. Schell (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2016), 103-122, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR870z6/RAND_RR870z6.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).

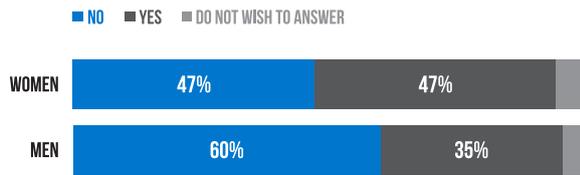


FIGURE 24. HAS SOMEONE AT OR IN RELATION TO WORK IN THE EDF MADE A COMMENT ABOUT YOUR LOOKS OR FIGURE?



FIGURE 25. HAS SOMEONE AT OR IN RELATION TO WORK IN THE EDF MADE GENERALISING REMARKS ABOUT MEN OR WOMEN IN YOUR PRESENCE?

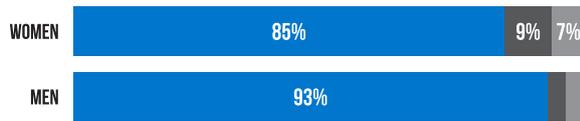


FIGURE 26. HAS SOMEONE PROPOSED TO HAVE INTERCOURSE WITH YOU AT WORK OR IN CONNECTION WITH YOUR WORK AT THE EDF?

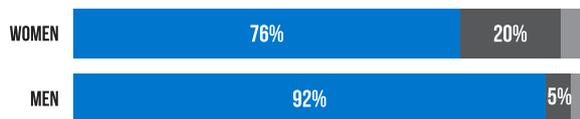


FIGURE 27. HAS SOMEONE ATTEMPTED TO TOUCH OR HUG YOU IN A SITUATION WHERE IT WAS NOT NECESSARY?

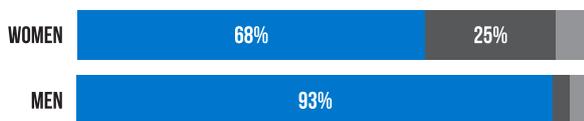


FIGURE 28. HAVE YOU BEEN DISPARAGED OR HAVE OTHERS BEEN FORCED TO REGARD YOU IN A DISPARAGING WAY BASED ON GENDER?

While the former question was reflexive, the next figure represents the respondents' experience with gender-based remarks in a work-related situation in general (see Figure 25). It turns out that 62% of female respondents and 40% of male respondents have experienced it.

The question of whether someone has at or in relation to work in the EDF proposed to have intercourse with the respondent (see Figure 26) was replied with an affirmative by 9% of the women (n=11) and 3% of men (n=20). Eight female respondents or 7% did not want to answer that question; a negative answer was given by 104 female respondents.²⁴

24. In the Canadian Armed Forces, a similar question gained an affirmative answer from 0.4% of men and 5.6% of women. 0.9% of women confessed that they have been sexually assaulted in the last 12 months. See: Statistics Canada, *Sexual misconduct in Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa, 2016), <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161128/dq161128a-eng.htm> (accessed September 6, 2017).

When asked if someone has attempted to touch or hug the respondent without reason in a working situation (see Figure 27), 20% of women (n=24) and 5% of men (n=29) answered with an affirmative.²⁵

Twenty-five per cent (25%) of female respondents (n=31) have experienced disparagement based on gender or felt that others have been forced to disparage her. In the case of male respondents, the percentage is at 3; in other words, 19 individuals expressed an absolute number (see Figure 28).

Table 1 provides the percentages of other possible negative experiences and situations suggested by the researcher.

Despite refusals, 19% of women have received suggestions or proposals to get together or spend free time together; 7% of men have had the same experience. Interestingly, innuendo or

In the British Army, a similar question gained a positive answer from 2% of men and 4% of women. 2% of women and 1% of men confessed that they have been sexually assaulted in the last 12 months. See: British Army, *Speak out. Sexual Harassment Report 2015*.

In the US Military, it was asked whether someone had attempted to establish a romantic or sexual relationship with the respondent against their will. An affirmative answer was provided by 0.61% of men and 9.02% of women. See: Coreen Farris et al, "Performance of the Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination Module".

In the US Military, 3.6% of women and 0.47% of men confessed to having been sexually assaulted in the last 12 months. See: Bonnie Ghosh-Dastidar, Tarry L. Schell, Andrew R. Morral and Marc N. Elliott, "The Efficacy of Sampling Weights for Correcting Nonresponse Bias" in *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military: Volume 4. Investigations of Potential Bias in Estimates from the 2014 RAND Military Workplace Study*, ed. Andrew R. Morral, Kristie L. Gore, Terry L. Schell (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2016), 21-70, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR870z6/RAND_RR870z6.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).

