



Utrecht University

**HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES. THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE MILITARIZED
MASCULINE BODY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION
CONTEXT.**

Gender Studies (Research master), Utrecht University
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13.08.2024

Abstract

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The thesis explored the hypothesis “whether the militarized masculine body could be considered as one of the types of *Hegemonic Masculinities* and if yes, what are the main characteristics that validate this notion?” The research project was partially inspired by one of the most significant books, considering the *Western Studies of Masculinities*, namely *Masculinities* by Connell (2005). Connell (2005) paid substantial attention to developing the categorical analysis within the Studies of *Western Masculinities*. The scholar focused on developing the concepts, namely: *hegemonic*, *subordinate*, *complicit*, and *marginalized* masculinities. The concept of hegemonic masculinities became the relevant lenses to study masculinities in general and it was the main analytic lens that I deployed to study my chosen case study. The main case study of the thesis became the *Militarized Masculine Body within the context of four European Union* countries, namely: Lithuania, the Netherlands, Greece, and Germany. In other words, I explored if the *Western Militarized Masculine Body* could be considered an exemplary type of hegemonic masculinities, which characteristics are outlined by scholars like Connell (2005) in her book *Masculinities*.

The *semi-structured style of interviews* was chosen as the main methodology of the thesis. I focused on the professionals who have direct working experience related to the sector of the military within the four *European Union* countries. The interview guide comprised of main five parts which mainly asked the interviewees to reflect on their personal as well as professional (working) experience related to ideal masculinities, militarism, the concept of Western and Militarized Men as well as the different identities having people integration to militarism, such as women, LGBTIQ+ people. The thesis was written in a way that the theoretical scientific information would be brought into dialogue together with the empirical part of the thesis.

I hope that the thesis will provide some additional scientific knowledge within the *Studies of Gender* or more particularly within the Studies of *Western Masculinities*. With the thesis I sought to contribute plurifying the concepts of hegemonic and militarized masculinities, demonstrating that analyzing these two concepts together can bring additional knowledge for the studies of masculinities itself. The thesis was written in line with the main mission of *Utrecht University* which is “to make substantial contributions to society, both now and in the future”. I hope that the generated scientific knowledge would provide some insights into how certain gendered issues within (western) militarism could be analyzed, for instance: the integrational aspect of different identities having people into militarism. Finally, with the thesis, I also sought to pay Europeans attention to the highly unstable socio-political, and cultural situation, that is currently happening in the Old World (Europe), mainly due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022. I consider that now like never before we have to generate the additional, intersectional knowledge related to militarism and mobilize the society towards this topic.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the thesis supervisor Dr. Koen Leurs. Koen strongly contributed to the final version of the master thesis. Due to Koen's supervising style (professional comments, communication style, and great observation of my working style), I was able to deliver the project. Koen invested a lot of time in explaining how to develop scientific arguments in an intersectional way, combining my social and humanitarian scientific backgrounds. I am grateful for Koen's help, punctuality in editing the draft versions of the thesis, and always an open attitude to help. I hope our collaboration process will also continue in the future.

A very special thanks to the second reader of the thesis Laxman Belbase. Laxman's insights towards the development of this project were invaluable. Laxman provided different sources of literature for developing the theoretical part of the thesis. In addition, Laxman helped me to complexify the topic and realize how many different potential future researches related to masculinities and their connection to militarism could be developed. Thank you for your volunteer work in grading the thesis proposal and the thesis itself. I appreciate the fact that you accepted to be the second reader of the thesis despite a highly busy agenda.

Last but not least, I would like to say thank you to all the professionals who participated in the research. I am grateful that you accepted to be interviewed on a highly delicate topic and share your knowledge despite a highly intense agenda. Due to the interviewees and their provided data, I was able to grow intellectually as well as emotionally. In addition, special thanks to the employees of the Lithuanian and the Netherlands *Ministries of Defence* who helped me to reach the right people for the interviews. I would like to thank you for your professionalism. I hope our collaboration process will keep developing in the future as well.

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Figure 1. The portrait of Gluck (full name: Hahhanh Gluckstein, 1895 – 1978). The portrait was taken from the Jewish Women's Archive. The access: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/gluck>.

1. Introduction of the research project.

With the introduction part of the thesis I am going extensively introduce the reader about the chosen topic of the master studies. The thesis will start by outlining my relation to the topic, and the main reasons why I chose to investigate such a delicate, gendered topic. I am also going to focus on outlining the main hypothesis and the (sub)questions of the study. Finally, the introduction chapter will be closed by considering the scientific relevance of the study.

1.1. Situating the study in my personal experience.

I first discovered the reproduction of the portrait *Gluck* (see Figure 1) in the *Jewish Museum Berlin* when I visited the exhibition, called *Sex: Jewish Positions* in June 2024 in Berlin. The exhibition played with the differing perceptions of sexuality in Judaism, analyzing the topics from the concept of marriage and procreation to the questions of the social norms to the eroticism of spirituality. My initial gut feeling once I saw the portrait was that I wanted this portrait to be somehow incorporated into my thesis. My desire to incorporate this portrait into the thesis is quite controversial. At first glance, this portrait does not have something visibly in common with the main object of the thesis which is Militarized Masculinities. Gluck is not even a man as the female sex was assigned to Gluck once Gluck was born. However, on the other hand, I consider that Gluck illustrates my emotional desire (if it is the right way to say so) of how I would like the man who is taking different positions within the society, such as in the sector of military would be perceived. The artwork label close to the portrait of Gluck in the museum declared “Gluck insisted on this shortened name and rejected any titles or forenames that indicated the specific gender. Gluck lived openly as a lesbian and subversively challenged the gender binary. Gluck’s masculine identity is evident in this portrait by Howard Coster, who has known as photographer of men”. For me the part “challenged the gender binary” is central. I consider that challenging the gender binary is one of the main objectives of this thesis. With the help of this research product, I am seeking to plurify the concepts of Masculinities as well as Militarized Masculinities. I am seeking to bring new knowledge, to contribute by advancing our vocabulary to photograph the different positionalities within masculinities. Gluck by her self-identification intervened in the hierarchical Western societal structures by generating new practical experiences in terms of identities, and their plurification. With this master's thesis, I want to do the same. I want to challenge the hierarchical norms, bring additional awareness to the studies of Gender, more particularly masculinities, and strengthen the intellectual idea that the additional research in relation to Western Masculinities and the Militarized Masculine Body is important to implement to understand better the concept of man and its manifestation in different Western settings.

The main idea of the thesis is to analyze a contemporary particular hegemonic type of masculinities¹ via the case study militarization of the masculine body. There are several reasons why I chose to write the thesis about masculinities. I would like to start with the personal reason that strengthened my motivation to choose the thesis topic related to

¹ An important note is to emphasize that I am going to use the concept of masculinities (plural) instead of masculinity (singular) in the thesis project. The main argument is related to the case that I do not believe that one single, consolidated type of masculinity exists even within the same category, for instance by analyzing the hegemonic type of masculinities. I do believe that a single man may describe or present himself by emphasizing a particular prominent form of masculinity. In this case, a single man may emphasize one particular masculine identity (social category), it is his own masculine identity that differs from the other. The connection is only possible in terms of certain joint characteristics, and attributes within, so to say, the same type of masculinity, but they are not all entirely uniform. Only the interview guide of the empirical part will be prepared considering the particularly emphasized type as I am keen on investigating the single, most prominent type of masculinity each respondent prioritizes in the interview.

masculinities and to study Gender Studies itself. Let me start with my self-identification². I identify myself as a man (biological category) and as a male (socio-cultural category). However, even if I agree with the logic that my (western) biological category (sex) as well as (western) social category (gender) match my current identification, I do not consider myself a standard man (if standard is the right word to say so) who, according to Rosi Braidotti, occupies the center of the society “male, white, heterosexual, owning wives and children, urbanized, able-bodied, speaking a standard language, i.e. ‘Man’” (Braidotti, 2019, p. 86). As I will illustrate in the theoretical chapter of the thesis, the mentioned figuration of a man as a centered figure would have some characteristics related to the concept of hegemonic masculinities. However, for now, I would use the mentioned concept as a great frame to define my own experience related to the process of becoming a man. I would like to start with the process of Western socialization.

By reflecting on my own experience, I will shortly outline the pressure to act in a certain way which I experienced while growing up. I consider that since childhood the imperative to become a hegemonic masculine boy was imposed quite rigidly on me (at least till my teenage time, considering my age of 14/15 years old). From a young age, firstly unconsciously and later on consciously I understood that to be a boy and later on to become a man meant pursuing a specific target, an object which is not taken for granted. My socialization as a young boy started by following the rules imposed by the shaping norms of the Lithuanian society. I had to follow certain boyish activities in primary school, such as attending certain activities like basketball, football, or wrestling. I do remember how strongly I did not want to go to these activities after the first sessions, but my father rigidly said that you have to try and keep going for at least one academic year (teaching the discipline so to speak, which, indeed, partially helped later on not surrender on specific tasks). I remember the awkwardness which sometimes I experienced in the boys’ dressing room where the boys (in many cases influenced by their parents) tried to act in a certain, rigid masculine manner. I remembered the awkwardness I experienced on the basketball court once the coach divided the two boys’ teams, one leaving to play with the t-shirt and the other without it (the relevant allusion to the question of gendered sexuality. I consider that this would never happen if we consider the female players of basketball). I remember the shame that I experienced in front of the football coach once I was not able to do any pull-ups and the coach mildly called such boys sausages. I remember the soft emotions that I had to sustain only due to the reasons to avoid the feeling of shame. I remember the lack of sense of relation in the hypersexualized group of male teenagers. I consider that all the aspects that I mentioned could be named as characteristics related to the (western) men’s socialization. I am certain that (more or less) similar situations are still experienced by many boys who are growing up in certain Western countries. I consider that there is still an expectation for a man to have certain attributes as well as behavior, which are strongly gendered. These attributes are intertwined in the different layers of (western) social, cultural, economic, and political reality.

I would provide one such example, related to my own experience. A couple of days before I wrote this paragraph, I bought my favorite perfume which I had worn since the age of twenty. It was the first time when I paid attention to what was written on the package (the description might have changed over time as well). Even if the text sounded tasty it still disappointed me “Ideal for: A confident, mysterious and sensual man who is always in control and looking for new adventures”. Even if the text sounds tasty it does not resonate with me. I am not always in

² The concepts of sex (as a biological category) and gender (as a socio-cultural category) will be outlined in the theoretical part (2.2. *Western Masculinities and its main characteristics*) once I will extensively discuss the concept of *Western Masculinities* and its main characteristics. For now, I will use these two concepts to justify my identification without extensive analysis.

control of all my actions and I would say it's even unhealthy to be always in control of yourself. I am not constantly looking for new adventures. I prefer stability and a sense of steady peacefulness. Does it mean that this perfume is not ideal for me? The given example only proves the case that gendered logic still habituating us into a certain binary masculine and feminine practice. By keeping the said things in mind, I consider that my personal desire to better understand what it means to be a man in the twenty-first century or to be a homosexual man in the twenty-first century, what is relevant for a man and for a woman, and for a person itself, and why we are still so deeply reliant on the stereotypical approach related to the binary logic men versus women were the main reasons which stimulated me to write the thesis related to masculinities.

I consider that a man could be considered as a canvas upon which norms, expectations, aspirations are projected. In my opinion, however, the boy's growing process should not be influenced by (Western) socialization, which is strongly influenced by the imposed gendered rules. We should not try to influence socialization in a strict, narrow and stereotypical manner how a boy and later a man have to behave. We should not try to correct the boy's behavior or his communication style from a young age. We have to teach a boy socialization in a way to help him understand that you have to act in a way that your existence would not overshadow the freedom of others, but you hold your freedom to be yourself and yourself is coming purely from you, not from the others. Simone de Beauvoir before more than seventy years in the most influential western book related to the foundation of feminism *The Second Sex*, declared that "One is not born, but rather becomes a woman". I consider the same could not be said if we are going to consider the notion of a (western) man. One is born, but rather not become a man. De Beauvoir uses this iconic definition to stress that "no biological, psychological, or economic destiny defines the figure that the human female acquires in society; it is civilization as a whole that develops this product" (Leboeuf, 2015; p. 138). In other words, a woman is not born with a certain, preliminary attitude towards her. De Beauvoir considers agency as the initial, ingrained quality that women carry. Agency as something that is taken for granted by a woman not only the man. Now that I outlined how I read the mentioned quotation, I would explain why I am arguing that the mentioned definition is not in line to the situation of a (Western) man. In a (western) woman's situation, socialization of a woman in many cases means liberation. Liberation of viewing her as not as a sexualized object by educating her, by letting her attend sports activities, by letting her construct their self-identity by interacting with the different actors of the society and in such way gaining the relevant experience to understand and shape who she is. In a man's situation, all the mentioned socialization processes, in many cases, are working not as the liberation practice but rather as encapsulation. Because of the case that a man always had the right to the liberation process which De Beauvoir laid down for women only at the end of the 20th century, there is already rigidly constructed norms of how the socialization process should look for him. I would like to polarize a bit (please also refer to the last sentences of this paragraph to understand that my polarization is a subjective opinion). Based on twenty-first-century Western logic, the highly feminine gendered job for a man, such as a nurse (in many cases) degrades his gender, while a woman who takes a highly masculine gendered job such as engineering liberates her. If a man attends a highly feminine gendered sport activity, for instance: aerobics, it's degrading his gender, while a boxer woman would be called liberation. Of course, the certain prejudices against women doing manly work or engaging in the manly sport activities are existing. I would also agree that it is highly different based on the country about which we are speaking, but my point would be that the logic of how I understand opposing is lying there. In order to disrupt it, I argue that we have to consider the male gender as infinitive or blank canvas which should not be influenced by different power relations. The male gender

should not be touched by socialization. Male gender without socialization, which equals becoming. Becoming, in many ways, means socialization, discipline, and refusing biological (unconscious) traits. Speaking from my own location, refusing means trauma. You refuse the real self by rejecting the biological characteristics for the sake of matching or better relating to the certain hegemonic, heterosexual symbolic logic grounded by gender binarism (men versus women). You do it in order to fit in as a form of discipline. Biological characteristics are understood as your real self, the qualities, which are not affected by socialization. In many cases, exposure to the real self means confrontation with societal norms or in my own case, a traumatic experience. However, important to stress, that the diversity of people and their experience of the situations is significant and many readers would disagree with what I am saying. I also support the idea that to a certain extent socialization for both genders are crucial as we have to function in a world and learn how to relate to fellow human beings. However, I feel an importance to polarize as we generally lack insights on gendered challenges related to western man's socialization. In the twenty-first century, we are mostly hearing stories about the issues that the (Western) women are facing in terms of the certain societal norms which are imposed on them but the significant disproportion exists if we compare how many productive, in-depth, and qualitative stories we hear from Western men about the same issues.

