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Military Masculinities and Gender Training

A qualitative analysis of The Nordic Centre of Gender in Military
Operations

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the notions of military masculinities in the gender training of the Nordic Centre of Gender in Military Operations (NCGM). Military masculinities are argued to create problematic gender norms that value men and devalue women. Therefore, there is a need to see if NCGM does reinforce or construct these gender norms into their training. The masculine norms are constructed as a dichotomy to the female norms, giving traits such as men being protectors and women the protected, and men being perpetrators and women being victims. The study is carried out through a qualitative text analysis of publications found on NCGM's website. The analysis examines the extent of military masculine traits in their publications, and how these traits are depicted. The results show that NCGM is aware of the gender stereotypes of military masculinities, but they still do depict men and women in stereotypical feminine and masculine roles.

Keywords: military masculinities, gender, gender norms, gender training, masculinity, Nordic Centre of Gender in Military Operations

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Abbreviations

CRSV - Conflict-Related Sexual Violence

CRSGBV - Conflict-Related Sexual and Gender Based Violence

NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NCGM - Nordic Centre of Gender in Military Operations

SEA - Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

TGM - Teaching Gender in The Military, A Handbook

UN - United Nations

UNSCR - United Nations Security Council Resolution

WIN - What is NCGM

WPS - Women, Peace and Security

WS - Who's security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations

1. Introduction

War and gender have always been intertwined. Cultures have created certain gender roles and even used these gender constructions to justify and enable war as well as using it as a weapon (Goldstein, 2001, p.251; Wood, 2018, pp.514-515). War is seen as a masculine activity and even though there is an increasing number of women in the military, most of the soldiers are still male and war is still a male dominated field (Chinkin & Kaldor, 2013, p.167; Goldstein, 2001, p.10). That is to say, decisions both in the administrative area such as spending, as well as decisions concerning who and when to kill, are mostly enforced by men. This domination of the field creates an image of men being seen as the “specialist” in violence, from domestic to military (Hearn, 2011, p.37).

One of the consequences of military gender norms have been argued by feminist scholars to be “military masculinities”, whereby soldiers are being formed to be “masculine”, violent, heterosexual and strong protectors who reinforce military masculine norms further. This explanation has further been used to explain sexual violence that has become an element of these masculinities, where it does not come from a sexual drive but rather from the masculine traits one is taught in the military. The soldiers would need to kill the feminine in oneself and feminize the enemy. Another problem military masculinities creates is the existence of sexual assault within the military, post-traumatic stress disorder among the peacekeepers, as well as the domestic abuse by the service members (Holvikivi, 2021, p.180). War is not something that runs through men’s veins but is rather something that needs to be taught by attaching masculine norms to the military and fighting (Goldstein, 2001, p.252). Hence, military masculinities have become a part of the peacekeeper and military gender identity (Higate, 2007, p.102). For this identity to be upheld, the literature on military masculinities suggests that the masculine identities need a polar construction of femininities.

In an analysis by Laplonge (2015) on the United Nations (UN) gender training, there seems to be a lack of understanding of different cultures and gender characteristics. There is also an absence in the peacekeepers own understanding of culture and gender and on how specifically their own cultures might affect their values and how they act as a group. Instead, the peacekeepers training has rather been focusing on how they can protect women in the best way. He recognizes that different kinds of masculinities can impact the behaviour of the

peacekeeping personnel, thus believing that training them into being aware of their own masculinity could help reduce gender-based crimes and biases. Furthermore, Laplonge (2015) argues that the gender norms existing in the military can also affect women's performance in the field, where women, as early as in the pre-deployment training, have only gotten the “safe” tasks and hence not become trained for the more dangerous assignments (Holmes, 2019). This illustrates how even women in the military are still being seen as in need of protection.

This thesis will study the norms of military masculinities in the Nordic Centre of Gender in Military Operations (NCGM) gender training. In October 2000, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 1325 which led to the involvement of women into the peace and security agenda. Since then, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has pushed the question of needing gender perspectives into military institutions. The focus lies on the role of women in conflict, protection of their rights during and after a conflict, their needs during the post-conflict period and on women's participation in peacebuilding. In 2008 they included conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) into the WPS agenda, recognizing it as a tactic of war and a crime against humanity. In 2015 the UN Security Council put it into the WPS agenda to prevent and protect women, girls and more recently boys and men, from CRSV. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) also adapted and joined into the WPS agenda by creating an operational framework to be able to implement the UN resolutions (DCAF, 2016, p.i; Political and Peacebuilding Affairs; Östman, 2021). After resolution 1325, the Nordic countries wanted to contribute more to the WPS agenda, so in 2012 NCGM was created. NCGM was in 2013 appointed head department of NATO's gender initiative, meaning that they assist NATO in training and education concerning gender and support their different partners with expertise. Additionally, they also collaborate and support the other Nordic countries and other international and military organisations as well as holding their own seminars and training programmes (NCGM, 2020; Östman, 2021). The content and the quality of NCGM's trainings are hence highly significant for a great deal of peacekeepers' perception of gender in military contexts, as well as a great influence in gender and military academia. Therefore, it is of importance to examine how this pivotal gender centre associates and works with military masculinities in their training.

1.1 Research Question and Main Purpose

Knowing about the effect military masculinities can have on soldiers, peacekeepers and wars, it would be reasonable that the theme of masculinities would be included in the military gender training. Gender in the military has become a growing academic field, as well as the literature on gender norms and masculinities. NCGM's work and purpose is educating about gender within the military and therefore it is of interest to see to what extent they consider these gender stereotypes that derive from military masculinities when constructing their training and in their own values. There are no other scholars that have looked into NCGM when researching military masculinities. If there is an absence of awareness and presence of military masculinities gender stereotypes in NCGM's publications it could confirm the idea of the military being a hegemonic masculine organisation, and if not, it could show a level of progressiveness in the notion of gender in the military. This research will however not be looking at how effective their training is or what consequences it might give. I am simply interested in answering the question of *What notions of military masculinities and its potential harms are constructed in the NCGM publications?*

1.2 Previous Research and My Contribution

This part of the thesis will discuss some previous research and how this study contributes to the field. Previous research includes analyses of other documents relevant to gender training and observations of gender training through the lens of military masculinities. Furthermore, there is also previous research on The Swedish Armed Forces and NCGM, but without a focus on military masculinities.

Dean Laplonge (2015) is sceptical of the concept of military masculinities in the existing gender training. He claims that gender training has become rather tokenistic and that there is a demand from officers for a "quick fix" gender training program. When investigating UN gender training materials, he observes that there is a refusal to deeper examine cultural masculinities within the military. Furthermore, the UN training materials mention that sexual violence is forbidden, but do not reflect upon why CRSV might occur or how normative and normalized masculinities can affect peacekeepers' perceptions of sexual violence. Further, he observed that there was a greater focus on how the military reacts to the training, rather than prioritising the quality.