25. In the Canadian Armed Forces, a similar question regarding the previous year received an affirmative answer from 1.1% of men and 4% of women. For the entire service duration, an affirmative answer was provided by 3.4% of men and 24% of women. See: Statistics Canada, *Sexual misconduct in Canadian Armed Forces*.

In the US Military, in posing a similar question, it has been specified that the respondent should answer whether his/her private body parts have been touched. This question gained an affirmative answer from 4.66% of women and 1.41% men. See: Lisa H. Jaycox, Andrew R. Morral, Terry L. Schell, Coreen Farris, "Performance of the Sexual Assault Survey Module" in *Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment in the U.S. Military: Volume 4. Investigations of Potential Bias in Estimates from the 2014 RAND Military Workplace Study*, ed. Andrew R. Morral, Kristie L. Gore, Terry L. Schell (Santa Monica: Rand Corporation, 2016), 77-92, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR800/RR870z6/RAND_RR870z6.pdf (accessed September 6, 2017).

In the British Army, a similar question gained an affirmative answer from 6% of men and 12% of women. See: British Army, *Speak out. Sexual Harassment Report 2015*.

	men	women
Despite previous refusals, have you received suggestions or proposals to get together or spend free time together?		
no	90%	75%
yes	7%	19%
do not wish to answer	4%	7%
Have jokes with a sexual undercurrent or innuendo been told to you or in your presence? ²⁶		
no	90%	78%
yes	7%	16%
do not wish to answer	3%	7%
Have your proposals or opinions been neglected due to your gender?		
no	95%	65%
yes	2%	27%
do not wish to answer	3%	8%
Have you been assigned additional duties not related to your work (e.g. moving furniture, making coffee) due to your gender?		
no	74%	62%
yes	22%	33%
do not wish to answer	3%	5%
Have you been refused an assignment of responsibility or duties due to your gender?		
no	95%	76%
yes	2%	1%
do not wish to answer	3%	7%

Table 1. Experience with different negative situations

jokes with a sexual undercurrent have been told only in the presence of 16% of women and 7% of men. It is possible that this can be explained with such behaviour being too common or the fact that the respondent is not bothered by it.

Yet, all the following questions are directly related to the performance of daily duties and professional decisions—therefore, the performance and efficiency of the organisation as a whole. Twenty-seven per cent (27%) of female respondents have felt that their work-related proposals have been neglected due to gender. Let us remind ourselves that the reason the Norwegians, Irish, and Australians want to increase the percentage of women in their military is to gain work-related proposals from another perspective (see Introduction).

26. In the Canadian Armed Forces, a similar question gained an affirmative answer from 75% of men and 78% of women. See: Statistics Canada, *Sexual misconduct in Canadian Armed Forces*.

In the US Military, a similar question gained an affirmative answer from 5.17% of men and 13.08% of women. See: Coreen Farris et al, "Performance of the Sexual Harassment and Gender Discrimination Module".

Thirty-three per cent (33%) of women and 22% of men have experienced the assignment of gender-based additional duties not related to their work duties. Seventeen per cent (17%) of women claimed that they have been refused an assignment of responsibility or duties due to their gender.

When asked whether the respondent knew who to turn to in case of unpleasant incidents, 25% of men (n=152) and 32% of women (n=39) answered that they did not know. Given the opportunity to express their thoughts, the respondents thought that they would turn to their superior, chaplain, psychologist or the Inspector General of the EDF. At the same time, 10 female respondents added that notification is certainly needed in this case. It was also pointed out that reporting incidents leads nowhere and makes subsequent service actually more difficult.

Those women who knew who to turn to pointed out that they would primarily contact their

superior in such a case. The Inspector General of the EDF and ombudsman were also listed numerous times. At the same time, it was stressed that in such a situation, the mediator of the conflict would rather protect the interests of the organisation, not the individual. A couple of times, attention was drawn to the fact that officers solve such problems by themselves.

Men who did not know who to turn to in the case of unpleasant incidents thought on four occasions that more information should be available on that topic. There was an inclination towards the view that they could manage such problems by themselves and if it was really necessary to find help, they would contact their direct superior.

The greatest number of those male respondents who knew who to turn to suggested that they would contact their superior. The Inspector General, ombudsman, and the unit's Master Sergeant were also suggested. It was also stressed that it was not becoming for officers to complain about such things and that they would resolve such situations on their own.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE RESPONDENTS

The respondents were given the opportunity to provide recommendations on how to engage with the topic further in a free format—41% of the female and 39% of the male respondents took the opportunity. Most male respondents recommended spreading more information in society: in the media, in schools, at public events. At the same time, they stressed that information has to be made available also within the EDF, because awareness has to be high within the organisation itself as well. The organisation must also be ready in terms of infrastructure and codes of conduct.