To further substantiate what was said, I will reflect on my own experience related to trauma, caused by the pressure to follow the characteristics of hegemonic masculinities. I am currently working in the hospitality industry, more precisely in the hotel. As could be anticipated, it is a highly policed environment in which all the areas are recorded by cameras. As I am working at the reception, I have sometimes to check the recordings to scan the guests or simply people who entered/exited the hotel (as we are a small, boutique-style, luxurious hotel with limited staff). As all the areas in the hotel are recorded, I am also able to see myself within the cameras completing certain actions. I realized that I get very uncomfortable once I have to look at myself via the cameras. It is highly disruptive to me to watch of how I speak and act, using my body language. I am currently able partially to understand why once I have advanced knowledge related to gender studies and I become more reflective. It is disrupting for me because I do not confirm the hegemonic masculine norms. I do not confirm the centered approach famously outlined in the figuration of the 'western man' elaborated by Rosi Braidotti. Through my conducted bodily actions, I am intervening in the hegemonic masculine norms as my body language in parts may be read as feminized. In many cases, the recordings depict me in actions when I am alone in the hotel. Once I am alone in the hotel and acting in a space, I am more relaxed and do not care how I mobilize my body as there are no people who watch me. Once I do not rationally think (e.g. once you are busy doing something), I act based on my pure biological instincts and unconsciously select the movements that mobilize my body the best at that moment. I am not going to make an argument in terms of if the pure biological instincts that impact the movements of your body are already implicated in socialization (as argued by some scholars such as Judith Butler or Jean Laplanche, who argued that unconscious is born out of an individual's engagement with the societal, see the books such as *The Unconscious and the Id*, 1999). I consider that to make the point here takes a long in-depth analysis. I will only reflect on my own experience. So, the first feeling once I watch how I mobilize my body by playing the recordings could be described as shame. I consider that the shame is coming because of the trauma, for instance: bullying in school (the experience which I had to encounter) or other traumatic experiences which I had to endure at a young age or sometimes even right now. Due to the rigid socialization grounded by the norms of hegemonic masculinity, I still need a lot of effort and mental capacity to reject the shame and disgust (so famously described by Freud in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* as the two main feelings that those perceived as 'perverts' are expected to be feeling due to its homosexual

instincts) because in a real sense, the shame and disgust is not my feeling. The shame is coming not from me but through the Western societal norms which are imposed on me. The shame is only the consequence of the stereotypical, perverse approach of (western) socialization that is imposed on me. In other words, my body language in the mentioned recording is made legible based on the gendered performance which confirms the centered approach to masculinity but, vice versa, abides by it. I do not feel the pressure to fit in a certain masculine frame once I am alone in the hotel and move my body. To watch myself recorded was a disrupting, shocking moment for me because I am not used to seeing something similar to that recording on a daily basis. I consider that if the gendered performances in a singular form would be abided, the masculinities in a plural meaning would take place. Our eyes would get used to different versions of human beings, and their different manifestations, including men and women, and others. We would abide by the concept-centered approach of a man or a woman. This is why I intentionally use the concept of masculinities rather than masculinity in the thesis project to make a place for diversity, to accommodate and pluralize masculinities. This is why I chose the thesis project whose main intention is to investigate the hegemonic masculinities and potentially criticize it as a phenomenon, that privileges ‘the center’ (one type of masculinities, which is directly related to the outlined figuration of man, discussed by Rosi Braidotti) rather than switching to ‘the centers, stressing the capital S’ (criticize the idea of a center in favor of multiple centers).

1.2. Reflection on the chosen topic of the thesis and the explanation of the main applied concepts

I would like to outline how I decided to write the thesis in relation to the topic of hegemonic type of masculinities and its relation to the militarization of the masculine body. I was certain that I would like to write the final research work related to the studies of Masculinities since the end of my first academic year of being a Gender Studies student at Utrecht University. However, I lacked the awareness of how the topic should be approached. The enlightenment moment arrived once I started to complete the academic internship at *Gender Concerns International* from September 2023 to January 2024 (The Hague, the Netherlands). During the internship, I had to take part in the representational work by attending different types of conferences. One such conference was the *Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy event held on 1 and 2 November 2023*, organized by the *Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs at The World Forum in the Hague*. The Netherlands is one of the few countries that accepted to be part of the *Feminist Foreign Policy* movement, whose main target is to promote gender equality globally by supporting different initiatives such as foreign policy grounded in gender equality. During the mentioned two-day international conference, I was fortunate to participate in different sessions in relation to the topics of Gender Policy, such as *Women, Peace and Security*, and *Financing Women’s Rights Organizations*. One of the such sessions was called *Masculinities, Militarization and Peace Building*, organized by *ABAAD* (Resource Centre for Gender Equality; Beirut, Republic of Lebanon). During the mentioned session, representatives of different non-governmental organizations as well as academics, including Laxman Belbase (the professor lecturer at the *Elliott School of International Affairs; The George Washington University* who also became the second reader of my thesis) talked about the concepts of masculinities, militarization processes of masculinities and its complications globally. I was inspired to write a thesis by integrating two different concepts, namely: western masculinities and its different typologies, such as the hegemonic type of masculinities. After the mentioned session, I also thought that the investigation of the process of militarization of the masculine body could become a relevant case study on how to scientifically approach the study of contemporary hegemonic constructions of masculinities. Consequently, I came up with the idea

to write the thesis about the different types of masculinities in the West³ more particularly about hegemonic masculinities, which should be investigated through the case study of the militarization of the masculine body. I am going to focus on the main three concepts, which are: Western Masculinities, Hegemonic Masculinities and Militarized Masculinities in order to demarcate the analytic focus of this project. All three concepts will be operationalized in the theoretical part of the thesis.

I would like to briefly introduce the key concepts and authors in the field with which I am going to work by writing the thesis. The first concept is *Western Masculinities*. The concept should be outlined by thinking about two words western and masculinities. The concept of masculinities itself in many cases is defined as the qualities and attributes which characterize men and boys. As *the Cambridge Dictionary* proposes, the characteristics that are traditionally thought to be typical for men, for instance: physical strength. The thesis will pay significant attention to defining the concept of *Western*. On the basic level, the concept of *Western* conveys the meaning that is significant in the Western part of the World, for instance: the masculine traits that dominate in the Western context. Based on Huntington's logic (1993), the West includes the European continent, North America, and Australia (the section on the *Western Masculinities* will detail it). The concept of Western Masculinities will be operationalized by considering the following authors: Harry Brod, Eve Sedgwick, Joseph Pleck, Raewyn Connell, and others. The other relevant concept that is going to be applied is *Hegemonic Masculinities*. I define the concept as the man who has the hegemonic type of characteristics, such as advanced physical strength, sustainment of soft emotions, and rigid type of talk manner. In many cases, the scientific literature emphasizes the subjugation principle of hegemonic masculinities. The subjugation principle could be reflected as the subjugated power imposed by the hegemonic masculine man to other gender identities, such as effeminate as well as homosexual men. The concept of Hegemonic Masculinities will be operationalized by considering the following authors: Raewyn Connell, Abdellah Taïa, Tim Carrigan, John Lee, and others. *Militarized Masculinities* is the final concept that I am going to apply by writing the thesis project. At the basic level, I consider the concept of Militarised Masculinities as the most repetitive characteristics that are associated with masculinities in the army. I divide the characteristics based on the main three levels: look/act/speak. As the theoretical chapter will outline, dualistic thinking (men versus women) as well as strict heterosexual conduct are separated as one of the most repetitive traits related to militarised masculinities. The concept of Militarised Masculinities will be operationalized by considering the following authors: Insook Kwon, Maya Eichler, Raewyn Connell, Jones Feder Burrell, and others. The mentioned concepts, including the key authors, will be further substantiated in the theoretical framework.

1.3. The main hypothesis, (sub)questions of the study and the structure of the thesis.

As the previous section outlined, my main objective is to focus on the main three concepts, which are Western masculinities, hegemonic masculinities and militarized masculinities. The

³ Different ways exist of how the science of Western Masculinities could be conceptualized. I will outline later in the theoretical chapter why the concept of Western was chosen. In addition, the whole section will be provided to unpack the concept of Western masculinities in the thesis. One of the most typical, historical attributes which is emphasized by Western Masculinities is the dominance of men over women and others (p. 1). The critique of it will also be emphasized. The mentioned aspect became one of many why Western feminists stressed the importance of analyzing the concept of masculinity and its relation to women. Methodologically speaking, historical writing on Western masculinities draws on feminist theory and the work of scholars such as Joan Scott, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Lynne Segal. The mentioned theorists historicized gender and focused on performative and discursive aspects of gendered power (Nye, p. 419). Nye (2007) claims that the work of Sedgwick demonstrated how homosocial relationships among men produced strong bonds but, at the same time, anxiety towards women, homosexual men, and fear of effeminism (p. 419). In addition, one of the most prominent academics who strongly contributed to the studies of Western Masculinities is Raewyn Connell, who advanced the concept of gender by making it plural and creating a hierarchy among different types of masculinities

concept of militarized masculinities becomes my case study on men in Europe with military experience to examine if we can validate the notion that militarized masculinities could be considered as one type of hegemonic masculinities. As follows, the thesis will try to investigate the hypothesis *whether the militarized masculine body is one of the contemporary hegemonic types of masculinities in the European Union context and if yes, what are the main characteristics that validate this notion?* All the empirical as well as discussion parts of the thesis will be devoted to analysing the specificities related to the main hypothesis of the thesis.

In order to test the hypothesis, the main research question of the thesis is formulated as follows: *how is the militarization of the masculine body, as one type of contemporary hegemonic masculinities, constructed in practice in European Union countries?* The chosen question partially derives from hypothesized expectation that a direct connection between militarized masculine bodies and hegemonic masculinities exists, and this study seeks to substantiate and validate this notion based on a literature review and empirical research. Is the construction mechanism of the militarized masculine body similar to the construction mechanism of hegemonic masculinities, including the subjugation principle (as the theoretical section related to hegemonic masculinities will outline, one of the peculiarities that are necessary for the hegemonic masculinities to exist is the principle of subjugation, subjugation to other types of masculinities). In order to unpack the main thesis question, the three sub-questions are stated as follows:

- (1) *What are the defining characteristics of the main three concepts applied in the thesis, namely: western masculinities, hegemonic masculinities, militarized masculinities;*
- (2) *How do military personnel who hold European Union citizenship (the interviewees of the empirical part) characterize the militarized masculine body; what are the main peculiarities in terms of their thinking logic;*
- (3) *How can we achieve a more comprehensive understanding of militarized masculinities as well as hegemonic masculinities by reflecting on the theoretical as well as empirical insight of the thesis.*

The sub-questions will be shortly outlined to understand the main logic of how they were formulated and in which way they will contribute to answering the main research question. In terms of the first sub-question (1), I consider that it is not possible to talk about masculinities if I do not define what kind of masculinities I refer to and why I choose this specific type of masculinities. In addition, all the (theoretical) conceptual frameworks will inform other parts of the thesis, which are methodology, findings and discussions, and conclusion. The second sub-question (2) is mainly devoted to completing the practical part of the thesis. The main methodological tool to investigate the topic will be semi-structured interviews. The mentioned tool will be applied by interviewing the European Union citizens who have or had direct experiences related to militarism, for instance: the section of findings will show that the interviews will be arranged with employees of *Lithuanian* and *Dutch Defense Ministries* as well as military veterans or the research institutions which are directly related to militarism. The interviews will be conducted by considering the three mentioned theoretical concepts and by paying special attention to the militarized masculine body and how they reflect on it by answering the questions. Important to stress that the questions will be prepared in a way to explore if the answers of the respondents resonate with the main characteristics of the hegemonic masculinities, described in the theoretical part and if yes, in which way. To do so,

different variations of questions will be asked. Some questions will be formulated in a way to gather characteristics related to hegemonic / militarized masculinities while the other will be more open questions to understand what kind of characteristics the respondents have in mind. The third (3) sub-question is formulated by intentionally wrapping up the all research paper. The main objective of the thesis is to accumulate additional scientific information in relation to the studies of Western masculinities and their different typologies. Consequently, the aim is to gather additional information in relation to Western masculinities, Hegemonic and Militarized masculinities. Also, important to stress that one of the most important objectives of the paper itself is reveal that militarism itself is a highly gendered institution in which basically the actions are considered as gendered.

I would also like briefly to outline the structure of the thesis. The second chapter of the thesis is going to focus on the literature review, which will detail the topic. The main three concepts of the thesis western masculinities, hegemonic masculinities and militarized masculinities will be operationalized by applying different sources of literature. The third chapter of the thesis *Methodology* is going to be written by considering the method of the project writing, the research material of the project (the background of the interviewees) and the chosen approach of the study. The fourth chapter of the thesis *Analysis of the Findings* will focus on the main empirical outcomes of the thesis by considering the aspects of Ideal Masculinity, the definition of the Western man, the Militarized Masculine Body and the inclusion of the different identities within the Militarized Setting. The thesis will be closed by writing the last chapter on the Discussion of Findings. The collected findings will be outlined in connection to the raised hypothesis of the thesis as well as the main research question.

1.4. Cultural, political and societal relevance. The threat of Russian colonization to European Union and NATO countries.

In the contemporary moment, certain tropes of militarization of the masculine body in the Western World (European context) are especially visible due to the two military conflicts, such as the *Russian War against Ukraine*, with a full-scale invasion since 22 February 2022, and the *Israel-Hamas War*, which occurred on 7 October 2023. Due to both military actions, the topic of militarization became more relevant in the Western context by entering public discourse, for instance, different TV channels. The standard visual tropes of the masculine militarized body in the mass media channels are also becoming more repetitive and taking the greater attention of European citizens. One of the reasons for this is the increasing danger of Russian expansion/colonization of Europe. I consider that both military phenomena (the Russian war against Ukraine as well as the Israel-Hamas War) deserve equal attention to be elaborated. However, I would like to specifically focus on the Russian War against Ukraine due to several reasons. Firstly, this War is happening around nine hundred kilometers away from my motherland (Lithuania). Secondly, since the start of this War, the Lithuanian news media channels are occupied by different information in relation to the War. Consequently, due to my cultural background, I consider having more advanced knowledge of this phenomenon and being able to explain some peculiarities in a complexified way. I will use Lithuania as the case study to illustrate the relevance of the scientific research. I would claim that (more or less) similar arguments could be applied by thinking about the other European Union countries, such as the Netherlands as the topic of militarization and different discussions around it became more repetitive in public media channels such as *NOS.nl*.

Different news related to militarization occurred in the TV channels of Lithuania since the start of the Russian War against Ukraine. The different mass media channels, such as *Delfi.lt* created the sections in their portal, specifically targeting the news related to Ukraine. The topics vary from the general information about the War, including general military actions to the number of victims or the spread of statements by the political leaders about certain military actions. Important to mention that the information is strongly visualized. The visual tropes, which are presented in the articles include the figuration of political dictators (e.g. one of them are the Russian president Vladimir Putin, the Belarus president Alexander Lukashenko, the supreme leader of North Korea Kim Jong Un), the consequences of the War in Ukraine (affected infrastructure such as buildings), military goods, technologies (arms, bombs, ammunition, tanks, military aircraft, warships, drones) and the armed officers, which are depicted in a certain action. The presentation of the armed forces such as soldiers in many cases depicted by shooting, speaking with the political leaders, driving military equipment, or by standing in a rigid way and listening to the instructions. I conclude that all of this information (un)consciously affects the Lithuanian society about militarism in general and the militarized masculine body specifically. Elise Labott (*Senior Adjunct Professorial Lecturer SIS Faculty at American University*) commented on the social influence of the mass media in terms of the *Israel – Hamas War* by giving an interview on the topic of *How Does the Media Impact Public Perception about War?* In the mentioned interview, Labott claims that social media significantly influences how the public perceives certain war actions or the different parties, that are involved in the War (*American University, 2021*). One of the relevant examples would be the tropes related to the armed forces. The repetitive images of armed forces in the mass media channels can strongly shape how the daily Lithuanian citizens perceive them. In many cases, the militarized body is presented in a firm way: rigid walk, serious faces, strong posture, and traditional military uniform. The statistics reveal that such an image in the mass media channels positively impacts Lithuanian society in terms of the trust level of the Lithuanian army. The data reveals that in 2020, about 73% of Lithuanians trust the Lithuanian army based (*karys.lt*). In addition, more than 66% of Lithuanians agree that financing of national defense should increase to 66% based on the year 2020 (*karys.lt*). We could assume that the positive results of the statistics are also highly influenced due to the certain presentation of the military topic in the mass media channels. The assumption exists that the traditional depiction of the militarized masculine body in the mass media channels positively impacts Lithuanian society in terms of trust level. Important to stress that the more repetitive traditional look of soldiers in the mass media channels after the Russian direct invasion to Ukraine in 2022 could also have a gendered impact on masculinity. Lithuanians could start to appreciate certain types of masculine body and their characteristics more than the others, for instance: the strong, rational masculine body could be appreciated more than the other types of masculinities due to its usefulness in protecting the country directly by its physical strength. The mentioned case is especially relevant once the debates about the conscription for permanent military service started in Lithuania in 2022. Debates included the topics if men as well as women should be conscripted and if only men, what kind of category should be conscripted? Important to stress that these are only the assumptions that were influenced by following the discourse of Lithuanian mass media since 2022.