Similarly, Aiko Holvikivi (2021) conducted a study on gender in peacekeeping training. She looks at UN Security Council resolutions pre-deployment training materials that are affirmed through localized commitments in regional and national policy documents. She also looks at the content of the overall gender training, rather than at the specific concept of masculinities, as Laponge (2015) and I will. She does, however, brush upon the subject of military masculinities, as it is a part of gender and military studies. Another finding is how different states interpret gender and what gender training should achieve in different ways; that is, how different states will create, and have, varied priorities within their own gender training (Holvikivi, 2021, pp.190). However, Holvikivi (2020a) also studied pre-deployment training for military peacekeepers during her research on emotional pedagogy. She noticed that there is an importance of discussing feelings in the context of CRSV, something often considered un-masculine in the military environment of hegemonic masculinities. Holvikivi (2020a) argues that the emotions generated by discussing CRSV, provoke a conflict between the military masculinities and talking about one's feelings. This conflict is “solved” by the military through emotional pedagogy in which the emotions concerning sexual violence are reduced to a military problem that can be “solved” through martial force. Furthermore, she illustrates the concept of “excess emotions,” believing that there are emotions created by CRSV discourses that cannot be contained within the role of the military.

Robert Egnell, now the principal of the Swedish Defence University, has written some important works regarding gender mainstreaming in *The Swedish Armed Forces Model*. His research is similar to my own, except I will look specifically at NCGM and military masculinities. In a study published with Peter Hojam and Hannes Berts in 2012, called “Implementing a gender perspective in military organisations and operations” they attempt to describe and evaluate the evolution and the model of gender perspectives in the Swedish Armed Forces. Although there is an implementation of gender perspectives, its transformational potential has not been delved into. For example, the theme of working more within the unit and staff instead of projects with limited impact. Gender perspectives were only complementary to operational effectiveness, but they noticed that the newly established NCGM has a great deal of potential and was innovative in the field. In their work of 2014, “Gender, military effectiveness, and organizational change”, they look specifically at the implementation of gender perspectives in the Swedish Armed Forces to see if/how it can affect the military’s effectiveness in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. They also

highlight the importance of implementers being strategically placed within the organization. In findings, they observe that the Swedish Armed Forces have been relatively successful, one of the reasons being that they chose to apply gender perspectives as a military effectiveness issue instead of being its own problem. Overall, the findings suggest that officers found gender field advisors beneficial in terms of effectiveness. Egnell (et.al. 2014, p.14) briefly mentions military masculinities, understanding it to be an important subject, but only touches upon it. Additionally, these publications looking into gender mainstreaming were published first in 2012, when the NCGM more or less got started, and the second in 2014. It is now 2021, and the gender field has grown and developed, and therefore, one can assume that NCGM has as well. This thesis will hence contribute to a more modern study and with another perspective.

Most previous research has looked at documents and organisations other than the NCGM, except for Egnell et.al. They do, however, look into their implementation of gender mainstreaming, rather than looking at the features and presence or absence of masculinities. While the location of Holvikivi's (2020) study is classified, she looks at emotional pedagogy, rather than masculinities per se, although she recognizes it to be an important part in the military masculinities discourse. This study will contribute to the field by looking specifically into NCGM and their training programs to see if and how they deal with the subject of military masculinities. This study has not been done before and will contribute to the greater academic field of gender in the military.

1.3 Outline

In this first section I have gone through a short introduction on the subject and the organisation analysed. The relevance of the study and how it contributes to the field have also been explained. Next section will be discussing the theory this study is built upon and discuss relevant concepts that will be used throughout the essay. Section 3 will be discussing what method was used, what material, and why. In section 4 the results will be presented. Moreover, in section 5 there will be a discussion of the findings from the analysis. Concludingly the last section will be a short summary as well as suggesting ideas for future research.

2. Theory

In this section, I will discuss the theories used during my analysis. It will begin by creating a foundational understanding of the definitions used throughout this text. Furthermore, this section explains the actual theories that will be used and creates an understanding of why it is relevant for my thesis. Lastly, I will present the broad subject of military masculinity and illustrate that there are multiple dimensions of military masculinities.

2.1 Gender and War

War is universally gendered and always has been. Patriarchal gender relations are even argued to predisposing societies for war, as well as simply being a cause of them (Cockburn, 2011, p.19). Military masculinities are a small subject in a greater, and growing, field of gender and war. For example, scholars researching themes such as how genders are affected differently during times of war, gender being a reason for justifying war, and the connection between gender and sexual violence of different kinds¹. Furthermore, Goldstein (2001, p.38) argues that there is not a single strand of feminist theory within the field of war, however, most feminist approaches do acknowledge the fact that gender does, in fact, matter in war. There is also a collective concern within feminist strands of masculinities in military practices, that being an ideology that justifies male domination.

2.2 Masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity is a concept described as manifesting the most honourable way of being a man. Even though it is only practiced by a minority, it is very much seen as normalized. It requires all other men to adapt in relation to it as well as legitimize the global subordination of women to men. When studying the field of hegemonic masculinities, one of the main focuses is on the military where hegemonic masculinities has become problematic and an entrenched trait of the military (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, pp.832,834).

The definition of military masculinities is described as a concept that is embedded within the military organisation. The military comes with both benefits and requirements, and according to Ogilvy (2016, p.1), the training is constructed to create a masculine ideal. That ideal consists of for example having respect for authority, self-discipline, violence, service before

¹ Famous scholars such as Cynthia Enloe, Joshua Goldstein, Sandra Whitworth, Marsha Henry, Maria Eriksson Baaz, Higate... etc

self and risk-taking. During times of war, additional stereotypical norms are applied, such as being courageous, willing to sacrifice and being strong. These traits have been considered central for the definitions of military masculinity. The basic military training has often been described as a process where the military indoctrinates hegemonic masculinity norms that praise masculine traits as well as denigrating femininity (Holvikivi, 2021). Whitworth (2004, pp.151,160) describes the military as a strictly ordered hierarchical organization where the main purpose is to create men, and sometimes women, to be warriors who are prepared to kill and die for their country. Further mentioning how some have suggested that the military's first task is to teach the soldiers to be men, and secondarily teach them to be soldiers. Masculinities can, however, not be constructed without constructing a complementary and supportive ideal of femininities. Cultures construct women, the feminine, as only having a value of being nurturing mothers while celebrating men as soldiers (Enloe, 2004, p.107).

Femininities are seen as a part of the definitions of masculinities. When defining militarism Enloe (2004, p.219) defines it as including the idea of always needing an “enemy” to which they always will have a hierarchical relationship to, for the sake of being able to act effectively. Enloe (2004) also includes the trait of the feminine always needing protecting in time of crisis. That is to say, militarism is directly connected to protecting “the feminine”. Femininities have always been associated with being vulnerable, peaceful, fertile and in need of protection. These traits are a necessary counterpart to the masculine identity of the killing warring protectors (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2009, p.499). Femininities/non-masculinities within the military are nevertheless seen as something bad. The military use sexist, racist and homophobic slurs such as “cunt”, “faggot”, “nigger” or simply “ladies” to intimidate new recruits and teaching them what not to be and nurture their ideals of masculinity. The military's job is supposed to “kill” all feminine traits within the soldier. For example, soldiers coming home after the Vietnam War have expressed how they rather have permanent physical injury's rather than admitting of having mental problems after the war since it is seen as “betrayal” of the hypermasculine norms (Whitworth, 2004, pp.156,161,170-171). When masculinities within the military denounce femininities, they also denounce and deny the fact that women and girls can be perpetrators of violence as well. Even though they do know about it, it is a too uncomfortable subject to discuss (Eriksson Baaz & Stern, 2013, p.35).