It was pointed out that the number of female conscripts should be increased, which builds a foundation for new active service personnel. The respondents were generally pleased that the number of female conscripts is on the rise and that this is the right development. There were also opinions that a conscript service for women should be made mandatory. Other respondents, at the same time, thought that under no circumstances should we take the

road of obligations and quotas. Viewpoints that women should not be accepted into the EDF at all were also expressed.

Attention was repeatedly drawn to the fact that active service personnel do not actually understand why the number of women has to be increased, since such courses of action cannot be an objective in and of itself but a means to achieve an objective not yet defined.

It was repeatedly stressed that medical units urgently need more women. It was noted a couple of times that women still cannot be directed to serve in a combat unit. At the same time, it was also recommended that women could form separate units.

Male respondents pointed out four times that we should start by having a Minister of Defence who has completed conscript service.

Female respondents also mentioned the most that for women to get involved, information must be spread, already starting with kindergartens and schools.

Women pointed out that many may fear service because mothers always want to be available for their children.

It was stressed that the current equipment was not suitable for women, they did not want to look like bums, being a good soldier does not entail being unbathed and wearing ill-fitting clothes and such general common problems should be solved before the more extensive involvement of women.

It was repeatedly mentioned that to involve women more, work has to be done with men, not women. Women are afraid that they will not be heard in the organisation due to its overall male-centric stances.

It was pointed out two times by female respondents that recruit training should be made mandatory for women and that the main entry point to the EDF should be conscript service. It was also recommended that the physical requirements for women be raised so that only those who manage at least as well as men would enter the military. It was also thought that women should serve on the home front.

This approach was protested by one officer respondent with a service record of over 20 years who recommended reviewing training materials. One illustrative excerpt from these deserves to be quoted here. The Infantry Manual of the Estonian Defence Forces describes, among other things, the factors shaping the worldview of service personnel. These include the keyword “male-centred”, which is explained as follows: “The male-centeredness of the social circle may affect attitudes toward gender roles. The EDF also include women but often they work in catering, medical, storage, and communication services, mostly as attendants.”

It was also recommended that recruiting women to the Estonian National Defence College be made a specific objective, stressing that we want women in the EDF because we want the best of society in the EDF, be they men or women. One respondent expressed their opinion that there is no purpose in just joking around, but if a woman has the firm desire to serve in the EDF, her career will always be supported.

CONCLUSIONS

Although the sample of this survey included fewer young active service personnel with a shorter service record and lower education, participation was still very active and the reliability of the sample can be considered high.

As an important observation, it has to be pointed out that support for women serving in the EDF is much higher among active service personnel than in society in general. While in society in general 16% of the respondents found that women should not participate in conscript service at all, only 5% held that view among active service personnel. At the same time, the idea for voluntary conscript service for women has found wide support in society in general as well as in the EDF.

While in society in general almost half of the respondents were inclined to agree with the claim that women should serve in the EDF only in peacetime or that women are not suited to fighting a war, among active service personnel only under 30% held that view.

One thing which was noticed was the above-average opposition of active servicewomen to claims representing traditional gender stereotypes; for example, that women cannot manage equally with men or that women are not suited for certain military roles. At the same time, women expressed above-average support for quotas and organising training for female conscripts under a separate programme.

It is interesting that the experience of instructing female conscripts significantly increases active servicemen’s support for the idea that women manage equally well compared to male conscripts.

Most of the women said that they have experienced many positive things in the EDF due to their gender. Female and male respondents held their careers as equally important and mostly perceived that their family regarded their career choice favourably.

As expected, unequal treatment due to gender was perceived differently by men and women. A certain inverse effect occurred: 2/3 of men have not noticed the unequal treatment of women and 2/3 of women have noticed it. It has to be stated that 1/3 of women claim they have not been unequally treated based on gender and a partly overlapping group of the same size have not noticed gender-based unequal treatment toward other female colleagues either.

Some negative issues that have to be pointed out are the fact that 10 to 20% of female respondents have experienced different types of physical advances and one-fifth to a quarter of female respondents have experienced that their professional competence is under-used due to their gender characteristics.

When the respondents were asked for their recommendations about moving forward in the field of involving women, the most common suggestions proposed by respondents of both genders was related to spreading more information and raising awareness among the general public as well as among serving members of the EDF.



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