I would also like to further substantiate the claims to the socio-cultural and political relevance by pointing to how commentators have referred to gender topics in writing about the Russian War against Ukraine. By analyzing the different articles, I noticed that most of the commentators indirectly stressed that the Russian War against Ukraine could strengthen the specific narrative of how a militarized masculine body would be perceived in the Western context. The cultivation of narratives in which the militarized masculine body would be

depicted by the hegemonic type of masculine traits (imposed by Russia) in the European context is possible if Russia wins the war against Ukraine. Włodkowska (2023) claims that “States identities are gendered in the sense that their goal is to reproduce male-perceived traits such as violence, aggressiveness, and honor in their relations with other states [...] Putin’s behavior is in line with his perception of interpersonal relations and a world in which the stronger are allowed more and weakness should be exploited”. Consequently, such kind of approach is risky if we consider the European Union / NATO context. The Russian win against Ukraine could stimulate the Europeans and the respectable European institutions to reconsider how the militarized man should look/act/speak. The Russian win against Ukraine could work as an awakening moment for Europeans by hinting that Russia won against Ukraine due to the cultivated approach towards militarism. The possible Russian win would encourage the Global West countries to reconsider their perceptions, and values of how the militarized, masculine man should be perceived and what kind of values it should carry in order to be successful by competing with the countries that are opposing the democratic regimes and the propagated values of the Global West. As Włodkowska (2023) claims, Putin verbally feminizes the European Union, claiming that the EU focuses on minor issues, such as women's or LGBTQI+ people's rights. As Winterbotham (2023) argues, the strategic narrative imposed by Putin can work as the construction mechanism of a shared meaning directed to international politics to convey certain values and beliefs. Putin and the Russians themselves in many cases present masculinity as superior to femininity by constructing narratives such as women are victims which are needed to be protected due to their physical attributes and maternal or peaceful disposition in the military context (Winterbotham, 2023). Pottié (2022) claims that the male stereotype, I would add the hegemonic type of masculine stereotype was created from the war. It means that the War itself is deeply rooted in masculine values. The reflection of it would be the case that men are willing to sacrifice their lives on the battlefield in order to defend their country and its different constituencies - women the part of it. I would argue that the said information has serious implications if Russia wins the War against Ukraine. Firstly, it would validate the fact that Western humanism and its long-lasting traditions to protect human rights are not working considering the international arena. The European Union is already (in)directly involved in the War by providing the War ammunition to Ukraine since the Russian invasion in 2022. It means that the European Union and other Western countries are fighting on the side of Ukraine. With the win of Russia, not only Ukraine but also the whole Western democratic countries would collapse or at least would be humiliated. Also, it would validate the thought that Russia could further create the expansion plans to the neighboring countries, such as the ones, which were part of the former Soviet Union. The whole Eastern part of Europe when are in danger. Secondly, the win of Russia against Ukraine would stimulate Western political leaders, institutions, and society members to reconsider the concepts of masculinity and militarized masculinity. The shift from the more humanized, gender-equal version of the Western militarized masculinities to the one closer to the cultivated militarized masculinity by Russia and the other totalitarian countries would be possible. In other words, some of the Western countries would have to reconsider the perception of militarism and militarized masculine bodies in order to stay competitive in the international arena.

2. Theoretical framework

The main four concepts of the thesis, namely: western masculinities, hegemonic masculinities, militarized masculinities, and toxic masculinities will be reviewed to investigate the hypothesis of the thesis, namely whether the militarized masculine body can be seen as one of the contemporary hegemonic types of masculinities in the European context. The first section (2.1. *The critical approach of the main concepts applied in the project*) is going to focus on the concept of Western Masculinities. The section is going to focus on why the concept of Western rather than European is operationalized in the thesis. The second section (2.2. *Western Masculinities and its main characteristics. Operationalization of the Concept in the Thesis*) is going to focus on the technical explanation of Masculinity Studies, its main development trajectory since the 1960s (the emergence of the *Second Wave of Feminism*). In addition, the main foundational works related to the Studies of Masculinities will be reviewed such as Sedgwick's (1985) *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*. In addition, the concept of Masculinity will be reflected in itself, focusing on the biological category as well as its definition as opposed to femininity. The third section (2.3. *Hegemonic Masculinities and its main characteristics. Operationalization of the concept in the thesis*) focuses on the concept of hegemony itself as well as the studies of Hegemonic Masculinities and its main characteristics. In addition, the concept will be analyzed via the main characteristics as well as working mechanisms that characterize the mentioned concept. Finally, the chapter will be closed by giving extensive attention to the concept of Militarized Masculinities (2.4. *Militarized Masculinities and its main characteristics. Operationalization of the concept in the thesis*). The concept will be operationalized by reviewing the main scientific discussions that are circulating around this concept.

2.1. The critical approach of the main concepts applied in the project

I consider that the investigation of the concept of Western masculinities is necessary as it is the foundational concept from which the other types of masculinities evolved. I consider it is important to define how I phrase the concept of Western Masculinities as there are no normative academic definitions of it. In addition, it is important to emphasize why I choose specifically the concept of Western Masculinities instead of European Masculinities. I consider that the socio-geographical context would be the logical step to start to explain my decision. Samuel P. Huntington in his canonical article *The Clash of Civilizations?* (1993) reflects the idea of how the different civilizations should be defined based on Western logic. Huntington (1993) claims that the World could be divided into the main seven or eight civilizations, which include Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American, and possibly African civilizations (p. 25). The scholar claims that the civilizations should be grouped based on similar cultures and the perception of the civilization rather than economic indicators: "It is far more meaningful now to group countries not in terms of their political or economic systems or in terms of their level of economic development but rather in terms of their culture and civilization. Civilizations are defined by common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, customs, and institutions, and by the subjective self-identification of people" (p. 23). The scholar also separated by which criteria the West differs from the rest of the civilizations. One such criterion is religion and the Western idea itself. In terms of religion, the Western part of the World from the rest is divided by the clash reflected through Christianity versus Islam or thinking about a certain context, such as the European continent: Western Christianity versus Orthodox Christianity (this is one of the possible separation lines between West/East Europe in terms of the cultural perception, p. 29). In terms of Western ideas, the scholar claims that the demarcation line between the Western civilization and the East

civilization could be stated as follows: “Western ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, the separation of church and state, often have little resonance in Islamic, Confucian, Japanese, Hindu, Buddhist or Orthodox cultures”(p. 40). A similar logic was also applied by Edward Said who in his book *Orientalism*(1978) defined the concept of the *Orientalism* and how it is constructed in relation to the concept of the Occident: the West. As Said in the mentioned book claimed, the representation of the East is usually depicted as exotic, feminine, and weak while the West itself is defined as rational, masculine, and powerful. Huntington (1993) similar as Said (1978) defined both cultures in opposition. However, Huntington’s approach was merely scientific without criticism. A lot could be said about the canonical piece of literature by Huntington (1993). It sparked a lot of debates among academics that also encouraged Huntington to launch the book on the same topic in 1997. From the *Gender Studies* perspective, we also have to keep in mind that in Braidotti’s terminology, Huntington’s standpoint embodies the figuration of the privileged man center (white, western, urbanized, wealthy with a prestigious academic degree). His thinking location could be strongly influenced by these elements in a way that unintentionally uplifts Western culture. Despite some controversial debates, I tend to agree that the mentioned information is the relevant demarcation line in between the Western and the other civilizations for my project. By emphasizing the importance of mobility of the Western concept itself, Huntington (1997) claims that the Western notion changed three times in the twentieth century. All three cases were marked by the sociohistorical consequences. The scholar divides the West based on three dates, namely 1920 (The West and the Rest); 1960s (The West and the Rest during The Cold War); Post-1990 (The West and the Rest; The World of Civilizations: Post1990 after the collapse of the *Soviet Union*). The current West notion (post-1990) includes the geographical context of the *European Union* countries with some limitations (the demarcation line from the West to East continues from Finland and goes way back through the Baltic States, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia), the North America (exclusion of Mexico which is considered as Latin America) and the subregion of Australasia. I would claim that, in most cases, the same logic is applied by scholars who analyze the concept of Masculinities in the Western context. As an example, canonical scholars of the studies of masculinities, such as Raewyn Connell in the books *Masculinities*(1995/2005) use the same geographical logic by analyzing the concept of *Western* masculinities. The scholar in the book *Masculinities* (2005) limits himself to the quote Western countries (the European Community, North America, and Australasia, p. 246) or in the book *The Men and The Boys*(2000) uses the concept of North American and European models (p. 43). I leave the right for the reader to disagree with me, but in order to have a theoretical argument, I would like to stick to this logic. Consequently, the different literature sources mainly related to the discussed three geographical areas (the context of the European Union countries, North America, and Australasia) will be applied to the thesis in order to define the concept of Western Masculinities and its different typologies. In addition, I chose to apply the concept of Western Masculinities instead of European Masculinities due to the fact that I do not want to limit myself to the analysis of European literature. Masculinities Studies is still a relatively young field, and to have broad access to the literature is my priority. In addition, I claim that based on the notion of civilization, European masculinities could be considered as Western masculinities with common characteristics (some limitations are also noticeable).

Investigating the concepts of hegemonic and militarized masculinities are crucial as it is directly related to the hypothesis of the thesis, which is an inquiry into *militarized masculinities* is considered one of the types of hegemonic masculinities based on the empirical research findings. In addition, the main characteristics related to hegemonic and militarized masculinities will be defined due to the fact that the information will be used in the empirical

part of the thesis, for instance: by making up the interview guide or analyzing the connection between hegemonic and militarized masculinities. The concept of toxic masculinities will be used in the last section of the thesis as the relevant theoretical concept to critically investigate the relation between hegemonic and militarized masculinities if the hypothesis of the thesis (militarized masculine body is one of the contemporary hegemonic types of masculinities) becomes valid. In other word saying, the concept of toxic masculinities and its main separated characteristics should help critically investigate the main hypothesis of the thesis by stressing the critique related to hegemonic masculinities and its manifestation the Western social context.

In closing this paragraph, I would like to reflect on the article which strongly influenced my thinking, called *Rethinking Masculinity Studies: Feminism, Masculinity, and Poststructural Accounts of Agency and Emotional Reflexivity* by Andrea Waling (2019). Waling (2019) criticizes the categorical analysis of masculinities by claiming that categorical analysis portrays masculinity “as a static and fixed entry despite their attempts to theorize its fluid multiplicity” (p. 89). Advanced attention is given to the studies of hegemonic masculinities by claiming that it’s too modernist, structuralist, and deterministic. Waling (2019) emphasizes the main two arguments related to the critique of categorical analysis of masculinities, which are agency and emotional reflexivity. The scholar claims that the categorical analysis of masculinities in many cases lacks both mentioned aspects. In terms of agency, the scholar is seeking to emphasize “how feminist accounts of agency regarding women’s engagement with sexualized culture and practices of femininity can be useful in theorizing men and masculinity” (p. 99). The scholar claims that agency should be understood as the aspect of how men do masculinity rather than considering that men have or lack agency: “If men are becoming more aware of their privileged positions in society by way of their engagement with masculinity, how do they negotiate and reflect on what when considering the impacts such positions have on others” (p. 102). In other words, the scholar put emphasis on the process as a continues, all included manifestation rather than the fragmented parts of it. Waling (2019) emphasizes the two-sided impact of masculinity that it is not “solely an experience of discourse, cultural norms, and power, nor can it be limited to live experiences that neglect considerations of power and structural inequalities” (p. 95). The categorical analysis of the studies of masculinities tends to focus on power manifestation, and experience of discourse rather than the all included elements. The second point of critique that the scholar emphasizes is related to emotional reflexivity. By relying on the article *Sticky masculinity: Post-structuralism phenomenology and subjectivity in critical studies on men. Men and Masculinities*, Berggren, K. (2014), Waling (2019) claim that Masculinity should be considered “as a systemic structure that shapes men’s subjectivities, and a consideration of how men actually experience the world. Theories of masculinity tend to be concerned with the former, with little consideration of the latter [...] consideration of both power/system structural inequalities, and men/boys lived experiences of masculinity is necessary” (p. 95). The focus is on the process of reflection. The scholar emphasizes the importance of reflecting on men’s decisions rather than focusing on how men do masculinities. The scholar claims that a scarcity of knowledge is noticed there.

The article by Waling (2019) encouraged me to rethink the relevance of my project and the possible outcomes of the research. I would agree that my chosen research method is a categorical analysis of masculinities in which I am investigating if Militarized Masculinity and its practical characteristics could be considered as a certain type of Hegemonic Masculinities. I consider it is crucial to have this methodological frame to be precise and clear with the outcomes of the research that I would like to deliver. However, I consider the potential for providing nuance a highly important object of my thesis. I am not going only technically to

confirm or reject certain assumptions by outlining why I tend to think based on a certain trajectory. Firstly, I intend to accumulate additional knowledge within the studies of Western Masculinities and more precisely in connection with Militarization. As Ashe, F. and Harland, K. (2014) claim “Despite critical studies of masculinities being an important and growing part of global social inquiry, to date there has been a dearth of studies into masculinities in Northern Ireland and I would add that in the Global West” (p. 758). I consider that it helps to reduce the level of fragmentation within my project and healthily combine both perspectives, which could be described as: How? and Why? an individual acts in a certain way, in a certain social setting, and how the identity of masculinities is operationalized.

2.2. (Western) Masculinities and its main characteristics

Western Masculinities is the foundational context where dominant typology of masculinities was conceptualized. The concept of Western masculinities will be operationalized by considering its historical peculiarities (its development as a separate field of the studies). In order to stress its development as a separate subfield of study, the concept will be operationalized considering feminism epistemology, more concretely the second wave of feminism and, its critique of phallogocentrism. Furthermore, the concept will be explained by thinking about the biological and social characteristics of sex as well as binary thinking logic (men versus women).

I would like to start to outline the concept by thinking about the historical peculiarities of the Studies of Masculinities. Feyza Bhatti (2022) in the book *Masculinity Studies – An Interdisciplinary Approach* reviews the development trajectory of masculine studies. The scholar claims that the studies of masculinities is a relatively new academic field that evolved from the women’s movements, more particularly *the second wave of feminism* in the 1960s when women started to question the patriarchal structures and masculine domination (p. 1). The scholar emphasizes that the studies of masculinities emerged due to the loss of status of men against women: “it was an antifeminist yet non-political movement that argues that men are victimized as a result of the gains of the feminist movement” (p. 1). In addition, the question of women’s oppression by men became the relevant point of how the studies of masculinities evolved. Gender Studies portrayed men as the main cause of the repression of women (critique of phallogocentrism). Men were the most resilient gender category to change, unwilling to give up their privilege. In order to complexify this created patriarchy, the phenomenon of masculinities became an important study to analyze itself. Reeser (2015) in his article *Concepts of Masculinity and Masculinity Studies* claims that the initial research works related to masculinity in 1980 mostly focused on the idea that masculinity is a natural, essential sex/gender category in which “the male sex role was taken as a uniform, stable and normative configuration to which actual males do or do not conform” (p. 13). In the same article, Reeser (2015) applies the thoughts of the American scholar Harry Brod who was one of the first Western academics, to specialize in Men’s studies. Brod claimed that scholars are used to writing too simplistically about the male sex role in Western Society (referring to the 1980s). The scholar suggested considering masculinity as a plural phenomenon by focusing on its historiography (focusing on how masculinity had changed over time). The initial Studies of Masculinities or rather more precise say Men’s Studies were non-literary, more focusing on the perspective of social science. According to Reeser (2015), Eve Sedgwick’s work *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985) was the foundational piece of literature that established the clear connection between literary and gender studies. Sedgwick (1985) included the concept of *Homosocial Desire* to analyze the male homosocial bonds.