Higate and Henry (2004 p.489) find in their ethnographic study of masculinity and security involving peacekeepers, that there is a well-established link between sexuality and masculinities. Peacekeeper's identity is constructed in relation to the "local" women and their sexual relations being a central part, even though the "identity" varies. Military masculinities can also infantilize the "other women" to people who need to be saved from their barbaric, dehumanized men by the masculine "saviours". Often these "saviours" have been depicted as the strong white middle-class men (Khalid, 2011, pp.20,23; Ogilvy, 2016, pp.1-2). The militarized masculinities also affect "otherness" when the peacekeepers use their power position to sexually exploit the "local" women. Being with "other" women would give opportunities to do things they cannot do at home. Women can also become systematically "othered" through military masculinities where their personhood, both materially and symbolically, is undermined (Higate & Henry, 2004, pp.490,494).

Furthermore, as mentioned earlier, the construction of different masculinities cannot be done without the creation of the opposite "other" femininities. Cultures create a categorisation of male and female duality and when masculinity becomes valued in the military, femininity becomes devalued and discriminated against. Soldiers insisting on being heroes will hence create a dichotomy whereby males are protectors and females are the ones in need of protection (Chinkin & Kaldor, 2013, p.168; Goldstein, 2001, pp.251-252). According to Higate and Henry (2004, p.493) the institutionalized masculine norms within the military circulates within the discourse of peacekeepers being saviours and women requiring men's "protection". As Laplonge (2015) noticed in his research, the UN's training programs focused mainly on how the soldiers should act to be able to protect women in the best way possible. Furthermore, men are, as mentioned, connected to be fighters while women's role within the military varies depending on cultures, from being part of the troops to being peacemakers. These norms illustrate how even the females in the military are seen as being in need of protection and that not only the civilian women (Goldstein, 2001, p.10).

When men are not supposed to be vulnerable, they are also often not seen as possible victims of war. Eriksson Baaz & Stern (2013, pp.34-35) discuss this subject in relation to CRSV. The CRSV against men are more varied than against women and can include mutilation, forcing men to rape or men being denigrated. A subject that seems to have been forgotten and ignored while women are being portrayed and assumed to be victims.

I might also add that I understand that there are different kinds of cultural definitions of masculinity. As well as other definitions, the definition of military masculinity can, and has, changed over time. Laplonge (2015) underlines the importance of understanding that there are several forms of masculinities that cannot always be understood, since different groups can have their own internalized definition of “masculine”. There are risks associated with trying to define masculinity in the context of peacekeeping operations since this could create “good” and “bad” men. The bad men will be hunted down and the good will give peacekeepers unrealistic standards of what they need to be, when they really should be focusing on their own culture's perception of masculinity. Military cultures vary depending on time and place; hence one cannot see military men as a homogeneous group. Even though there are similar traits of masculinity within the military, masculine traits can be expressed and shaped in multiple ways. There is a disaggregated construction of military masculinities, both between cultures as well as, for example, the Navy and the Air force (Brown, 2012; Higate & Henry, 2004, pp.484-485). However, as Goldstein (2001, p.10) argues, no matter what culture and society, military masculinities do simply have variations and men will always be connected to warfighting. That is why, in this thesis, I refer to “masculinities” rather than “masculinity”.

To clarify, the definition used in this study is the more stereotypical one, as mentioned by the authors above. The strong, violent, aggressive, courageous, heterosexual, saviours, are the traits that will be mostly looked at. Since military masculinities assume that gender is a dichotomy whereby women are described as the opposite, it is relevant to see how females are portrayed in contrast to the men.

For transparency I should briefly mention a critique of military masculinities in connection to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA). Moncrief (2017, p.716-718) counters the theory of military masculinities by claiming that if military masculinities were a reason for SEA there would be less of a variation between different peacekeeping operations. The variation of SEA in peacekeeping operations is a valid point that is worth considering when researching military masculinities. However, he does not take into consideration that peacekeeping missions have soldiers who come from different cultures. As mentioned above, military masculinities can vary among cultures, for example some focus more on sexual violence while others focus more on honour. Nonetheless, SEA is not the only problematic outcome of military masculinities, as mentioned in this thesis.

2.3 Masculinities in Gender Training

Gender training and masculinities in the military have become co-dependent where the training has become an instrument to reproduce the masculine stereotypes but at the same time relying on them to work. Always depicting the victim of sexual violence as female while the peacekeepers are masculine saviours (Holvikivi, 2020a, p.5). Soldiers do not want to be seen as rape victims, claiming that “rape only happens to women.” Similarly, rape is also a way of attacking the enemy, stripping them of their “manhood” (Shepherd, 2008, pp.52-53). Gender have often only had a focus on women, and if the gender training does not address masculinities, it will simply reduce gender being equal to women's vulnerability and hence excluding the need to address men's vulnerability, power position, and the toxic side of military masculinities (Holvikivi, 2021, pp.180-181). The gender norms existing in the military can also affect women's performance in the field. As early as in the pre-deployment training, women have only gotten the “safe” tasks and, therefore, not trained for the more dangerous assignments that could occur in peacekeeping operations. Thus, both civilian and military women are seen as in need of protection (Holmes, 2019). Moreover, Holvikivi (2021) found that gender in UN pre-deployment training is seen as typically connected to sexual violence and a problem that can be solved through training.

Furthermore, some feminist theories have felt that gendered training in the military might be a waste of time and do not see how it might be able to work since the military is such a hegemonic masculine institution. The training would clash and rather be quite contradictory. There are also other scholars who have argued that training soldiers on gender might be normatively good (Holvikivi, 2020b). Nonetheless, according to Whitworth (2004, p.3) peacekeeping has become a contradiction. Soldiers are made through celebrating and reinforcing traits that are aggressive, promoting violence, misogyny, homophobia, and racism, when peacekeeping operations really are supposed to require attributes such as empathy, impartiality and sensitivity, norms that is argued to be rather the opposite of the typical military hyper-masculinities. Even though not all soldiers want to act in this way, the military organisation shows them that it is okay (Higate and Henry, 2004, p.484). Although troop-contributing countries to peacekeeping operations get a gender training curriculum, it does not mean that they will use it and implement it to change the norms within the military. Holmes (2019, pp. 67-68) argues that since gender norms in the military favour men, there is

a great likelihood that the male senior military leaders will reject the gender mainstreaming programs and continue to reinforce gender norms that will favour them. However, Duncanson (2009) argues that military masculinities can be a force for good if one can incorporate it with feminized characteristics, thus mixing being brave and strong, together with being empathic and patient. Similarly, Brown (2020) believes that when/if the military can work against their own masculine norms, they could be important agents of change. She also illustrates in her research on the Australian military, how there has been a lot of progress and potential for “re-gendering” the military from its toxic masculinities.

Furthermore, there has been some progress in the field of gender mainstreaming, and in the employment of female soldiers into the military, nonetheless, it is important to not simplify masculinities to the point of trying to explain CRSV through essentialist theories.