Sedgwick (1985) claims that the asymmetry between male homosocial and homosexual bonds exists in comparison to females. In other words, female homosocial and homosexual bonds could be described as continuous while the same relations of men as discontinuous. In order to illustrate the mentioned point, the scholar provides an example related to the social interaction between the members of the same sex. Sedgwick (1985) claims that the aims, emotions, and valuations link lesbianism with other forms of women's attention to women, for instance: mother and daughter, sister and sister or women's friendships (p. 2). The scholar describes it as continuous. In the meantime, the opposite relation is assigned to male, named as discontinuous. The scholar claims "When Ronald Reagan and Jesse Helms get down to serious logrolling on "family policy," they are men promoting men's interests [...] Is their bond in any way congruent with the bond of a loving gay male couple? Reagan and Helms would say no – disgustedly. Most gay couples would say no – disgustedly. But why not? Doesn't the continuum between "men-loving-men" and "men-promoting-the-interests-of-men" have the same intuitive force that it has for women?" (p.3). As Sedgwick (1985) described the main intention of the book was to generate scientific knowledge which would help the reader "to focus intelligently on male homosocial bonds throughout the heterosexual European erotic ethos" (p. 16). Joseph Pleck was another researcher who significantly contributed to the emergence of Masculinity Studies by defining the psychological concept of *The Male Sex Role Identity* in his pioneering book *The Myth of Masculinity* (1981). Pleck (2015) in his written article *The Theory of Male Sex-Role Identity: Its Rise and Fall, 1936 to the Present* claims that the mentioned theory conveys the meaning that "for individuals to become psychologically mature as members of their sex, they must acquire male or female "sex role identity" which is grounded by sex-appropriate traits, interests that psychologically confirm their biological sex" (p. 21). The mentioned theory worked as the foundational layer for many further masculine-related research studies such as "the effects of the absence of the father, male crime and violence, and male attitudes toward women" (Pleck, 2015; p. 21). Pleck (2015) claims that "the resulting cases of the lack of the so-called normative assignment of the sex role identity leads to effeminacy, homosexuality or hypermasculinity" (p. 21). Harry Brod was one of the first scholars who defined masculinities in a plural sense. The collection of essays *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* (1987) is considered as the foundational step towards multiplications of masculinities (p. 15). In his *Introduction: Themes and Theses of Men's Studies*, Brod (1987) claims that scholars treated men as generic human beings which systematically excludes from consideration what is unique to men. In addition, the mentioned approach systematically prevented to analysis of the specific male experience.

The word masculinities itself carries socio-cultural meanings while man is marked by the biological imperative. Franklin (1984) stresses the difference between two categories being man and being masculine. Both categories are derived from the two interrelated categories of sex and gender. In terms of sex, the scholar emphasizes the natural pre-given status of "man a person at birth who has an XY chromosome pattern, male and female hormones, a penis, testicles, seminal vesicles, and prostate glands generally categorized as male" (p. 2). On the other hand, there is a difference between sex (man) and gender (masculinities). If a "man compares to biological characteristics, masculinity conveys socio-cultural flavor. Masculinities and Femininities are related to indirect experiences and formal and informal learning, we develop images, conceptions, perceptions, and the like, of masculinity and femininity" (p. 2). Consequently, the assigned pre-given sex of the individual could be man, and the later developed social habits could be described as masculine or vice versa feminine, or masculine and feminine or leave non described (as the section 'other'). As follows, one of the ways how masculinities could be defined is related to the social norms that are assigned to the individual later in his particular stage of life. In other words, man and masculinities collapse if the assigned

pre-given sex is man, and later developed social habits could be treated as masculine. Transsexual people could be considered as the relevant example when the opposite gender identity to their sex is chosen/assigned. However, important to mention that the most current literature related to trans science claims that transsexuals are seeking to remain transsexuals as the gender category rather than confirming the binarism between man and woman (as an example, see Hayward's 2008 written article in a figurative way: *More Lessons From a Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciated Selves*). Naturally, this is a highly complex statement which significantly varies per person. Some transsexuals would strongly disagree with this statement (as I learned from my own network) as their intention would be to transit fully from one gender category to the other and not call themselves as transsexuals.

It is important to stress that the concept of Western Masculinities is mobile, constantly evolving. Based on certain social situations, geographical context, the concept could be treated differently. In most of the Western countries being *masculine* is still understood in opposition to being feminine. The noun in opposition should be stressed here. In some Western countries such as Lithuania, the connotation of opposition is firmer than in the Netherlands. In other words, I would claim that the stereotypical approach of masculine and feminine gendered norms is more consolidated to Lithuania than in the Netherlands. The relevant example would be *The Gender Equality Index* in 2023, prepared by *the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE)*. *The Gender Equality Index* is a composite indicator that measures the complex concept of gender equality, including aspects such as work, money, knowledge, time, power, health, violence, and intersecting inequalities between men and women in all twenty-seven European Union countries. If we compare the average number between men and women, we could see that the figure is comprised of 64.1 in Lithuania while it constitutes 77.9 in the Netherlands. The mentioned number indicates a score in terms of women and men equality. 100 would mean that a country had reached full equality between women and men. The mentioned statistic is a great allusion to the noun opposition. Despite the steady development in both countries, gender equality is still lacking in Lithuania and the Netherlands, but on different scales due to different social, historical, and cultural peculiarities. I consider the mentioned example to be the relevant justification for the concept of opposition. The concept of opposition in a sense of gender opposition (men versus women)⁴ as well as in a sense of how significantly the level of opposition could vary in different European Union countries, such as Lithuania and the Netherlands.

By stressing the importance of opposition, Connel (2005) in her book *Masculinities* defines Masculinities based on binary thinking logic: "unmasculine person would behave differently: being peaceable rather than violent, conciliatory rather than dominating, hardly able to kick a football, uninterested in sexual conquest, and so forth" (p. 67). Connel (2005) proposes to conceptualize masculinities is to place it in opposition to femininity. On different scales, masculine social characteristics are opposed to feminine in the Western countries. Important to stress that such a definition is not neutral, which has divided rather than united approaches in terms of masculinity and femininity. Many contemporary scholars try to significantly intervene in the mentioned definition, for instance: the canonical French philosopher Elisabeth Badinter, who in her works such as *XY: On Masculine Identity* (1995) or *The Unopposite of Sex. The End of The Gender Battle* (1986) stresses the dualistic identity of a man (sex), which is comprised of XY chromosomes or the bisexual nature of an individual itself. In terms of bisexuality, Badinter (1986) claims "A sufficient bisexual integration, a developed bisexualization, is the only thing that can enable us to understand that there can be a sexual

⁴ Important to stress that this canonical definition is missing other identity categories, such as minority groups of homosexual, bisexual, trans, disabled people.

otherness in every one of us [...] When gender identity is well integrated, human beings can discover, as a further possibility of development, the advantages of their bisexuality. It is their bisexuality, for example, that enables men to “mother” without complexes, and women to use their masculine impulses in a positive fashion” (p. 174).

The concept of Western masculinities was operationalized by considering its historical development and by paying attention to the main two aspects, namely biological versus social connotation (men versus masculinities) and its oppositional definition (masculinity versus femininity). I conclude both dimensions are important to be applied in the empirical part of the thesis to lay the foundation of how the interviewees perceive Western masculinities and if their answers could be related to the theoretical information stated in this section.

2.3. Hegemonic masculinities and its main characteristics

The concept of Hegemonic Masculinities will be operationalized in this section by providing the definition of hegemonic masculinities (the development trajectory of the concept), discussing the main characteristics, and articulating the working mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities. I consider it highly important to outline the main characteristics and the working mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities as they will be used as an analytical lens in the empirical part of the thesis once the interviews are implemented. I am going to analyze if militarized masculinities could be considered as an ideal, aspired type of hegemonic masculinities. I would also like to outline the difference between characteristics and the working mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities. I consider that characteristics should be related to the personal features and attributes that identify the person. In the meantime, the mechanisms are connected to process, ongoing phenomenon, for instance: how different objects, such as mass media consolidate and develop the manifestation of hegemonic masculinities in society. In other words, characteristics are marked by the word noun or what while mechanisms are related to the word verb or how.

The joint consensus agrees that the word ‘hegemony’ and its critique were shaped by the work of the Italian intellectual Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony and its development is considered one of the most significant contributions to twentieth-century Marxist thought (Bates, 1975). The word hegemony itself means leadership or dominance. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) claim that the concept of hegemonic masculinities was created around 1980, and its manifestation significantly influenced the thinking about men, gender, and social hierarchy. The application of this concept provided a link between men’s studies, issues in terms of men and boys, feminism and patriarchy as well as social models of gender (p. 829/830). Exaltation of the specific type of masculinities is one of the most common characteristics related to hegemonic masculinities. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) claim, the characteristics include “a most honored way of being a man, it required all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men” (p. 832). Important to mention that the focus is on the exaltation of one type of masculinities which could be illustrated by the word Center as quoted in the Introduction part of the thesis. Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) stress that hegemonic masculinities could be considered as the process in which “the dominant group – the white, educated, heterosexual, affluent males we know and love so well – can adapt to new circumstances without breaking down the social-structural arrangements that actually give them their power” (p. 577). In the meantime, Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) emphasize the critique of hegemonic masculinities, which could be considered as the societal demands of men to live up to an impossible standard: “the male role” is unduly restrictive because hegemonic masculinity does

not reflect the true nature of men” (p. 579). Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) emphasize the main characteristics of hegemonic masculinities by claiming that this type of masculinities is constructed in subjugation to other types of masculinities, such as young and effeminate as well as homosexual men (p. 587). I would like to provide two examples depicted in literature (fiction) that emphasize the inner conflict of the main protagonists which could be characterized as effeminate, homosexual not matching the normative binary gender logic. The inner conflict circulates around the resilience, and protest directed to the effeminization processes. I consider that in both cases which will be outlined, the subordinated type of masculinities that the main two protagonists illustrate (according to Connell vocabulary, 1995 / 2005) are presented in opposition to hegemonic masculinities, which unconsciously become superior considering the situation of the main two protagonists. The superiority of the hegemonic type of masculinities is revealed through the expressed verbalized feelings. One of the cases could be found in the novel *An Arab Melancholia* by Abdellah Taïa (2008). The first chapter of the mentioned book depicts the main protagonist Abdellah and his sexual experiences as a teenager with the neighborhood boys in a rural city in Morocco. The inner identity conflict of the teenager Abdellah is reflected through the sexual intercourse with the other (older) male teenager. Sexual passivity is the main trope of effeminacy which is assigned to the main protagonist Abdellah. The sexual passivity is reflected through the taken sexual roles during the intercourse with the older boy. Sexual intercourse is depicted based on the binary thinking logic (man as active, *giver* versus woman as passive, *receiver*). The mentioned illustration is emphasized by the following citations, expressed by Abdellah “just as long as he stopped turning me into a woman [...] Just because I loved men and always would, didn’t mean that I was going to let him think of me as the opposite sex, let him destroy my identity, my history like that” (p. 21). The social reality of what it means to be a homosexual, effeminate man in rural Morocco is reflected through the inner feelings of Abdellah, characterized as “From now on, people would only see me one way. I’d come with a warning label. A tag: effeminate guy. Sissy. They wouldn’t take me seriously. People would take advantage of me every day, abuse me more and more” (p. 30). I consider that this quoted scene illustrates the subjugation principle imposed by hegemonic masculinities, directed to other types of masculinities. Abdellah feels shame and disgust for being a pervert, of being converted to the effeminate guy. His mindset is impacted by the binary thinking logic imposed by hegemonic masculinities. He feels that his inner sexual passion (submission himself to the sexual partner and completing the function as a *receiver*) is harmful, and illegal, which contaminates his masculine identity. Another relevant example, which illustrates the subjugation principle of hegemonic masculinities is outlined in the short story *Uncle* by James, G.W. (2009). The story depicts a young male child who experiences the sensual pleasure of swimming in a pool with his uncle. The subjugation principle is reflected through the life experience of a young boy who feels small, and effeminate in front of his uncle (the obvious illustration of the hegemonic masculinity): “He’s wearing short red shorts so I can see how hairy his legs are and how many muscles he’s got. As giant as he is, he’s making me feel even smaller than I usually do, and I don’t think I really like it” (p. 6). The mentioned quotation emphasizes the physical strength and superiority of the hegemonic masculinities which are exalted by the expressed sensual pleasure of the main protagonist (young effeminate boy). In addition, the exaltation of the hegemonic masculinities is outlined through the sustainment of emotions, feelings, movements by the main protagonist which are opposing to the actions/feelings the boy should act/hold: “My daddy doesn’t let me hold him like Uncle Paul does. He says: You can’t be such a crybaby all the time, Jake, “which always sounds silly to me [...] I never know what my daddy wants me to do. Telling me “You’re gonna have to get tough one day, Jakie. You’ll see” (p. 10). The mentioned quotation illustrates the most obvious characteristics that a man confirming the hegemonic masculine identity traits should hold, namely: sustainment of soft emotions, and

acting in a calculative, rigid manner. I consider that both cases illustrate the subjugation principle directed to other types of masculinities, such as young, effeminate men. Both mentioned cases exemplify how the theoretical elaboration in terms of hegemonic masculinities could be illustrated in a practical way.

The working mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities could be manifested in different ways. The circulation mechanisms of admired (hegemonic) masculine conduct could be reflected through churches, narrated by mass media, or celebrated by the state. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) state that some mechanisms could be obvious, such as “pageantry” of masculinities in television sports broadcasts or applying censure to subordinated groups, for instance: criminalization of homosexual conduct (p. 834). In addition, the mechanisms could also be reflected via certain habits, which are propagated by the states (the ways of celebrating hegemonic masculinities). In order to illustrate how the mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities are cultivated by the states, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) provide an example, related to *Stakhanovite Movement*⁵, which happened in the former Soviet Union since 1935. The movement derived from the public figure Alexei Stakhanov, a coal miner who achieved a world record by mining 102 tons of coal in 1935 in a single day. The scholar complexifies the mentioned achievement by claiming that it was reached with the help of other workers but many details were silenced by the communist regime in Soviet Russia. The scholars complain that the exaltation of the mentioned movement by the state works as a distortion moment due to the propagation of hegemonic masculinities based on everyday social practice (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). In other words, the mentioned practice (celebration of the Stakhanovite Movement) is artificially inserted as a shock moment to the daily based experience of citizens to direct them to glorify the characteristics of hegemonic masculinities. The mentioned movement emphasizes characteristics such as the exaltation of physical masculine strength, the calculative working manner of masculinity. In addition, the mentioned movement reveals the logic that hegemonic masculinities are constructed in subjugation to other types of masculinities, such as effeminate or different identities having men (subordinated masculinities⁶ as an example), which characteristics are portrayed as opposite to hegemonic masculinities. Important to mention that the mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities could be also identified in the contemporary environment by considering the different mass media channels as one main cultivation mechanism. The relevant examples would be related to the political leaders which are currently in the spotlight in terms of the *Russian War against Ukraine* (2022). One of them is related to the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. The different worldwide mass media channels stress certain communication styles as well as the general outfit of the mentioned political leader. I consider that one of the most visible attributes that illustrate the case of hegemonic masculinities of this public figure is related to the chosen clothing style after the Russia's direct invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The chosen clothing style, grounded by an olive-green sweatshirt with the Ukrainian trident on the chest, cargo pants, and work boots by Zelensky consolidates his image as the white, heterosexual, standard man who confirms the military masculine norm. In the meantime, I would claim that the Russian President Vladimir Putin illustrates an even more visible case of a hegemonic masculine leader. The main constructed image of Vladimir Putin, starting with how he is speaking, uses his body language illustrates the hegemonic leader those leading is grounded by the exaltation of autocratic power and, the construction of the fear phenomenon

⁵ Stakhanovite Movement (mainly 1935 – 1938). A mass cultural movement of workers which originated in the Soviet Union. The movement was called after Alexei Stakhanov, a coal miner who became the influence of the Soviet Union workers to produce more than was required by working harder and more efficiently.

⁶ Connell (2005) in her book *Masculinities* characterized the four types of masculinities, namely hegemonic, subordinate, complacent and marginal. Subordinated Masculinities should be understood as men who do not fit into the construction of hegemonic masculinity and are treated lower based on gender hierarchy.

directed to people who surround him. The mentioned argument could be justified by thinking about different layers, starting from physical image, and finishing to oral public rhetoric. The public image of Vladimir Putin is grounded by the direct emphasis on the physical strength of masculinity. The different mass media articles with the titles *Bare-chested Vladimir Putin poses for macho holiday snaps while on camping trip to Siberia*⁷ are visible in different mass media channels. The same logic applies once we consider his political rhetoric. The relevant example would be related to his public speech when he announced the ostensible *Special Military Operation*⁸ against Ukraine on 24 February, 2022. The short, precise communication, rigid steady tone of voice with a pointed emphasis on certain words, hard steady body posture by holding two hands on the table, serious even sometimes aggressive facial expressions, and sharp eye contact with the camera prove his hegemonic masculine behavior. In addition, the hegemonic masculine way of governance is also reflected through the imposed laws on Russian society which are directly influenced by Vladimir Putin. One of the examples would be related to the Russian Supreme Court's accepted decision on November 30, 2023, that the International LGBTIQ+ movement should be considered an extremist organization. Consequently, all the activities related to LGBTIQ+ movements should be considered extremist in Russia. The mentioned case proves the idea that the non-binary gender ideology is presented as a threat to the ideal type of hegemonic masculinities in Russia. In addition, the mentioned accepted regulation also reflects the main characteristic of hegemonic masculinities, outlined by Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) in terms of subjugation to other types of masculinities, such as young and effeminate as well as homosexual men.