Essentialists believe that men are biologically aggressive and that is why they are good soldiers but also why they act upon their “lust”, being a part of their nature, while women are seen to be naturally more peaceful. This assumption could be dangerous since it suggests that recruiting women into the military, just because they come with certain “female characteristics”, would solve the complex issue of CRSV (Egnell, 2014, pp.121-122; Whitworth, 2004, p.153). The complex issue will be hard to solve if there is no recognition, or understanding, that there are different explanations as to why male peacekeepers commit CRSV (Higate & Henry, 2004, p.495)

3. Method and Design

This part of the thesis will present the material, design, and the operationalisation for my analysis of the NCGM. Firstly, presenting why the given material was chosen, then what kind and what it contains. Lastly, I will be explaining qualitative text analysis and how to operationalise it throughout the material.

3.1. Material

3.1.1 Choice of Material

I will analyse the publications found on NCGM's website regarding their training and peacekeeping, this includes 6 documents and 1 video. The original plan was to complement the publications by including a few interviews with trainers and/or gender experts from NCGM to create a greater depth into the findings. The interviews could have given NCGM a chance to explain my findings and be able to give a short answer of *why* the training is built and presented in this way. They were interested and wanted to participate in my study, but they did not have time for interviews. When not being able to implement the original plan, I decided to extend the amount of publications analysed. Using the publications alone, could be advantageous by, for example, isolating from other background factors and underlying variables such as different participants in a seminar, or personal opinions that could have an effect if using interviews. By analysing the publications chosen one gets more of an overview of NCGM, as well as information that is supposed to represent the whole department and therefore easier to generalise the result. Hence by critically choosing to extend the number of publications used there will still be a great overview of NCGM and there will be no problem with answering my research question (Esaiassion et.al. 2017, p.226). However, a mix of these two could have been preferable.

3.1.2 Documents

The documents analysed are the ones made available through the NCGM website, as well as some background and overall information from NCGM. They have 8 documents available for the public whereof 6 out of those I deemed relevant to this study, since they are either guidelines for the training content or describing the way NCGM works. The last 2 of documents were only reviews on how it went rather than on the actual training content. One

out of the 6 documents analysed is not written directly by NCGM. It is however still relevant since NCGM did publish it on their website and hence assumingly they stand for the information in it as well as using it as their manual for their training. All the documents used in this thesis are in English and are briefly described below. I have analysed the following documents:

“A Military Guide to the United Nations Security Council Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security”, 2020 (Military Guide)

Military Guide (2020) is a publication with 28 pages. It is a simple guide to the United Nations Security Council Resolution on the WPS Agenda. The guide is divided into 5 sections. (1) Introduction (2) Introduction to the WPS Agenda (3) Participation (4) Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Conflict (5) Integration of a Gender Perspective in Operations and Organisational Structures. The guide also includes recommendations for dealing with certain themes. I believe this guide is important for the study to analyse since NCGM created these recommendations. They are clear about where their focus lies, why, and which concrete actions NCGM stands for. Hence the whole document is worth analysing. For simplicity, this document will be called “Military Guide” throughout the text.

“Nordic Centre of Gender in Military Operation Folder”, 2017 (Folder)

For simplicity, this document will be called “Folder” throughout the text. Folder being a publication of 2 pages. The document presents the NATO approved courses and seminars as well as illustrating that applying gender perspectives could improve and strengthen the military's capabilities and their operational effectiveness. It also describes the function of a gender advisor. Folder (2017) is useful for this study to see how NCGMs training is built and structured as well as what the roles they are focusing on and what they are actually supposed to do.

“Soldiers card”, 2016

This publication is only 2 pages long. It is a document that looks like a pamphlet and is very similar to Folder (2017). It describes how they implement gender perspective in military operations as well as explaining why it is necessary. They also explain some of the roles that these trainings have a focus on. This publication is of interest because they specify where they want to integrate gender perspectives. It does not only explain where they believe it is most important to focus their training, but it will also give a concrete understanding of how

their training is built, even though it is very summarized. Despite it being similar to Folder (2017) it is still useful since it gives different views on the same theme as well as being a year apart.

“Policy brief NCGM Expert Meeting on International Law and Gender”, 2020 (Policy brief)

This document will be called “Policy Brief” throughout the text and it is 12 pages long. This one is a little different from the other documents since it is a policy brief from a meeting in 2019 with a mixture of participants that are not only from NCGM. It included 20 senior experts from the military, police, academia, UN, NATO, prosecution office of the UN International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, and from the civil society. They all met during a 2-day event where they mainly discussed Conflict Related Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (CRSGBV). The Policy Brief (2020) is of value since the meeting involved issues specifically NCGM had identified, and thought was relevant. 3 themes being; Which types of acts are considered to be conflict-related gender-based violence?; What is the military’s role and responsibility to prevent and respond to CRSGBV?; How can cooperation with other actors be strengthened? Since this Policy Brief (2020) was published on NCGM’s website, it also means that they view it as valuable to illustrate their way of training and stands.

“Teaching gender in the military, A Handbook”, 2016 (TGM)

This handbook is by far the longest document out of all used in this study, being 226 pages long. The name will be shortened to “TGM” throughout the text. Unlike the other documents this handbook is not created by NCGM but by the Security Sector Reform Working Group which is chaired by DCAF. They worked in collaboration with the Education Development Working Group, of the Partnership for Peace Consortium of Defence Academies and Security Studies Institutes. It is written by 19 authors, some of them from The Swedish Armed Forces. The handbook is supposed to help teach gender in the military, including advice, exercises, and practical information. The handbook starts with mentioning “The views expressed are those of the authors alone and do not necessarily reflect the views of the institutions referred to or represented within this handbook.” (TGM, 2016, p.c) illustrating how we cannot be completely sure the handbook represents NCGM views. However, TGM is published on NCGM’s website and is very relevant since it is a direct and descriptive gender training handbook, describing both how NCGM apply gender training and why they do. The importance is not of who wrote it but rather that NCGM uses it.

“Who's security? Practical Examples of Gender Perspectives in Military Operations”, 2015
(WS)

This document consists of different examples of peacekeeping operations where gender perspectives have been applied and been successful. It has 58 pages, including several pictures, and contains 20 different cases all with different gender experts. The cases are divided into 6 sections. (1) Gender perspective in operational planning (2) Gender as an analytical tool (3) Reaching the whole population (4) Avoiding gender stereotypes (5) Capacity to deliver on the mandate (6) Enhancing operational effect through training. Throughout the document they are trying to show how applying gender perspectives can enhance the operational effect. This document is specifically of interest when looking into the masculine protector and the weak female victim gender norms the military is supposed to reinforce. The different sections of the document are also divided into very relevant themes since they either actually describe gender norms and how they have dealt with them in the past, or describe how they actually implement their training and gender perspectives. The document will be called “WS” throughout the thesis.

3.1.3 Video

What is NCGM?