Different patterns of thinking were operationalized discussing the concept of hegemonic masculinities. The mentioned concept was analyzed by considering its main characteristics as well as the main working mechanisms of how hegemonic masculinities affect the social fabric. With the next section I would like to move to outline one of the most relevant concepts of the thesis, which is Militarized Masculinities.

2.4. Militarized masculinities and its main characteristics

Militarized Masculinities will be applied as the lenses through which the main hypothesis as well as the research question of the thesis will be tested. The application of the concept will also seek to understand if the militarization of the masculine body is working based on the same characteristics and working mechanisms related to hegemonic masculinities (Section 2.3). In other words, the theoretical characteristics as well as mechanisms are defined in section 2.3. (Hegemonic Masculinities) will be explored by analyzing the concept of Militarized Masculinities. I consider it is crucial to define the main scientific discussions, that are circulated around this concept even if Militarized Masculinities will be the directly investigated object of the thesis. It is important to do so for several reasons. Firstly, it will help to understand how scientifically the concept is defined and what kind of academic definitions are circulating around this concept. Secondly, it will help to understand if the theoretical scientific information will be in line with the practical results, which will be outlined in the discussion part of the thesis. Consequently, the concept of Militarized Masculinities will be operationalized by considering its development trajectory as well as the main characteristics. Important to mention that in some literature sources, the concept of militarism is directly related to the concept of hegemonic masculinities. One of the most repetitive logics of how militarism is related to hegemonic masculinities is building opposition between masculinities

⁷ The reference was taken from the mass media portal, called *Standard.co.uk*. The link <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/world/barechested-vladimir-putin-poses-for-macho-holiday-snaps-while-on-camping-trip-to-siberia-a3604836.html>

⁸ Please see the link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1qS6J-WbTD8> and the shorter version <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asuix16wlWo>

and femininities. Nath (2022) claims that “associating the military with an essential idea of men reflects hegemonic masculinity, it reproduces the gendered binary between the masculine protector of the feminine victim” (p. 47). Considering what was said, I still would like to separate these two concepts (hegemonic masculinities and militarism) and try to empirically investigate whether the respondents may confirm the mentioned theoretical assumptions that exist in analyzing scientific sources. In other words, I am going to search the evidence to support the theoretical hypothesis that militarized masculinities could be characterized as one type of hegemonic masculinities in the European Union context.

Svedberg (2021) claims that since the mid-1980s, the steady increase of feminist literature appeared to conceptualize the questions related to gender and militarization in various disciplines, including international relations and the studies of masculinities. I would like to separate the main intellectual thinking trajectories around which the topic of militarization and gender is circulating since 1980. Kwon (2000) in her article reveals that the compulsory male military service in South Korea “has played a crucial role in constructing citizenship, nationhood, masculinity, femininity, motherhood and fatherhood and in creating the essential ‘glue’ that binds each of these six potent ideas to the concept of the nation-state in contemporary South Korea” (p. 1). Kwon (2000) presented the three-way mechanism which could be applied by analyzing the conscription processes in South Korea, namely: “(1) pre-conscription socialization; (2) military service; and (3) post-conscription interpretation of that military experience” (p. 42). Kwon (2000) stresses that the mentioned mechanism is not only a male-only affairs project but women are an integral part of it. The scholar emphasizes that the integration of women is especially relevant by analyzing the first two stages of the conscription mechanism in which the focus should be “the interactive dynamics between mother and son, pre-conscripts or conscripts and their girlfriends, and the like, are the active part of constructing the gendered citizenship” (p. 43). The parent’s relation to the conscription process of their child is a highly gendered phenomenon in which the strict functions of parents are stressed out, namely a father “should encourage his son to go into the army, and to fulfill his national defense duty to achieve real citizenship” while mother represents “emotional attachment such as compassion and pity toward their conscripted sons” (p. 44). In addition, Cynthia Enloe (1988) repeats the idea that the inclusion of women into the conscription process is a necessary condition in which women are acting based on the strict rules imposed by patriarchy: “In each country military strategists need women. They need women who will act and think as patriarchy expects women to act and think. And they need women who will be disguised, so that the military can remain the quintessentially “masculine” institution, the bastion of “manliness” (p. 220). Conway (2012) claims that the “Military service is predicated on particular conceptions of masculinity” (p. 6). Enloe (2000) introduces the case of Nicaragua by emphasizing the particular conceptions of masculinity “Young men of draftable age during the 1980s were propelled toward military service not only by the conscription law, but also by a desire to be seen as manly and by the fear of being seen by others as one of the cochones, “faggots” (p. 251). Similarly, Conway (2012) outlines that “Men who refuse to perform military service threaten the operation of these binaries and invite attempts to ‘feminise’ such men and thereby negate their political and gendered identity” (p. 24). Heterosexuality as one of the main characteristics of a militarized masculine body will be further outlined below. In the meantime, the already outlined information proposed an idea that the process of militarization is an ongoing process that rightly could be defined as indoctrination. The process of indoctrination is necessary in order to transform a youngster to a soldier. Kwon (2000) outlines the indoctrination process using the case of South Korea by claiming that “During three years in uniform, the state and its military are expected to reformulate young men’s civilian minds and bodies into the minds and bodies of military personnel [...] In South Korea,

the conscription period is also a brainwashing time for the inculcation of anti-Communist nationalist ideology, the fostering of increased enmity for North Korea, and the internalization of the logic of safeguarding the nation from the threat of possible war” (p. 47). The rejection of self-relation and personal background in the sake of the national interest is one of the most important aspects of the indoctrination policy. Kwon (2000) claims that “During military service, young men can confirm the reality and entity of nation as an imagined community by gathering and residing collectively in the name of national defense for more than two years without consideration for any of the social values such as personal or social relations and background” (p. 47-48). The mentioned information stresses the logic that during a certain period of time, the young man is transformed into a soldier whose thinking is grounded by the principle of national defense, the sense of belonging to the nation and the rejection of individualism. As the empirical part of the thesis will demonstrate, the indoctrination process will be addressed by some respondents.

The binary thinking logic (men versus women) as well as strict imposed male heterosexual conduct stand as one of the main characteristics related to the militarization of the masculinity process. In terms of binary thinking logic, Connel (2005) claims that militarization is directly related to masculinities by provocatively using male genitals as a symbol to illustrate it: “the gun is a penis symbol as well as a weapon. Gun organizations are conventionally masculine in cultural style” (p. 212). Eichler (2014) concludes that men despite significant changes in terms of gender relations, remain associated with militarism while women are associated with pacifism. Important to stress that the discourse by high-level politicians - both male and female - also emphasizes gender binarism in terms of militarization. The relevant example would be Amina J. Mohammed (the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations), who during *the Feminist Foreign Policy Ministerial Event* (20 September 2023, United Nations) claimed: “When I see conflicts around the World, Wars around the World - We are not seeing enough women there. And man, I have to say this what it is, but you know: You want to win a War, we want pathways to peace”. The mentioned quotation is a direct allusion to the division logic between men and women. By the word ‘we’ Ms. Mohammed referred to women. I would claim that the mentioned quote illustrates an idea that militarization and its main interrelated concepts between winning/losing the War, reaching the stage of peacefulness, and surrendering have a direct gendered connotation. In other words, the mentioned quotation by Ms. Mohammed illustrates the deep stereotypical dualistic thinking that started to be intervened with the emergence of feminism epistemology. The foundational ideas of feminism, starting from Simone de Beauvoir tried to intervene in the idea of man (object) versus woman (subject through their appearance). The repetitive scientific thought is depicted in the literature, which illustrates the mentioned thought, expressed as following “the masculine “just warriors” who guard the feminine “beautiful souls” (Gopal, 2023; p. 35). Smith (2007) claims that “Beautiful Souls’ are innocent and pure and therefore very vulnerable; their attributes of beauty and peacefulness correspond particularly neatly with the traditional and still common view of ideal femininity” (p. 3). The binary thinking outlined above will also be developed in the empirical part of the thesis. The dualistic nature of women and men will be applied to investigate if the interviewees confirm the theoretical thinking logic related to the militarized masculine body.

The strict male heterosexual conduct is the other attribute that characterizes the Western type of masculinities and its relation to militarization processes. Eichler (2014) claims that militarized masculinities are created around the narratives related to the protection of femininities (e.g. masculine warriors to protect feminine beautiful souls) as well as in relation to devaluate the gendered others as well as those othered by race or sexuality (Eichler, 2014; p. 83). Eichler (2014) claims that one of the most generic ways to conceptualize militarism is

related to its relation to heterosexuality. Hearn (2012) stresses that “many states specifically disallow gay/homosexual men from serving in the military, and in some countries, men in the military who are defined in this way can be prosecuted” (p. 39). Eichler (2014) recites the main characteristics associated with militarized masculinities which, in most cases, are opposing to men whose identities are different than heterosexuality, namely toughness, violence, aggression, courage, control, and domination (p. 82). Most of the academic literature related to militarism and homosexuality is grounded in the U.S. Militarism is an essential, integral part of American society. According to different sources such as *Statista.com*⁹, the U.S. has the most powerful army in the World. Thus, the main development trajectory of policy related to homosexual people’s integration into the military will be reviewed considering the case of the U.S. as similar development trajectories at least in terms of the dates, for instance: abolition of the homosexual ban in militarism could be traced in other European countries or Australia and Russia. Franklin D. and Ronald J. Koshes (1995) claim the main three arguments under which the U.S. policy excluded homosexuals from the military by 1993. The ban on homosexuals was unconditional till Bill Clinton was elected as the president and the new regulations were accepted in 1993. However, since the formation of George Washington’s army, homosexual individuals were excluded from the army following the argumentation “Personnel who voluntarily engage in homosexual acts, irrespective of sex, will not be permitted to serve in the Army in any capacity, and their prompt separation is mandatory” (p. 18). Harry, J. in his paper *Homosexual Men and Women Who Served Their Country* applied a quantitative analysis to prove that the policing regulations towards the ban of homosexual people into the U.S. army, considering 1969 and 1970 years were not sufficient enough by claiming that “homosexual and heterosexual men seem equally like to have served in the military, while lesbians were more likely than heterosexual women to have served [...] The explanation for this may be that many homosexuals may not be aware of their homosexuality at time of entry into the service, and hence, cannot readily be identified either by themselves or others” (p. 117). The main three arguments exist under which homosexuals were excluded from serving in the U.S. armed forces between 1980 and 1990, namely: “(1) homosexuality is a mental disorder rendering a person unstable, (2) homosexual service members are a source of poor morale for military units, and (3) homosexual service members are poor security risks” (Jones, Koshes; 1995, p. 16). The first was merely focusing on the explanation of homosexuality and its mental deviance from so-called normativity. The second reason was related to the aspect of military order and morality and was justified by several questions, namely: “1. What effects do homosexual or antihomosexual cliques have on discipline? [...] 2. In the many military settings in which soldiers do not ready access to heterosexual partners, what are the effects of the presence of a known homosexual person?” (Jones, Koshes, 1995, p. 19). The third aspect of security risk was explained as “homosexual service members are security risks, since they would be subject to blackmail or (sexual) seduction” (Jones, Koshes, 1995, p. 19). Only on July 19, 1993 the newly elected president Bill Clinton announced the new policy on homosexuals in the military which echoed the principle: don’t ask, don’t tell. One of the main elements of the policy was that service men and women are judged based on their conduct, not sexual orientation, the orientation question will not be asked in the enlistment procedure and most interestingly if a person openly states that he/she is homosexual, it would create a presumption that he or she could engage in prohibited conduct but the service member would have an opportunity to refute that presumption (Burrelli, Feder, 2009, p.1). The scholars confirm that accepted legislation repeated the following: don’t ask, don’t tell principle when the sexual orientation is a private rather than open matter and about which to speak is not advised. In terms of other Western countries, Burrelli, Feder (2009) claim that countries such as Great Britain voluntarily changed

⁹ The official statistic related under the topic *The World’s Most Powerful Militaries* in the portal *Statista.com* <https://www.statista.com/chart/20418/most-powerful-militaries/>

or been ordered by the accepted agreements by the court to change the bans on homosexuals. In Australia the ban on homosexuality lifted in November 1992, and in Great Britain in January 2000. Russia lifted the ban in July 2003 by claiming that sexual orientation should be considered a confidential thing to prevent violence against homosexual soldiers in the army.

To conclude what was said, important to stress that militarism in some countries such as South Korea worked as an essential concept, a glue to combine concepts, such as nationhood, masculinity, femininity, motherhood, and fatherhood. One of the crucial working mechanisms of militarism is indoctrination during which the youngster is transformed into a soldier. The aspect of self-rejection for the sake of national interest is one of the most important elements of the indoctrination process. Dualistic thinking (men versus women) as well as strict heterosexual conduct were separated as one of the most repetitive characteristics that define the concept of Western Militarism. The logic of binary thinking circulates around the thought of “the masculine just warriors who guard the feminine beautiful souls” (Gopal, 2023; p. 35). In terms of the strict heterosexual conduct, the liberation policy and its limitations were reviewed using the case study of the U.S. The interview guide of the empirical part, more precisely part three Western Masculinities and Militarism was prepared by integrating the main insights of this part. It will have a two-sided effect. On the one hand, it will search the evidence to practically confirm the theoretical information related to militarism. On the other hand, the given characteristics will help to test the main hypothesis of the thesis if the militarized Western body could be considered as one type of Hegemonic Masculinities.

3. Methodology

The applied research methodology will be outlined in this chapter. Methodology can be perceived as a systematic approach to studying a research problem, for example through structured empirical data collection. I consider it a logical decision to outline the methodology of the research within the main three sections, namely *The Chosen Method of Project Writing*; *Project Research Material* and *The approach of the research*. The first section of the chapter will focus on explaining the writing style of the empirical part of the thesis. To do so, I will consider the main two concepts of feminist epistemology, namely situated knowledge and reflexivity. Both concepts are central to outlining the research results progressively. The second section of the methodological chapter will introduce the eight interviewees. The identities of the interviewees will be outlined as well as the process of how they were approached. The last section of the methodological part will focus on the research approach, namely the main methodological approach semi-structured, in-depth interview and its integrational peculiarities to the research. Overall, my main chosen methodology is a qualitative case study. In order to conduct the extensive research, I am using different tools, such as reflexive writing in connection to critical theories.

3.1. The chosen method of project writing

I would like to outline two concepts that are relevant to provide insights into my thesis writing process, namely situated knowledge and reflexivity. I consider that both concepts should be kept in mind by considering of how the project was written. In terms of *situated knowledge*, the main article, called *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective* (1988) by Donna Haraway will be outlined. The main arguments proposed by Haraway, why the concept of situated knowledge is relevant to completing a feminist research project, will be explained. Reflexivity is the other concept that is going to be applied in writing the research project. Reflexivity as the lens to perceive the certain analyzed object within multiple differences of power, which surround the analyzed object. I consider that a small part of my research should be devoted at least to addressing these two concepts as they definitely affect the research project. As an example, reflexivity is a tool guiding all the parts of the research project from choosing the research question to the way how the Interview Guide is going to be made.