To add further understanding of NCGM's thoughts and their association with military masculinities and gender norms, I will also be analysing a short video found on their website. When clicking on the link I get directed to Youtube where the video is uploaded. The video is in English and is 4 minutes and 54 seconds long and is explaining what NCGM is and how they operate, hence an informational video. However, it is not specifically NCGM that has posted it but The Swedish Armed Forces, but since they are a part of the organisation, and the video is on their website it is still relevant. It gives a good overview and shows what NCGM not only wants their fellow military and gender expert communities to see but also the general public. Even though it contains very similar information as the documents it is still of use because it gives another point of view when answering the same question. The video also has different experts and personnel presenting the information and not only one author. For simplicity I will refer to this video as “WIN” throughout the text.

3.2 Qualitative Text Analysis

I will do a qualitative text analysis of NCGM's publications to see how they touch upon the subject of military masculinities and gender norms and in what way. Qualitative text analysis is used when researchers want to capture the greater meaning, or create meanings, from a text. It is also used during analysis's to see which parts of a text can be of more relevance to certain themes. Included in qualitative text analysis is analysing arguments and critically examining the analysed results (Esaiasson et.al, 2017, pp. 211, 214). The video included in the material used, is also considered in the method of text analysis, since the imagery is not significant and will not be taken into consideration but only the verbal part of the video.

When analysing the NCGM publications the text will be approached with analysis questions to be able to answer if there is any association between NCGM and the characteristics of military masculinities. The analysis is systemizing, meaning that I will systematically find relevant and central themes for my study. By critically analysing the texts I can go in depth and reveal implicit meanings, such as power relations between men and women. This method helps me to analyse the different publications in the most effective way possible (Esaiasson et.al., 2017, pp.213-214, 216; Tegnell & Svensson, 2007, p.100).

3.2.1 Operationalization

To be able to analyse the publications there will be an overarching operationalisation question of *What meanings are attached to civilian and military men and women in NCGM?* a question which, building on the theoretical framework on gender and the military, can be broken down into these 4 questions:

1. *Are there traces of associations of men/masculinities as the protector in contrast to women as inherently in need of protection? In that case how? Do civilian men and boys feature at all as in need of protection? In that case how? Do military women appear in the role of protectors? In that case how and in what capacity and contexts?*
2. *Are there traces of associations of men/masculinities as perpetrators in contrast to women as inherent victims? In that case how? Do civilian men and boys feature at all as potential victims and in that case how? Do women feature at all as potential perpetrators and in that case how, and in what capacity and contexts?*

3. *What kind of threats (e.g. sexual violence, torture, abduction) are identified in the publications? How are civilian, and military, women and men described as potential victims and perpetrators in relation to this violence?*
4. *Does the notions of masculinities and military masculinities appear in the publications and in that case how? Are there any traces of an acknowledgement that the gender norms around masculinities constructed in the military, may be problematic? In that case in what way? Do they acknowledge that the gender norms can be manifested in misogyny, violence, and sexual violence? Do they consider it important?*

These sub-questions show my way of thought when reading the text. For question 1 the role as a *protector* will be analysed. Military masculinities would describe men, or at least soldiers, as the strong protectors and saviours. Therefore, I will be analysing how they describe the protectors and see if it relates to the military masculine traits in contrast to the inherently feminine trait of needing protection.

Question 2 and 3 are quite similar, however question 2 discusses the theme of *victims* and *protectors*, while question 3 discusses the theme of *threats* and *perpetrators*. The people in need of protection are often described as *victims* and as being weak. The victims are most often described as being women. The protectors are usually seen as masculine men. Hence there will be an analysis of the publications for traces of these stereotypical roles in connection to questions 1. Furthermore, it is important to analyse and find who NCGM believes the victims need protection from. Since military masculinities will depict the military as “good guys” there will be interest in looking for who are the actual “bad guys”. If they describe them as if it could be anyone, it would demonstrate a self-critical attitude, while if mostly addressing perpetrators as “them” or “others” it would suggest that they portray themselves as the stereotypical “saviours” or “flawless”. Furthermore, it is important to consider what kind of threats exist in the publications and if they are different for women and men. Analysing to see if men can be seen as victims of these threats or if it is only women, as well as if women can be the perpetrators.

When answering question 4 I will analyse how much they talk about masculinities and its connection with the military. If they do talk about the subject, I will describe how and in what way. Here I am looking very specifically about how aware they are of the subject and to what

extent they are considering it. For this question alone the only thing of importance is to see when/if they are speaking specifically of gender norms, masculinities, and femininities.

3.3 Critical Reflections and Limitations

The publications have limitations that could affect the result. The publications used are only the ones NCGM wants the public to see. The publications might target a specific audience and have different agendas. It is impossible to know the extent of transparency in the NCGM publications. In most public documents, organisations do not want to be perceived poorly. NCGM probably possesses a significantly greater number of publications about the actual construction of the training and the implementation, materials that I do not have access to but could have helped me answer the research question more satisfyingly. I do take these limitations into consideration when analysing the publications.

To give the results better reliability, another researcher should read through the publications with the same operationalisation questions to see if they come up with similar results. That would demonstrate that this study's results are not poorly analysed or misinterpreted in some kind of way. Having another researcher analyse the publications would also show that my results are not biased, which can be a common problem in qualitative text analysis (Esaiasson et.al, 2017, p.64). With the help of a clear and detailed operationalisation, the study's results are valid enough to answer the greater question of what notions of military masculinities are constructed in NCGM's publications.

4. Results

Here I will go through the results found during the analysis. The findings will be systematically presented whilst going through the 4 operationalisation themes mentioned in section 3.2.1. All the questions will end with a short summary of the findings.

4.1. Protector and Protected

The theory of military masculinities assumes the soldiers are strong protectors and often protecting the “damsel in distress” which is shown in some of NCGM’s publications. For example, how the Military Guide (2020, p.8) focuses on protecting women, a message conveyed in an example of the following quote “Another aim is to improve the protection of women”. Likewise, the WPS Agenda seems to have a general focus on protecting women, and the main focus of the Military Guide (2020) is centred around helping the military in their role in implementing the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1235 goals, hence the WPS Agenda and protecting women.

During their training, the Malian soldiers increased their commitment of protecting women and children, of treating the population with humanity, of thinking of the population as their own family members, and of considering the honour in wearing a uniform. (WS, 2015, p.53).

This quote illustrates how the Malian soldiers' training was constructed to be able to protect women and children, as well as the connection between honour and wearing a uniform. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, a stereotypical military masculine trait.

There are some publications that show more and less awareness of the phenomena of males being perceived as protectors. For an instance TGM (2016, p.115) shows an awareness of males being seen as the protector when discussing classroom behaviours. They believe that men are perceived as “natural” leaders since men most often have been given the leader roles in different training scenarios. TGM gives further examples of when masculine gender norms have also been seen as a hindrance for protection: “There are, for instance, situations when gender stereotypes on the part of the military constitute a threat to force protection” (Kvarving & Grimes, in TGM, 2016, p.17). It is only in WS (2015) that NCGM discusses

female soldiers' capabilities as protectors, but this is in the context of how female soldiers are able to enter places where men cannot (WS, 2015, p.15).

Female civilians could however also be interpreted as being protectors in a way. Female civilians' role as protectors are indirect. They are rather seen as assets for operational effectiveness and hence protecting through helping the peacekeepers.