Situated knowledge can be understood as knowledge that is embedded in, and thus affected by, the concrete historical, cultural, linguistic, and value context of the knowing person. Situated knowledge draws attention to a certain location among various social identities, including gender, race, sexuality, or even geographical location from which the person speaks. Donna Haraway claimed that the situatedness of our knowledge became the epistemological block that fostered the importance of feminist and queer scholars (Simandan, 2019; p. 129). Haraway in her canonical article (1988) claims that the main intention of situated knowledge is grounded by “feminist objectivity that equals situated knowledge” (p. 581). As Haraway (1988) claims “Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. It allows us to become answerable for what we learn how to see” (p. 583). At the same time, Haraway (1988) stresses the importance of seeing from below. As Haraway (1988) claims “To see from below is neither easily learned nor unproblematic [...] The positionings of the subjugated are not exempt from critical re-examination, decoding, deconstruction, and interpretation” (p. 584). Haraway (1988) uses the figuration of vision to better translate the thought to the reader in terms of situated knowledge. The scholar claims that the situated knowledge is grounded by the question “How to see?”

Where to see from? What limits to vision? What to see for? Whom to see with? Who gets to have more than one point of view? Who gets blinded? Who wears blinders? Who interprets the visual field?” (p. 587). In the meantime, Simandan (2019) emphasizes that our knowledge is inevitably incomplete and situated, which reached us by following four epistemic gaps, namely: (1) by the stochastic probability, (2) by our positionality, which shapes the perceived world, (3) by the witnessed situation versus concretely remembered situation, (4) by the remembered situation versus confessed situation (p. 129). All the four mentioned aspects refer to the idea that our knowledge is situated based on a certain context and peculiarities (the possible one way of knowing). In addition, I would echo Simandan (2019) by claiming that Situated Knowledge is directly related to the concept of positionality. As Simandan (2019) claims “positionality as the information one absorbs from a situation is always only a subset of the total informational content of the respective situation” (p. 130). I would like to stress the importance of a subset of the total informational content. The mentioned quotation provides the idea that our way of knowing is only one way of knowing that do not reveal the whole, circulated way of knowing. In terms of the epistemological level, the notion of situated knowledge is an effort to think outside the duality of objectivity that is not helpful for cultivating feminist epistemology. I consider that Situated Knowledge is the relevant concept to think about how the empirical part of the thesis is constructed. As it will be defined in the section 3.2. *The Project Research Material*, all the eight interviews were implemented with individuals who are directly related to the sector of Military. By outlining on the concept of situated knowledge, I would like to stimulate the reader to think about the possible location from which the reader speaks. The situated knowledge is a relevant lens to look at how the answers of the respondents differ based on their military working knowledge and experience. I consider that the working positions of the respondents shape the angle from which they perceive militarism, how linguistically they express themselves, and what kind of information they communicate in terms of the cultural, value context. Situated Knowledge, which I direct to respondents and their taken work positions will also help to compare how significantly the answers of the respondents differ based on the same topic (militarism), based on the same questions. Situated Knowledge should help to validate the fact that our knowledge and perception are incomplete and strongly differ based on the working position within militarism. In addition, I would add that the situated knowledge could also help to disclose how certain identity categories of an individual, for instance: age, race, and gender influence the answers of the respondents on the topic of militarism.

Reflexivity is a second tool to reflect on my research project. Linabary. J., Corple, D. J., and Cooky (2021) mention feminist reflexivity as “imaging a knowable subject situated within complex fields of power” (p. 721). In other words, feminist reflexivity focuses on the power relations that are inherent in the research by thinking of the author or writer and the produced research product. Sharlene Hesse-Biber (2013) defines “reflexivity as a process by which they (the researchers) recognize, examine, and understand how their social background, location, and assumptions can influence the research. From the selection of the research problem and method(s) to the analysis and interpretation of findings, researchers’ agendas can impact the research process. Reflexivity is a way for researchers to account for their personal biases and examine the effects that these biases may have on the data produced” (p. 46). Reflexivity is considered as a relevant scientific tool to make the research project fairer and the outcomes more transparent. Reflexivity helped me to account for my personal biases by considering how my own position, and my own identity influenced what kind of research design I chose, for instance: what kind of Interview Guide I created and how I communicated with the interviewees during the research. Reflexivity as a relevant methodological tool was already applied in the Introduction part where I outlined my personal relation to the research (see the

section 1.1. *Introduction of the project. The personal approach*). I felt I had to outline my personal situation and identity related to masculinity. In addition, I provided some personal experience, for instance: my own positionality of the body to its visibility (the records which were played through the cameras and my reaction towards it). I consider that the mentioned personal examples already provided a hint for a reader as to why I chose to write the thesis based on the topic of hegemonic masculinities. In other words, the topic was chosen not only to conduct a relevant scientific analysis and generate additional scientific data but also for the sake of self-cultivation, becoming more emotionally mature in terms of my own masculinity and its different manifestations in a certain social context. In a nutshell, reflexivity helped me to understand how my consolidated social identity, described as a white, homosexual, East European, middle-class, highly educated man, having a physically able body influenced how I understand certain phenomena and make conclusions about it in the thesis project. I used reflexivity as a methodological tool “to better represent, legitimize, or call into question my data” (Pillow, W., 2003, p. 176). Reflexivity as a strategy to increase my attention to the subjectivity in the research process “a focus on how does who I am, who I have been, who I think I am, and how I feel affect data collection and analysis” (p. 176).

In terms of the writing style of the thesis, the first pronoun I was deployed. I chose to do so in order to stress my own presence in the research. The first pronoun is also the convenient vocabulary to stress the importance of reflexivity, for instance: the discussion of the results will be reflected by applying the pronoun “I”. The interviews were analyzed by applying the methodology of close reading. Mikics (2007) defines the strategy of close reading as a way of reading when the readers read the text closely by investigating the specific strength of a literary work, outlining how a text works, and how it creates its effects (p. 4). Focusing on my project, I applied the method of close reading by trying to find the patterns that would have some connection or disconnection with the theoretical part of the thesis. One of my objectives of the thesis was to compare if the scientific theoretical knowledge was in line with the information which the interviews said (empirical information). So, the comparative analysis was an important part of my research strategy. In addition, the part of *Discussion of Findings* of the thesis was written by partially integrating the theoretical part of information in such a way bringing into the dialogue the theory together with practice. All the interviews with the respondents were transcribed manually. It means that I listened to the recordings a couple of times and manually typed them. This strategy was chosen to better involve myself in the material and understand the said peculiarities better. Finally, the interviews were conducted in two languages, namely English and Lithuanian. I translated the interviews with the Lithuanian respondents by myself. Consequently, some small deviances are possible due to the localization of the text.

Both concepts situated knowledge and reflexivity helped to cultivate the project and make the reader as well as the researcher (myself) more self-aware of how the material was gathered. According to Harraway (1988), the situated knowledge could be understood as a way of vision. As a way of How to see? Where to see from? What limits to vision? Who gets blinded? All the questions should be operationalized by considering the answers of the interviewees. In addition, reflexivity was applied as a self-awareness strategy to comprehend how my own social background, the location from which I analyze the answers and assumptions may influence the interpretations of answers. I consider that reflexivity could work as a kind of controlling strategy to make the research outcomes a bit fairer or at least to be aware of how they were concluded.

3.2. Project Research Material

The used pronouns within the thesis ¹⁰	The Identity	The working position
Interviewee A	Male / White / 42 years old / Lithuanian	A senior specialist of the Military Personnel to the Ministry of National Defence Republic of Lithuania
Interviewee B	Male / White / 48 years old / Dutch	Dutch Military Veteran / A former soldier in the Dutch army and the United Nations Peacekeeper (Blue Helmet)
Interviewee C	Male / White / 57 years old / Lithuanian	Official in leadership position of the Institute of Military Affairs in Lithuania
Interviewee D	Male / White / 48 years old / Lithuanian	An expert of the Military Theory to the Military Institute (under the Lithuanian Army)
Interviewee E	Male / White / 31 years old / Greek	A commander Officer of an observation post on a rocky island on the Greek border
Interviewee F	Female / White / 54 years old / Dutch	Gender Advisor to the Dutch Ministry of Defence
Interviewee G	Male / Mixed Ethnicity / 31 years old / German and Nigerian	Programmer (Application Support) within NATO as a German military personnel
Interviewee H	Male / White / 52 years old / Dutch	Military Commander of the network of cultural and humanitarian affairs within the Dutch Ministry of Defence

Figure 2. Overview of the interviewees.

The empirical section presents insights from the interviews with professionals who are directly related to militarism. My first, initial idea was to focus on professionals who do not have direct experience related to militarism due to the easier process of access negotiation. However, even if I perceive the potentiality of completing the research with individuals outside militarism, I consider that the completed research with military personnel is a more logical step for the researcher who does not have advanced knowledge related to militarism. The interviews that were completed not only helped me to gather the relevant data but also strongly educated me in terms of militarism¹¹. I consider that the completed research would lay the ground for further research projects related to the topic. The last chapter of the thesis also outlined the possible

¹⁰ Important to mention that the thesis is not going to disclose any personal information related to the interviewees' background, including names. Some of the interviewees are taking positions within militarism in which disclosing any personal or working information would be strictly forbidden. In addition, with some of the interviews, the *Consent Letter* was mutually written to ensure the confidentiality of the interviews.

¹¹ As the empirical part of the thesis will outline, some Lithuanian respondents corrected my vocabulary once I tried to describe a certain military phenomenon. To illustrate it, I could provide an example related to the concept of the army. Two out of three Lithuanian respondents claimed that the word *army* ('*armija*' in Lithuanian) is not useable in Lithuanian language and it should be changed to *kariuomenė* (LT). The main reason is the case that the word *armija* (LT) is associated with the Russian legacy, which Lithuanians are trying to reject.

development trajectories of the project. The conducted research with individuals outside militarism would be mentioned as one of the possible research development trajectories.

In general, eight in-depth interviews were conducted with the individuals of the military personnel. The interviews were conducted with individuals living in different European Union countries, namely Lithuania, the Netherlands, Germany, and Greece. All the individuals are introduced in the table (see Table 1). The interviewees were found by applying different strategies. Firstly, two interviewees were found by using my own network (the Interviewees B/E). Secondly, the rest were found by approaching the *Lithuanian* and *Dutch Ministries of Defence*. I approached them through calls and emails. The responsible employees from the mentioned Ministries (the Dutch press officer from the Dutch Ministry of Defence and the operational employee from the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence) responded to my emails and I resent the interview request to the different departments within the Ministries and different related national military institutions. Consequently, I was able to get access to complete three interviews within the Dutch and Lithuanian Ministries. In addition, the official in leadership position from the Institute of Military Affairs in Lithuania (Interviewee C) helped me to connect with other military professionals related to the Lithuanian military organization (Interviewee D). Please see the Table 1. As Table 1 outlines, the interviewees are taking/were taken highly diverse positions within militarism. Some of them are directly involved in militarism, acting so-called on the ground, for instance: soldiers while the others have more diverse approaches combining the completed military missions in different countries, such as Afghanistan, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Palestine together with the administrative work within the *Defence Ministries* or other research military organizations. The interview was also completed with a professional who had only direct administrative work experience, related to militarism, so called office job. Consequently, all the interviewees spoke about the same topic from different locations (situated knowledge) which helped to accumulate rich data.

All the interviews were implemented online, using different communication platforms such as Microsoft Teams or WhatsApp. The online way of implementing the interviews was chosen due to the fact that the professionals are situated in three different European Union countries, namely Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Greece. It was not possible to reach them all physically in-person. Therefore, I decided to choose a one-way research approach to conduct the interviews to avoid fragmentation. Seven out of eight interviews were recorded. Only one professional from Lithuania (Interviewee A) refused that the interview would be recorded (the reasons were not outlined by him). In addition, six out of eight interviews were conducted with a live camera. Two respondents did not turn on their cameras, namely the Lithuanian professional (Interviewee A, see Table 1) and the Dutch specialist (Interviewee F, see Table 1). The duration of the interviews varied from one hour to 1 hour and a half. I consider that the variation of the duration depended on the different factors. Some professionals had highly intense working schedules and were not be able to be interviewed for more than 45 minutes with some minor extensions, for instance: it was the case with the Dutch professional (Gender Advisor, the Interviewee F¹² from *The Defence Ministry of the Netherlands*). I consider that some professionals were able to have longer interviews due to the case that they accepted to be interviewed after working hours as it was the case with the *NATO* professional from Germany (the Interviewee G). In addition, I also completed the interview with the *Dutch military veteran* who was not working and had a bit less intense agenda in comparison with the rest of the interviewees. Consequently, a longer conversation with him was possible. The age of the interviewees varied from 31 to 57 years old. My main concern in terms of age was that the

¹² At the end, the interview with the *Interviewee F* was extended to 15 minutes.

individuals had to be older than 18 years old. The age bracket of 18 in all the *European Union* countries is considered the age of adult. Thus, I wanted to interview people who reached the status of majority. The interviews were conducted with 7 individuals who considered themselves men/male and 1 woman who considered herself as woman/female (see Table 1). My main target was to focus on the respondents of men/males. The *Interview Guide* was created by following this logic. However, I decided to include one woman/female in the research due to the fact that she was directly related to the research topic that I investigated. The mentioned interviewee (women/female) is a Gender expert within the *Dutch Defence Ministry* in the Netherlands. Consequently, this expert has a lot of advanced knowledge and direct experience related to the integrational issues of women into militarism or minority groups, such as homosexual, bisexual men or disabled people. Duncanson and Woodward (2016) claimed that a “significant number of women are, year after year, continuing to join national armed forces and pursue (indeed, enjoy) careers therein” (p. 4). Consequently, the interview with the female expert defined the main problematic issues, such as the main challenges related to the gender-military nexus in the Netherlands. I hope that the accumulated data will also spark some light in terms of fostering gender equality in the sector of militarism. Important to stress that the interview with the mentioned female professional had to be slightly modified, for instance: the section related to the reflection on the ideal masculinity and its personal connection had to be deleted in order not to blend data together with the male respondents. In addition, some of the questions had to be modified in a way to reflect on more factual information related to masculinity rather than only the personal approach, for instance: the note “Could you please explain your answer by thinking about your personal approach as well as the discussions which are happening (if happening) in the Dutch Ministry of Defence?” was added in order to use the knowledge of the interviewee (please see the *Appendix*, the *Interview Guide* of the respondents is added).

In general, the main target of the research was to gather ten interviews. However, the final reached number was eight, mainly due to the project deadline. The process of so-called negotiating access to the field by gathering the interviews was difficult in a way that the professionals are highly busy people and some of them were not so cooperative in talking about the chosen topic. Some professionals whose contacts I got by using my own network did not respond to the emails while with the others it took a lot of time to find the consensus on time. In addition, I had to wait for a couple of weeks for some respondents to get the answers to the emails. Furthermore, two out of eight interviewees asked for the written *Declaration of Consent* provided by *Utrecht University* in terms of confidentiality of the interviews. Consequently, the operational part of gathering the relevant data took some time as well. In the end, I consider that the significant data was accumulated which helped to show the complexity and sensitivity of the chosen research topic. I consider that focusing on the quality of the interviews by having in-depth conversations was more beneficial than the certain reached number. I was focusing on the explorative aspect of the interviews, looking for experiences of meaning-making rather than aggregation. However, important to stress that I am going to reach the number of ten interviews if I am going to publish the research data of this master's thesis.

3.3. The Approach of the Research

In this paragraph, the main aspects of the thesis methodology will be reviewed. The chosen thesis methodology is partially inspired by the scholars, such as Eichler (2014). Maya Eichler (2014) in her article *Militarized Masculinities in International Relations* claims that “militarized masculinities are constituted within and beyond public militaries [...] the politics of militarized masculinity are as much personal and local as they are public, national,

and global. Militarized masculinities are produced at multiple sites: the individual, e.g. through the beliefs and actions of individual men and women; institutions, e.g. through the policies of states, public militaries, peacekeeping forces, private military and security companies (PMSCs), or international organizations; as well as the level of ideology, culture, and discourse, such as through social norms, film, or media. Significantly, militarized masculinities shape, and are shaped by military practices, but also by state policies, security discourse, education programs, media debates, popular culture, family relations, personal identities, and more” (Eichler, 2014; p. 84). I consider that the written notion by Eichler (2014) accurately defines the chosen methodology of my thesis. The main methodological approach (prepared in-depth guide of the semi-structured interview) created in a way to analyze militarized masculinities at multiple sites, asking the questions related to the beliefs and actions of individual men and women as well as through the institutional level, asking the questions of the professionals related to policies, regulations in terms of the national level. In addition, the questions related to the mass media and its relevance in shaping the perception of militarism were also raised.

The semi-structured, in-depth interview was the main methodological tool that was applied in investigating the case study. Sharlene Hesse-Biber (2013) describes “Interviewing *as* a particularly valuable research method feminist researchers can use to gain insights into the world of their participants” (p. 267). The scholar emphasizes that a semi-structured interview should be conducted with an Interview Guide “a list of written questions that I need to cover within a particular interview” (p. 269). However, the semi-structured interview differs from a structured interview in a way that “I have an agenda; but it is not tightly determined and there is room left for spontaneity on the part of the researcher and interviewee” (p. 269). In terms of the in-depth interview, it is more issue-oriented. As Hesse-Biber (2013) points out “a researcher might use this method to explore a particular topic and gain focused information on the issue from the participants [...] Feminists are particularly concerned with getting at experiences that are often hidden. In-depth interviewing allows the feminist researcher to access the voices of those who are marginalized in society” (p. 273). Similarly, Hesse-Biber (2013) in her book *The Practice of Feminist In-Depth Interviewing* separates a semi-structured interview as “conducted with a specific interview guide – a list of written questions that I need to cover within a particular interview. I am not too concerned about the order of these questions, but it is important that I cover them in the interview” (p. 115). Similarly, I thought about this strategy by preparing an Interview Guide. I prepared an Interview Guide in a way to guide the respondent and answer the questions that are crucial to investigating the issue of militarized masculinities. However, I also left some space for small interruptions, verification, and side questions which I consider beneficial to ask at that moment. Important to stress that the topic itself is delicate. Some respondents faced the topic for the first time. Consequently, I assume that the eight respondents had different styles of communication and in order to have productive conversations, I had adapt to it. The adaptation process means skipping some questions or adding extra questions, and verifications to understand if I am on the same page with the respondents.

The Interview Guide was comprised of the main five parts (please see the added interview guide in the section of *Appendix*). The first part *Introduction* was related to getting to know each other better and starting the conversation. In terms of the first part, my intention was to pay special attention to the question Why? I started the interview process with the respondents by asking them to reflect on their ideal masculinities which influenced them once they grew up. Some respondents got personal by responding to their family members, such as grandparents. In addition, even if all the respondents which I had an interview are/were

professionals related to militarism (having direct experience related to militarism), I asked them to reflect on some questions by incorporating their own personal experience and insights, which were combined with their professional experience. The relevant example would be the case when some respondents incorporated the examples from their daily life once I asked to define the Western Man and its physical characteristics. In such a way, I am able to reflect not only on the factual information that the respondents provided but also on the possible reasons why respondents were willing to speak in a certain way. I reflect on the individual situations of respondents. The second part *Defining the Western Man* was created to investigate the subjective opinions of the interviewees about the Western man, its characteristics, and binary gender differences. The third part of the interview *Western Masculinities and Militarism. General Questions* were created in a way to understand how the interviewees define the main characteristics (inner/outer) of a soldier (a person of an army) based on three layers how he should look, act, and speak. In addition, some provocative questions were raised to investigate the opinions of the interviewees about it. The fourth part of an interview *Policing Gender Norms* was dedicated to investigate the issue of gender minorities such as gay men, transsexual people, disabled people, and their integration into military service. Some provocative questions were raised to probe the opinions of the interviewees. As it was already mentioned, some questions had a double purpose, which was to investigate the subjective as well as institutional layers on the topic of militarism, especially it was relevant for the employees of *Lithuanian and Dutch Defence Ministries*. In order to understand both perceptions, the sub-questions such as “Could you please explain your answer by thinking about your personal approach as well as the discussion which are happening (if happening) in the Dutch / Lithuanian Ministries of Defence?” were added. Finally, the last part of the interview *Testing the main working mechanisms of hegemonic masculinities* was created to use social media as the relevant tool to test if the respondents applied social media as a way to cultivate hegemonic masculinities within the case study of militarization. In general, the *Interview Guide* was prepared about the theoretical part of the thesis or more precisely to a certain section of the theoretical part, for instance: the second part of the Interview Guide *Defining The Western Man* was about section 2.2. *Western Masculinities* (the theoretical part of the thesis), while the third part of the interview guides *Western Masculinities and Militarism. General Questions* were created in relation to section 2.3. *Hegemonic Masculinities* and 2.4. *Militarized Masculinities*.

4. Analysis of the Findings

The following chapter will outline the main findings in relation to the concepts of Ideal Masculinity, the definition of the Western Man as well as the concept of Militarization of the Masculine Body within the European Union context. The integrational aspect of Women as well as Homosexual, Transsexual people integration into militarism will also be outlined. The empirical chapter is written by bringing into the dialogue the theoretical information, stated in the *Chapter 2* together with the critical theories such as *Gender Performativity* by Judith Butler (2006) and *Homonationalism* by Jasbir Puar (2017).

4.1. The Ideal Masculinity and its relation to the Father Role

Every interview with the respondents was opened by first asking the interviewees to introduce themselves. Once this information was collected, the respondents were asked to outline their relation to masculinity and more precisely, their understanding of what *Ideal Masculinity* means for them. The answers of the respondents proposed an idea that masculinities could only be considered in the plural sense. As Harry Brod (1987) in his work *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men's Studies* outlined, the multiplications of masculinities are the essential pillar within the Studies of Masculinities itself. I would like to suggest that the role of the father is one of the most repetitive thinking patterns which was addressed by the majority of the respondents considering their ideal type of masculinities. More precisely, I would claim that the majority of the respondents used the characteristics of the hegemonic type of masculinities by describing the figure of the father and his impact on their lives. Different interpretations existed of how the role of the father and its hegemonic or lacking hegemonic characteristics influenced the respondents once they grew up. To provide prove to the mentioned thought, I will use examples of the answers of the respondents. Interviewee B mentioned that he was raised in a difficult way. His father in many cases encouraged him to demonstrate physical strength (violence) against other children as a way to solve the problem / conflict. The following citation illustrates what was said: "I was raised in a hard way. Come back home crying because some guys did something for me. When my dad would be like (if you still crying): take a piece of wood and solve the problem". The mentioned quotation demonstrated that Interviewee B was affected by the characteristics of hegemonic masculinities directly through his father. The characteristics of the Hegemonic Type of Masculinities, outlined by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) such as toughness, and the demonstration of physical strength directly influenced Interviewee B through the role of the father who encouraged the interviewee to cultivate these attributes as the way to solve the certain interactions with the interviewee's peers. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) defined the hegemonic type of masculinities as superior to other gender identities, including women and minorities. Consequently, the superiority of the hegemonic type of masculinities is reflected through demonstration of the physical strength as in the case of the Interviewee B proposes.

In addition, it is important to stress that some of the respondents mentioned the cases when they felt like minorities within the larger social setting due to the fact that they missed the father role in their family setting who would cultivate the hegemonic type of masculine characteristics by growing them up. The relevant example would be Interviewee D who claimed that the lack of a father figure in his childhood had a direct effect on how he later was able to implement certain masculine functions. Interviewee D mentioned that he was growing up with a single mother who was not able to prepare him to complete certain tasks, which based on the Western

societal perception, are still more considered as the activities of a man rather than women. As an example, Interviewee D mentioned that once he was growing up, he was not taught how to dismantle a gun or how to drive a car: “Looking from my personal experience, the practice of masculinity was missed. The role of the father wasn’t realized fully. Mother had more importance for me [...] You have to imagine: you come to the military academy and your male classmate is already able to dismantle a gun while it is everything new for you. You don’t have driving lessons but you already know how to drive because your father used to teach you once you were young”. According to Interviewee D, all these qualities were stressed like the necessities that the boy should be taught by his father once he was growing up (the part of the Western socialization). Again, I would claim that the addressed qualities itself have a gendered connotation. Interviewee D addressed the hard, rational qualities that directly propose the case that the father should teach his male children the hegemonic masculine attributes, grounded by calculative thinking logic, and demonstration of physical strength. Interviewee D mentioned the case of the gun dismantlement. According to Interviewee D, the lack of a father role while he was growing up had the impact that he was not able to dismantle the gun once he started to follow the *Military Academy* in Lithuania. As Connel (2005) already claimed “The Gun is a penis symbol as well as a weapon. Gun organizations are conventionally masculine in cultural style” (p. 212). I would add that the gun itself is not only the masculine symbol but more precisely the hegemonic type of masculine symbol. The later section related to the Militarized Masculine Body (section 4.3.) will outline the fact that an individual who is associating with a gun (the soldier as an example) is grounded by hard characteristics such as advanced rational thinking, precise communication, and physical strength. Consequently, I would claim that Interviewee D did not directly propose the idea that he understands the role of the father through the hegemonic type of lens. The role of the father should be grounded by strongly hegemonic attributes that should be passed on to the male children. The mentioned hegemonic attributes should help the male children later in their life to complete certain functions; for instance: to drive a car or dismantle the gun if he is going to follow the *Military Academy* as an example.

Furthermore, some of the respondents addressed the case when the father demonstrated the opposite characteristics than the hegemonic types of masculinities in their families and it was accepted as the norm. However, certain members of society or certain phenomena in society reminded them that such kind of attributes that were cultivated in their families should be perceived more like exceptions rather than normativity. In other words, some of the respondents mentioned that their fathers were lacking the hegemonic type of characteristics in their family setting and it was perceived as weakness rather than strength for the people who were included in their network. The relevant example would be Interviewee H who reflected on the case that his father helped his mother do the housekeeping work once the interviewee was young. However, such an approach was not acceptable in the families of his friend. The following citation proves what was said: “I was raised up by the vision that the housekeeping you do together. It is not only the women who is doing housekeeping. Cleaning the dish(es) you do together [...] I saw at my friends’ places that it was not normal. It was not normal that a man did housekeeping together with his wife”. I would claim that the mentioned quotation proves the case that certain expectations related to the father's role in the family setting work as the discipline mechanism in the Western context, more precisely in the case of the Netherlands. The main intention of such a mechanism is to remind that certain, traditional gendered roles exist within the family setting (at least back in the day). In other words, women should be responsible for the reproduction function within the family setting reflected through carrying (housekeeping) while men should take care of the economic aspect of the family. I would claim that Interviewee H directly referred to the subordination principle, one of the main

attributes of the hegemonic type of masculinities. The subordination principle is marked by the idea that women are subordinated to men by the gender division logic. The presented case of Interviewee H shows that the neglect of this societal rule works as an exception which back in the day was not so repetitive in other families.

The section developed the connection of the Ideal Masculinity in relation to the role of the father. The presented data demonstrated that different experiences existed once the interviewees reflected on the Ideal Masculinity and its relation to the role of the father. The accumulated empirical data demonstrated that most of the respondents related the role of the father to the hegemonic characteristics of masculinities. In other words, the interviewees mentioned that the hegemonic characteristics of masculinities, cultivated by their fathers influenced their growing period. In the case of Interviewee H, the hegemonic attributes of masculinities were missed in his family setting and the more soft, collaborative approach between men and women was addressed. However, that was considered as the exception rather than normativity thinking about the broader societal context.

4.2. Defining the Western Man in terms of the socio-cultural and economic factors

The second part of the Interview focused on trying to understand the more in-depth perceptions of the interviewees related to Western Masculinities. I started to ask to outline the concept of the Western Man and the characteristics that define him once the more intimate connection with the interviewees was established. Important to mention that most of the interviewees did not name the characteristics of a Western man first only once they were asked to do it. By characteristics, I mean references to the physical as well as mental qualities. Some respondents rather than answering the question directly, referred to the examples through which they tried to define a Western man. It was the case of Interviewee B who rather than describing the characteristics of a Western man, started to explain the processes of how it was in the past and how it is right now in terms of the perception related to the Dutch people on masculinities. The significant deviance exists in how the interviewees answered the question on masculinities. However, I would claim that some common patterns exist which let me group the answers of the respondents and analyze them. Firstly, I would say that to a certain extent, we can agree that the characteristics that were named by the interviewees to define the Western man have a direct connection to the theoretical data of chapter 2.3. *Hegemonic Masculinities and its main characteristics. Operationalization of the concept of the thesis.* If we consider the notion that the identity of hegemonic masculinities is constructed in opposition to other identities, such as “young and effeminate as well as homosexual men” (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, p. 587), we could agree that some of the answers of the interviewees related to this thinking perception. A few of the interviewees directly referred to physical strength, modesty, and calculative thinking. The relevant example would be Interviewee D who claimed that one of the most typical characteristics to define the Western man are modesty, courage, and confidence: “Firstly, modesty. Also, the balanced sense of humor, respect for everyone, courage, and confidence”. However, at the same time, Interviewee D mentioned that he by purpose did not mention the physical characteristics that should be considered as the background features: “Perhaps before ten years I would say that the man has to be physically strong but now ... I think the man firstly has to be mentally strong and then we can talk about arms, biceps, and etc”. The mentioned quotation proposes the idea that the age difference is a significant factor that influences the interviewee's opinions on masculinity.

I would like to separate the aspect of age difference as the factor that is relevant to be analyzed in relation to the intersectional perception of masculinity. It was interesting to notice that some

respondents applied the factor of generational difference by answering the question. Couple of respondents claimed that the present time is highly different in comparison to the past. In other words, the current notion of masculinity highly changed in comparison to the past. *Interviewee B* connected the mental, physical strongness of masculinity to the shift of time by claiming: “At that time, yes, we are very different than now. We think that the current generation, they are pussies. They don’t want to work [...] With me it was ... You don’t give up, you are pushing”. The answer of Interviewee B is interesting in a way that he perceives the current generation of males as less masculine based on the Dutch context. Again, the *less masculine* we have to understand based on applying the lenses of hegemonic masculinity. The answer of *Interviewee B* proposes the idea that back in the day, the acceptable behavior norms related to masculinity were grounded by resilience, hard work, and the sustainment of soft emotions in terms of the Dutch context. In the meantime, Interviewee C also directly referred to the shift of perception related to masculinities based on generational differences in terms of the Lithuanian context. However, Interviewee C mostly connected his answer to the physical appearance of masculinities by claiming: “At this current social environment I would say that I perceive the young male guys on the street who, in my opinion, even dressing up themselves in a not masculine way. I am not against those short trousers, but ... I can’t call a male guy masculine whose lower legs are naked when it is minus five”. The answer of Interviewee C is interesting in a way that the respondent referred to the strict binary thinking logic between men and women by focusing on the dressing style. Based on what was said, we could agree that the clothing style has a strong gendered connotation for the Interviewee C, which helps to convey the masculine identity that a certain male takes in the Lithuanian context. The mentioned thought has some common lines to the book *Men in the Mirror: Men’s Fashion, Masculinity, and Consumer Society* by Tim Edwards (1997). Edwards (1997) concludes that men's fashion has a strong meaning to sexual politics and strongly contributes to the creation of the contemporary identity of Western masculinity. The scholar emphasizing to pay closer attention to men's fashion (dressing style) from the sociological perspective by claiming that men’s fashion is still a critically neglected area of academic study, in particular, of sociology (p. 5). In addition, Interviewee H also directly referred to the age-based differences in terms of the notion of masculinity by using more diverse arguments. The interviewee divided the males into three different categories by claiming that the differences exist based on the two layers: physical appearance as well as cognitive thinking. According to the interviewee, the male category exists who are after 50 years old, quite wealthy, taking the leading working positions. On the physical level, the interviewee described them as quite passive with a belly and becoming bold. Such kind of people are less concerned about the aspect of sustainability, and the impact of pollution on the environment. The other male category would be at the age of 35 years old. Interviewee H described them as much more aware of the environment in which they are living, much more collaborative and concerned about the aspect of diversity and inclusion. Finally, Interviewee H named the youngest category of masculinity at the age of 21 or 22 by claiming that defining this category of people is relatively difficult in the Netherlands. The Interviewee H stressed that this category of people is more living an individualistic type of life and the impact of pandemics such as COVID-19 is significant on them. The provided answers of the interviewees in terms of the age-based difference give some insights that the category of age is the relevant lenses to filter out the different types of masculinities. Lucea (2017) in the article *Hegemonic Masculinity and the Aging Factor in The Old Man and the Sea* claims that aging is the factor that “plays a major role in the deviation from hegemonic masculinity and consequent development of alternative types of masculinities” (p. 36). The scholar grouped the (Western) type of men into three categories, namely: the youngest, the middle, and the oldest. Lucea (2017) claims that in youth, in most of cases, men try hardly to stick to the hegemonic type of masculinity by hiding feelings of vulnerability and weakness and demonstrating their

manliness by expressing strength or even aggression. In middle age, men are strongly defined by their productivity in the workplace. The ideal man is considered the one who takes a high, leading position or whose work involves physical activity. The scholar claims that older men shift from hegemonic masculinity to alternative types of masculinities as their physical state as well as cognitive mindset can't function based on the characteristics of hegemonic masculinities. They are not able to fulfill this role due to their health aspect. As the scholar claims "older men experience many changes in later life: they retire, their bodies are no longer muscular, they are more likely to develop health problems, they may see their income decline, etc. All these continual changes force older adults to redefine themselves" (p. 36). Consequently, I would claim that completing some further analysis in relation to Western Masculinities and the aspect of age would bring some additional knowledge in understanding the diversification of masculinities in terms of generational differences.