By addressing men, women, boys or girls when gathering information, we will get access to additional and different types of information. This will increase our situational awareness and lead to increased Force Protection and operational effect (Soldier Card, 2016, p.2)

Women leaders often constitute potential agents of change and influencers within their communities and can therefore be consulted on topics such as sexual violence and violent extremism (Military Guide, 2016, p.14)

NCGM also has several examples where they illustrate gender experts and soldiers' willingness to learn and listen to the “local” women. For example, a peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the peacekeepers learned from the civilian women’s patterns and the information they gave concerning rape allegations in the area (WS, 2015, p.36-38), and thus realizing the women's potential as informants. In this manner the women are helping the soldiers to be better protectors rather than being acknowledged to be protectors themselves.

NCGM portrays women to be protectors further through their roles as mothers. One can identify a theme of NCGM using a language that seemed to reduce women as a family member rather than their own individuals, and the women's contribution to the peacekeeping missions were of their role as mothers. One example being: “Also, since women were primarily responsible for the children they were also likely to have a good understanding of the security situation in order to protect their children.” (WS, 2015, p.32). Another example of NCGM using women's capabilities of being a mother to make the mission more effective, is when they tried to use mothers, and their stereotypical need to protect her children, to be able to collect illegal weapons. Quoting: “The reason they wanted to extend it to women was because they thought they could be of use since they were mothers” (WS, 2015, pp.30-31). Another example being:

In addition to targeting the men, who claimed that they needed to keep their weapons in order to protect their family, the campaign should have also targeted the mothers who are afraid to lose their kids in any of the accidents involving weapons. (WS, 2015, p.31)

Thus, also practicing the hegemonic masculine norm of men wanting their weapons to be able to protect their families.

When soldiers protect civilians in the NCGM publications they are depicted as doing it physically and most often described to be with weapons. For example: “They planned for a large-scale operation with heavy vehicles and maximum force protection” (WS, 2015, p.18) and “This will increase our situational awareness and lead to increased Force Protection and operational effect.” (Soldiers Card, 2016, p.2). NCGM underlines the role of force protection.

The general language NCGM uses in their publications when talking about protection is usually referred to as soldiers protecting “civilians”. Furthermore, in WIN (2018) they mention how they want to protect all civilians and do not specify the stereotypical notions of women or children being the ones in need of protection, hence being more inclusive. As well as WS (2015, p.15) who mention “By using a gender perspective both men’s and women’s need for protection (military personnel or civilians) will be taken into consideration in any future situation or actual situation at hand” (ibid.).

Conclusion: The military are stationed to physically protect the civilians. Even though they are sometimes inclusive in who is considered “civilians”, the civilians are often referred to as female or children, groups inherently seen as vulnerable. Civilian females could be considered protectors, but in the form of informants or them wanting to protect their children, something the military will help them with.

4.2. Perpetrators and Victims

In TGM (2016) one can see an awareness of women inherently being seen as victims in contrast to men within the military overall. For example:

You will most likely find that many of the responses you receive from the audience generalize women as victims. This highlights our own biased point of view of women's roles in conflict. These stereotypes have a real possibility of hampering an operation or mission should they persist. (Leevoma, et.al., in TGM, 2016 p.139).

TGM (2016) also shows a lot of awareness of the gender roles that exist in conflict and peacekeeping. Again, highlighting the gender norm of women being seen as victims and not men. This is presented in several passages such as:

We often think that women are only victims in war and conflict. Unfortunately women and children are among the most vulnerable in war and conflict, but they are not only victims: they are also important actors and can be powerful agents. (Leevoma, et.al., in TGM, ,2016 p.139).

In the Military Guide (2020) they continue to highlight the importance of women being more than just victims and add that they can even be an asset. For example, they write: “Women in armed conflict and post-conflict situations should be acknowledged as active agents rather than only passive victims or survivors” (Military Guide, 2020, p.14).

In TGM (2016, p.74) they continue with discussing the negative effects of women being seen as a victim but mostly in relation to the success of a mission. Hence to improve missions and the military gender training, TGM (ibid.) gives a suggestion that gender roles should be switched in training scenarios where they want men to also roleplaying victims to normalize it. Furthermore, TGM (ibid.) discusses the need to shift focus from the “ordinary” military training, to focus on women's empowerment and men's vulnerability to be able to illustrate how women are more than victims and that men can need protection as well. Quoting “By shifting the focus of a class to men's vulnerability and women's empowerment, you can expose the learners to a wider perspective on security.” (ibid.). Thus, NCGM demonstrates an understanding of the military curriculum being gendered in the sense of it portraying women and men stereotypically.

Furthermore, as mentioned in the previous section, Policy Brief (2020, p.8) discusses reasons why soldiers might indulge in CRSV. NCGM's list of reasons why, suggests that it would be in the soldiers' nature to act upon CRSV if they got the chance. Indicating it to include all

soldiers and not only the peacekeepers or “the others”. The idea that men are going to take the chance to act upon these “unacceptable behaviours” if they get the opportunity, are actions that are considered stereotypically masculine.

The NCGM brings up in what way they integrate gender perspectives in several of the publications analysed. Both in the Folder (2017, p.2) and WIN (2018) they describe how NCGM integrates gender perspectives in military operations by, for example, asking “How many men?” and “Which men?”. Even though NCGM gathers information through the “locals”, being both men and women, it could be assumed that they seem to presume that the perpetrators are men, or the fact that the only people that are worth considering in different situations are men. There is also the possibility that men are so connected to the military that the language simply deems all to be men/masculine. However, in Soldiers Card (2016), they added to the description of how they integrate gender perspectives to “How many women” and “which women”, hence being more inclusive than the other documents mentioned.

Most of the publications do not mention women as being perpetrators with the exception of TGM (2016). They mention women as perpetrators in the context of underlining the importance of gender training for the soldiers.

Without this knowledge they risk overlooking security threats (by, for example, assuming that all women are non-combatants), and may fail to identify those in vulnerable situations who are in need of protection.
(Kvarving & Grimes, in TGM, 2016, p.14)

None of the other publications mention how women can be perpetrators directly. Even though NCGM does not always specify that the perpetrators are men, they do not mention how it also could be women, again mostly referring to “others”. However, when NCGM describes gender in WIN (2018) they mention that gender is what determines a person's position and value in different contexts. If gender roles already have been created from military masculinities, the same outlook would be applied for all situations. Hence the idea of women being perpetrators or men being victims will not be considered in any contexts.

Conclusion: There is an awareness of the gender norms existence in a military setting. However, the focus lies on the recognition that women are mostly seen as victims and the

masculinities are connected to being a perpetrator. NCGM do want to try to change these gender roles, for example in role playing during exercises. Most often women are not seen as perpetrators, but there is a soft mention of women being able to be combatants.

4.3 Threats

The greatest threat identified in the text were the threat of sexual violence. For instance, the Military Guide (2020) focus on the threat of sexual violence and the aftermath of conflicts. To demonstrate, “Provide security and protection to civilians in cases of sexual violence...” (Military Guide, 2020, p.21), or “Women and children under imminent threat of sexual violence should be evacuated to safety” (Military Guide, 2020, p.20). In the latter quote it is shown how the focus lies on specifically women and children needing to be protected from sexual violence. However, the Military Guide (2020) gives overviews of UNSCR and how it evolved the WPS Agenda and in one of the overviews, UNSCR 2467 (2019), they discuss how even though the main focus lies on protecting women and children from sexual violence, they do bring up men and boys (Military Guide, 2020, p.11).

Who is seen as the perpetrators in the context of CRSV is mostly mentioned in NCGM’s document Policy Brief (2020). In Policy Brief (2020, pp.3-4) they begin by discussing what is considered CRSV and further they clarify that sexual and gender-based violence committed by peacekeepers, military, police etc, is considered in the subject of CRSV. NCGM hence addresses the possibility and the fact that it is not always “the others” that are the perpetrators regarding CRSV in a peacekeeping operation. Policy Brief (2020, p.6) mentions that, firstly, the military’s role is of responding to one’s own forces committing CRSV, and secondly other actors committing CRSV towards the civilian population. However, this document has, as also mentioned by NCGM themselves, a greater focus on the latter. Proceeding with illustrating sexual violence as a greater threat is shown in Policy Brief (2020, p.8) where they discuss reasons why soldiers might commit CRSV. One of them being that if a large number of fighters are in “standby mode” they are more likely to be involved in “unacceptable behaviour”. Other suggestions are lack of discipline from the supervisors and lack of training. These examples suggest that soldiers have a tendency or a wish to commit CRSV. Hence, soldiers of any kind have the potential of being perpetrators.

Furthermore, Policy Brief (2020, p.9) presents one of NCGM’s solutions to prevent CRSV, which is by cutting down vegetation down the roads so armed groups do not have a place to

hide when women and girls pass by. “The growth of the vegetation provided armed groups with places to hide when women and girls passed by” (ibid.). This is supposed to protect the civilian women but from the threat of the “other” armed groups. Furthermore, Policy Brief (ibid.) discusses how it can be difficult to act when the military forces of the host nation they are stationed at, commits CRSV. This suggests how NCGM believes that the only “important” perpetrators of CRSV to focus on is the “others”.

An additional threat that is mentioned in the publications are weapons and explosives. The subject of armament as a threat to civilians are mostly mentioned in WS (2015). For example, during a peacekeeping operation where consulting the “local” population on the security situation helped them to detect “improvised explosive devices” (WS, 2015, p.20-21). There is also the combination of weapons and “other” men being presented as a threat. For example: “Women had stopped collecting firewood from certain areas because of the presence of armed men.” (WS, 2015, p.41) or “The women explained that the illegal weapons that still existed in the home were often involved in threats and domestic violence.” (WS, 2015, p.42-43).

However, as mentioned in question 2, in WIN (2018) NCGM claims that gender is what determines a person's position and value in different contexts. Hence people having their set gender roles in different context and therefore when there is a threat, for example sexual violence, NCGM will look at gender for who is the victim, who is the perpetrators and who to prioritize. That would usually be depicted as the “others” and not the peacekeepers themselves even though they have acknowledged the problem of peacekeepers committing CRSV. The findings suggest that when NCGM speaks about who is supposed to be protected from the threats mentioned, they describe the protected to simply be “civilians”, but it most often ends up focusing on women.

Conclusion: The greatest threats found in the publications were of sexual violence and secondly the threat of physical weapons. The perpetrators were the men holding the weapons or the men committing CRSV, both not depicted as being the peacekeepers but rather identified as the “others”.

4.4. Notions of masculinities

Essentially this study has a focus on military masculinities, but none of the publications do actually mention the words masculinity, masculinities or of its characteristics except for TGM (2016) when again discussing the gendered curriculum.

Any curriculum reflects the social and institutional context from which it is born. Accordingly it reflects, often implicitly and invisibly, the norms and stereotypes governing masculinity and femininity at work in that particular institution or social context. This is often referred to as the “hidden curriculum” (Holvikivi & Valasek, in TGM, 2016, p.83).

This acknowledges how women often have been described to be the subjects caught in men's war, and not described as a part of the military. Hence TGM (2016) suggests that by teaching gender, the masculine norms would be challenged and prevent them to be reinforced. Additionally, TGM (2016, p.108) also has an information-box with recommended readings concerning military masculinities. TGM (2016, p.74) challenges the idea that men cannot be vulnerable and believes it is a stereotype that needs to be broken. To illustrate:

Integrating gender in curricula must thus involve first noting whether the curriculum portrays women and men only in stereotypical roles (women as victims/civilians and men as warriors), and, second, seeking to challenge these stereotypical portrayals. (Holvikivi & Valasek, in TGM, 2016, p.83).

Furthermore, TGM (2016, p.115) discusses how behaviours in classrooms and during exercises affect the already existing gender norms, such as men being “natural” leaders.

The way in which women and men engage and are engaged in the classroom as well as the roles they are asked or allowed to perform will play a part in shaping the relationship between women and men in the institution as a whole. For example, if women never have leadership roles (over men) during group work activities, this can reinforce implicit assumptions in the institution that men make more natural leaders. (Watson, in TGM, 2016, p.115).

TGM (ibid.) continues by mentioning that Dr. Kilmartin claims that all soldiers have pressure to be masculine. Incorporating gender into military training can create awareness of inequalities as well as broadening views by learning both women and men's perspectives.

TGM (2016) also provides other helpful material for gender training such as having several examples of discussion questions that help provoke the participants to discuss and talk about gender stereotypes. Even though not directly mentioning military masculinities, gender stereotypes still address the traits of masculinities and femininities. Having themes of gender stereotypes as topics of discussion illustrates how they want the soldiers to understand gender roles and its effect.

Another distinguishable theme of the publications is how gender promotes efficiency. In WIN (2018), NCGM describes how they apply gender perspective to all situations in order to increase operational efficiency. The Military Guide (2020, p.16) also describes how gender stereotypes that can harm women's empowerment can be hindered by increasing women's participation in missions and in training. Furthermore, TGM (2016, p.17) challenges gender norms by giving an example of when soldiers believed women could not be combatants which resulted in the soldiers not being able to foresee attacks.

Conclusion: TGM (2016) is the publication with the greatest awareness of military masculinities and the problematics. NCGM does seem to, in some of the other publications as well, be aware that the problem of gender norms is important. However, it is limited to almost only referring to "gender norms" and the focus most often being on women.

5. Discussion

This thesis has analysed 7 NCGM publications with 4 operationalisation questions to illustrate *What meanings are attached to civilian and military men and women in NCGM?* A question that was needed when analysing the publications to be able to answer the greater research question of the thesis being; *What notions of military masculinities and its potential harms are constructed in the NCGM publications?* The results will be discussed through 3 major themes: victimization; women's role in the military context; the threat of CRSV. Lastly, I will discuss possible explanations and influences on the findings.

The analysis found that NCGM illustrates a good understanding of the existing problematic gender norms within the military that, for example, portray the women as victims and the military soldiers as saviours. A problem NCGM have argued they are aware of and have considered when applying gender perspectives to different situations. Their considerations are however not always visible in their publications. The awareness of the problematic gender norms is mostly raised in TGM (2016) where they discuss and problematize women being seen as victims and describe them as having more potential than usually presumed, such as being an asset for the peacekeeping missions. Military Guide (2020) also seems progressive in the way of seeing women as more than victims but rather useful agents. The language describing victims varies among the publications but also within the publications. For example, Military Guide (2020), WIN (2018) and passages in TGM (2016) use the word “civilians” rather than women, old, children etc, when describing who is in need of protection. When referring to the publications being progressive, I refer to being aware, problematize and taking action to the notion of the military being a hegemonic masculine organisation. Nonetheless, when discussing military masculinities, and using the information above, one can conclude that NCGM recurrently portrays women as weak in comparison to men. Hence indicating the military to be the masculine hero. Furthermore, when calling the ones in need of protection civilians it does not necessarily mean they are aware of the military being seen as masculine, but it can simply imply that the “others” become feminised and seen as the victims/protected.

Almost contradictory, there is a recurring theme where civilian and military women are seen to have an important role when it comes to protection. Women's role in several of the

publications have either been as soldiers where they can have “special” benefits that can help the missions, or when talking about the “other” women who however have been reduced to only having a role as a family member, most often mothers. They continue mentioning women as an asset because of their “female characteristics” when also repetitively mentioning in all publications that gender perspective will have a positive effect on the effectiveness of both the organisation and the operations. NCGM hence radiates a confidence in the effect of their own training and a will to convince others it works and that it is important.

Only using women for the effectiveness of the mission, as Egnell (et.al. 2014, pp.121-122) mentioned, seems to come with an essentialist view where one can only see women as an asset because of their “female characteristics”. That is to say, NCGM implements the notions of women being seen as an opposite of the masculine. However, not going so far as being seen as “subordinate” to men as hegemonic masculinities definitions imply. To clarify, I do not diminish the experiences women have during war since women and men do experience it differently, but by only mentioning people in terms of an asset, they imply that they forget that the women are individuals and not simply resources. Hence suggesting women being an asset can be interpreted as the women being systematically “othered”. This terminology could however be explained, as Egnell (et.al. 2014 pp.6-7) commented, that NCGM focused on gender for operational effectiveness because they believed that it was the only way for implementing gender perspectives without any resistance within the military. That is to say that it is still a problem 7 years later. As mentioned, the theory explains that for military masculinities to exist, it needs to be constructed from the opposite of femininities. When the publications portray women stereotypically feminine it implies men being the opposite.

Sexual violence seems to be the greatest threat identified in the publications. As Holvikivi (2021) stated, most gender training seems to have a focus on sexual violence which is shown in NCGM’s publications when the greatest threat mentioned is CRSV. Assuming that soldiers act in a toxic military masculine kind of manner, one can turn to the Policy Brief (2020) where they illustrate and give examples of what can cause soldiers to commit CRSV. They seem to assume that men will simply act upon their “urges” if given the chance or if not disciplined enough, simply being in a soldier's character. Even though NCGM is aware that the peacekeepers can and do commit CRSV it does not seem to be of importance in their publications. It is mentioned a couple of times how SEA is forbidden and unacceptable but is

rather being seen as a very strict rule than something that is discussed to a greater extent. There are examples of reasons as to why soldiers commit CRSV, but NCGM do not explore the reason why the soldiers seem to have these “urges”, or if it has anything to do with the norms of military masculinities. None of the NCGM publications seems to try to find solutions on how to prevent CRSV.

There could be alternative explanations to why women and men are portrayed differently in the different publications. One of the reasons for the different documents to differentiate in results can be because of the timeline. As mentioned earlier, gender, as most terms, are fluid, in constant change and contested. There were for example different cases reaching back all the way to 2003 in WS, as well as WS being published in 2015. The Military Guide was published in 2020 and WIN in 2018. However, TGM was released in 2016 and is probably the more progressive document NCGM have shared. Soldiers card (2016) was also a little more inclusive than Folder (2017) when describing the same things, integrating gender perspective. Soldiers Card (2016, p.2), Folder (2017, p.2) and WIN (2018) used the example of applying gender perspective by asking “who” and “how many”, it was however only Soldiers Card (2016, p.2) who did consider including women in those questions while the others only considered men. Even though it is only a year apart, Soldiers Card (2016) could still be considered more progressive than Folder (2017). However, the lack of focus on military masculinities, could through the theory be explained, as a subject the military do not want to address because they do not want to be aware of it, hence denying it. Either because being aware of military masculinities problems, would mean having to do something about it and hence losing men’s already existing power position, or because it is a topic too sensitive to discuss. The fact that TGM (2016) was the more progressive publication could hence be explained because it was written by a great deal of gender experts that were not necessarily part of any military organisation per se.

6. Conclusion

This study answered the question of *What notions of military masculinities and its potential harms are constructed in the NCGM publications?* The analysis of the publications concludes that there are several themes present concerning the potential harms of military masculinities. Firstly, NCGM often portrays women in a stereotypical role of needing to be saved by the military, usually referred to as men. NCGM does however show an awareness of the existing military gender norms formed from military masculinities. Secondly, almost contradictory to women being seen as victims, NCGM believes that women have more potential than they are often portrayed to have by society. NCGM most often describes women in the way of making their operations more effective, either as their role as informants or their role as mothers. Women have been recognized as helping in operational effectiveness by helping the soldiers protect the civilians rather than being seen as protectors themselves. There is however an exception of civilian women being considered direct protectors, but only for their children.

Thirdly, the more persistent threats defined in the publications were the one of CRSV and armaments. The perpetrators are often portrayed as armed but are still mostly not the peacekeepers themselves, even though they recognize peacekeepers committing CRSV. The soldiers, however, is being portrayed as the strong protector, especially with the help of the gender training NCGM provides, while the “other” women being the victims in need of saving. While promoting women to join the group and to be a part of the military in their countries, the “local” women are seen as victims.

Lastly, the study found that rather than portraying men as stereotypical military masculine, there were to a greater extent women who were portrayed as stereotypically feminine. Masculinities and femininities being a dichotomy, means that feminine stereotypes do underscore the masculine stereotypes. Nonetheless, there are also a lot of traces of an understanding of how these gender norms can affect both their training and the military operations. For example, NCGM acknowledges that gender is a social construction that causes men and women to be treated differently. Furthermore, believing that gender perspective needs to be incorporated into the curriculum as well as being considered in most operational areas. The differences in the result of the publications could be explained through the different publication dates, while the lack of a direct mention of military masculinities

could be explained through it being an uncomfortable subject. To conclude, NCGM do seem to have some kind of awareness of military masculinities but do still however construct and reinforce military masculinities traits regularly.

There are several ways one could advance from this study. Future research studying specifically NCGM could observe some of their training courses and seminars, hence get first-handed information and reactions of both the personnel and the participants. Furthermore, other questions could be asked to NCGM's publications and their personnel. The operationalization questions used do not represent the whole concept of military masculinities and there are many other nuances that could be analysed. Examples of different nuances could be how the language describes different themes such as sexual violence, the trainers, and soldiers, or looking at the participants views on sexism and racism. Nonetheless, to be able to continue researching about specifically military masculinities in military gender training, it would be beneficial to explore other organisations than NCGM and see how NCGM differs from other gender and military training centres. For example, see if they differentiate both in the curriculum as well as in the ways the participants of their training are affected. Concludingly, this thesis has contributed to the somewhat limited field of military masculinities and gender training, an important subject that needs to be given more attention and researched further.

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