Furthermore, a couple of the respondents mentioned that the different socio-economic crisis had a direct influence on the notion of Western Masculinities. Interviewee E referred to two events, namely the *COVID-19* pandemic and the *Greek Government Debt Crisis* of 2019. The interviewee claimed that both crises had a direct influence on the family structure in general and the notion of masculinity in the family setting in particular. Once I asked to define the notion of Western Masculinity, Interviewee E gave some general description by stating that the notion of men becomes highly unstable once we start to consider the economic crisis that happened in Greece in 2009. I asked the interviewee to comment if the economic crisis directly impacted the notion of masculinity. The interviewee responded as follows: "Yes, exactly. The man had to work in the past, women had to take care of the household. But I think the middle-class typical family can't cope with the issues when just one family member is working. They have to work both. They have to find new ways to raise their children". I consider the mentioned quotation as a highly relevant argument by thinking of how strongly different socioeconomic, and cultural phenomena impact gender relations in a certain geographical context. The provided citation by Interviewee E proposes the idea that the traditional gendered roles are threatened in the Greek context. According to the interviewee, the case in which the man is the main breadwinner is no longer relevant due to the changed societal structures. Women also have to work and contribute to the family budget due to the imbalance between prices and salaries caused by the crises for example. A similar notion was also expressed by Interviewee B who brought into his answer the aspect of expenses in the Dutch context by claiming "Things changed as things got much more expensive. Women went working. Natasha my girlfriend has a very good job. We are complementary". The mentioned information of Interviewees B and E have a direct relation to the thought of Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) who criticized the concept of hegemonic masculinities and more precisely the structure when the man is the main breadwinner in the family setting. The mentioned scholars claimed that it is kind of the societal demands of men to live up to an impossible standard: "The male role is unduly restrictive because hegemonic masculinity does not reflect the true nature of men" (p. 579). The notions, expressed by Interviewees B and E could be associated with the article *Men at (home) work: masculinity and the second shift during Covid-19* by Dan Cassino and Besen-Cassino (2022) who provided the concept of the package deal. The scholars claim that the package deal consists of four main pillars, namely fatherhood, marriage, home ownership, and employment (considering the heterosexual type of masculinities). The scholar claims that all these elements are interconnected, for instance: "employment and providing for the family are closely intertwined with being a good father, making sure the children are in a good school district, safe environment" (p. 103). At the same time, the scholar emphasizes the divisional logic that you can't be a good father if you don't have a job or you can't be a good husband if you are not able to provide a comfortable home. All this economic, societal even cultural

structure creates the conditions for the males to be desperate to confirm them. If the conditions to be a good father/husband are not confirmed, the male is at risk of losing his credibility to be described as a good father / husband. The mentioned socio-economic crises such as *the Covid-19 pandemic* or *The Governmental Debt Crisis of Greece* directly influence the notions of a good father or good husband in the Greek context. The answers of the respondents demonstrated that the males are not able any more to sustain the traditional gendered roles. The binary gendered relations between men and women have to be redefined in terms of the family setting. Men and women have to become more collaborative and complementary in the domestic environment in order to sustain their families.

The second section of the empirical chapter argued that the factor of age and the different socio-economic events such as the *Covid-19 pandemic* or *The Governmental Debt Crises in Greece* in 2009 had a direct impact on the notion of Western Masculinities. The empirical data demonstrated that some of the respondents by answering the questions related to the characteristics of Western men brought into their answers the comparable analysis of how significantly the concept of masculinities changed over time. The explanations of Interviewees B and C proposed the idea that men themselves became more liberal in the present in terms of demonstrating their soft emotions or physical appearance, for instance by choosing more unisex types of clothing. We could assume that due to the fluctuating liberation process in the Western context, men become more comfortable to accept in Badinter's (1986) terminology, a dualistic identity of themselves, called (social) bisexuality. However, at the same time, some oppositions are perceived, especially once the interviewees are asked questions about the significant differences that exist between men and women. Finally, the analysis demonstrated that the socio-economic events redefine the gender relation in between men and women. The relevant example was stated in terms of how significantly *The Governmental Debt Crisis in Greece in 2009* threatened the traditional Greek gender roles between men and women. Men and women had to become more economically collaborative in order to sustain families.

4.3. Investigating the perception of the Militarized Masculine Body in relation to the critical theory of Gender Performativity by Judith Butler

Once the understanding in terms of Western Masculinities and its different manifestations by the interviewees was established, the conversation with the interviewees shifted to the main object of the thesis, which is to investigate the militarized masculine body within the context of *The European Union*. I asked the interviewees to define a (male) soldier based on the three layers, namely: how he should look, act, and speak. Firstly, I would like to briefly introduce how the different respondents define the concept of the militarized masculine body based on the three layers. Later, I am going to connect the gathered information with the critical theory of Judith Butler, depicted in the book *Gender Trouble*. In general, I would claim that the concept of indoctrination could be applied by analyzing how the interviewees presented their answers by defining the militarized masculine body (the soldier) based on the three levels: act/look/speak. During the interviews, some respondents disagree with applying the concept of indoctrination by rather choosing the concept of shaping and forming the perception. As an example, Interviewee H claimed that he would like to focus on the concept of forming rather than indoctrination. Interviewee H claimed that "Indoctrination is something awful. Forming as a slow way. People can always say no and there is a possibility to leave. It is more voluntary form and process of forming". I perceive the concept of indoctrination in a way as repeating an idea or belief by accepting it in a certain social setting but an individual still has some agency to maneuver within that social setting as addressed by Interviewee H. If we consider the concept of indoctrination as Kwon (2000) outlined by claiming that "During three years in

uniform, the state and its military are expected to reformulate young men's civilian's minds and bodies into the minds and bodies of military personnel" (p. 47), we could say that the answers of the respondents have some affinities. Mostly, all the respondents named certain conditions of how the right soldier should interact based on the three mentioned layers: act/look/speak to be acceptable in militarism. Interviewee F included a highly relevant concept, called conforming to the standard behavior within militarism, which will be developed more in the last section of this chapter. The standard behavior within militarism exists in order to be accepted rather than excluded from the group.

The main two thinking patterns were noticed in terms of how the person within militarism (soldier) should look. On the one hand, three respondents directly named the physical characteristics that define the soldier, namely the Interviewees A/B/E. On the other hand, three respondents chose a more abstract approach, namely the Interviewees C/D/F. If we would like to understand how the interviewees described the militarized man based on the physical level, we could agree that most of them defined it as an athletic, young man around 23 years old who is grounded by advanced physical performativity and endurance. The following quotations prove what was said: "A strong build man around 23 years old (The Interviewee A); Short hair, shaven and very good personal hygienic" (The Interviewee B); "Able to run, he has to have endurance, he has to be able to lift his body armor" (The Interviewee E). In terms of the more abstract approach, the respondents did not directly name the physical qualities by rather integrated them as the background aspects into their answers. Some respondents focused on the ability to perform certain tasks as in the case of Interviewee C: "In terms of physical appearance, he needs to be able to complete a certain function". The answer of Interviewee D was relevant as he included in his answer the aspect of modern technologies by explaining how the lack of physical strength is compensated "The physical readiness was much better in the past in comparison to today¹³ [...] The current youngsters are much less developed in terms of physical readiness but the lack of physical strength is compensated due to new technologies". Finally, Interviewee F was the only respondent who presented a contradictory answer which in a way opposed to the answers of other respondents by claiming "I think they attitude should be more friendly because then you gain more trust. That is more affective. To me muscles – no relevance. But then they are young soldiers, they enter the military, muscles do count. How strong you are". The presented answers propose an idea that the militarized masculine man based on the looking perspective, in a broad sense, is understood similarly as the man who is grounded by the hegemonic type of characteristics. Both categories of men share similar qualities such as athletic body, and hygienic look (all the glittery aspects of looking such as long hair or plucked eyebrows are rejected). In addition, advanced personal hygiene is emphasized.

In terms of acting, most respondents named the direct qualities of how a male soldier should act. Interviewees B/E/F/H directly named the main attributes, such as active listening or rigid walk, endurance which grounds the definition of acting. The Interviewee separated the sense of obedience, which, according to the respondent, the soldier should have. In addition, Interviewee E stressed that different soldiers have different purposes, which are not always directly related to militarism. The case of the soldiers at *The Presidential Guard* in Greece was stated. Interviewee E mentioned that physical attractiveness is one of the most important criteria according to which the soldiers are selected around this monumental Greek place: "About acting, yes, obedience is something that we want from our soldiers. Soldiers at the *Presidential Garden* are the image of the Greek army for tourists. Greek people admire them.

¹³ Referring to the context of Lithuania.

They have to stand straight, and not to talk at all. But this is something different, we are choosing only the tallest one because of the image you want to show". The answer of Interviewee C was relevant as the respondent separated the sense of wildness which, in his opinion, is important to have for the soldier in more extreme situations. At the same time, the interviewees stressed that the mentioned quality is usually lacking in female soldiers due to societal expectations, directed to them "You have to have a bit of sense of wildness. When people skip or ignore what you say and you don't have time to explain when you have to increase the voice of tone and scream a bit [...] And this I think is the hardest part for a woman. It is easy to speak in a rigid manner with a husband in a domestic environment, but in a social environment when everyone thinks that you should be weak...". In addition, I would claim that the most comprehensive description in terms of *acting* was provided by Interviewee G who included a highly relevant concept, called Citizen in Uniform by outlining how a soldier in Germany should act. *The Citizen in Uniform* is a highly relevant concept that outlines the idea that the soldier is a citizen of a certain country whose characteristics should not be changed even if he is on duty. In addition, I consider that it is a highly relevant concept if we want to encapsulate the shift of the army itself within the specific time framework. In other words, the army of the specific country is changing or not changing only if the country and its sociocultural structures are changing or remain still. The army could be influenced only if the actors within that particular society are changing because an army is a societal setting comprised of citizens. The answer Interviewee G presented as follows: "Act and speaking. He or she should speak clearly. They need to be understandable. In the German military, there is a concept which is called citizen in uniform. This literally means that you start as a citizen and when you wear a uniform. This basically means in this regard you should act as a citizen [...] So, basically, only because you wear a uniform, it doesn't mean that you are special because, in the end, you are for society. This is basically the most important thing when it comes to the Western military". In terms of speaking, the answers of the respondents were quite direct. The interviewees said that the soldiers should speak in a short way and be as precise as possible. The sentences should be relevant, even a bit broken. In addition, the content of what you say should be rationally justified. The way of speaking should be grounded by confidence, with no visible insecurity as Interviewee F concludes: "Confident attitude [...] Confident as confident. Someone who is not insecure [...] You can tell from people who are confident. The way they speak. They speak more clearly, they speak without question marks". Consequently, self-assurance is separate from the other relevant qualities that the person within the army should be able to have.

The foundational perception related to the militarized masculine body was analyzed through the three different layers: look/act/speak. By providing the answers, the interviewees mentioned highly relevant concepts such as indoctrination or confirming the standard behavior within militarism. Interviewee F included the concept of standard behavior once the interviewee was asked to comment if the males who are grounded by characteristics of soft skills, such as emotionality, and lack of physical strength would be able to integrate themselves within the militarism in the same way as the males who are grounded by hard characteristics. The interviewee mentioned that it is not the case as the man with soft characteristics would not conform to the standard behavior which is existing within militarism. The standard behavior should be understood as the normative understanding of militarism, grounded by physical strength, short precise communication, and the sustainment of soft emotions. Basically, both concepts emphasize the idea that we become soldiers rather than be soldiers. The process of becoming is the essential part and the process of indoctrination. I would like to bring these three different aspects of analysis look/act/speak to the critical theory of *Gender Performativity* by Judith Butler. Butler (2006) in the canonical book *Gender Trouble* argues that "The

disciplinary production of gender effects a false stabilization of gender in the interests of the heterosexual construction and regulation of sexuality within the reproductive domain” (p. 185). Butler argues that the aim of coherence construction, projected on gender conceals the gender discontinuities if we think about a variation of gendered behavior within the heterosexual, bisexual gay, and lesbian contexts. The scholar aims to emphasize that sex (the biological aspect) and gender (the social aspect) in many cases could be not easily combined. As the scholar emphasizes “gender does not necessarily follow from sex, and desire, or sexuality generally, does not seem to follow from gender”(p. 185). However, any kind of gender confusion is sought to be suppressed for the sake of coherence. Coherence is emphasized through the stabilizing regime. Coherence should be understood based on the gender relations grounded by heterosexual construction. As the scholar claims, gender coherence is desired, wished for, and idealized. The same desire together with certain acts, and gestures produces an internal core of substance that is projected on the surface of the body. Butler argues that the mentioned acts and gestures are performative “in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are fabrications manufactured and sustained through corporeal and other discursive means” (p. 185). In other words, Butler argues that gendered behavior is manufactured together with the help of acts, gestures, and discourse which are projected to reflect heterosexual relations. The mentioned thought is also supported by Butler’s notion of substantive identity. Butler claims that to reach the substantive identity is to dismantle different layers of a person which are comprised of ruled-generated identities. Butler describes rule-generated identities as the ones that “rely on the consistent and repeated invocation of rules that condition and restrict culturally intelligible practices of identity” (p. 198). By outlining the concept of identity and the elements that directly affect it, Butler pays a lot of attention to a discourse that exists as “pervasive and mundane signifying acts of linguistic life” (p. 198). Butler argues that the act of repetition is the crucial aspect of consolidating the culturally intelligible identity.

Considering what was said, I would argue that the process of becoming a soldier has some similarities with the theory of gender performativity provided by Butler. My argument would be that the militaristic behavior similar to the provided scheme in terms of gender performativity by Butler is manufactured based on the three discussed levels of look/act/speak. To become a soldier, the man has to follow certain rules as to be a soldier is not self-explanatory the same as to have the gender. The militaristic behavior has to be conformed based on the looking element (as the interviewees mentioned: short hair, athletic body, good personal hygiene); the acting element (as the interviewees mentioned: active listening, rigid walking, the sense of endurance) and the speaking element (as the interviewees mentioned: short, precise communication). I would argue that the mentioned components should be manufactured within the masculine body due to the help of indoctrination. If we consider indoctrination as the shaping practice, we could agree with the thought of Interviewee E: “Once you are joining the army you are the kid, once you are leaving the army you are the man”. The process of becoming is the essential element there. The becoming aspect is consolidated through the aspects of looking and acting as well as projected discourse based on the heterosexual power structure. The aspect of repetition is an essential part of the daily based discourse, existing in the militaristic setting. The act of repetition helps to manufacture the desired type of soldier which according to Interviewee F could be defined as the one who conforms to the standard behavior within militarism. Consequently, I would argue that the militarized man is an example of how a certain social phenomenon is manufactured based on the critical theory of *Gender Performativity*, outlined by Butler. I would align myself with Butler’s (2006) thought that the critical task is “to affirm the local possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of repetition that constitute identity” (p. 201). In other words, you have to

understand how the identity is constructed within a militarized setting through the repetition process (three layers look/act/speak) to intervene in the normative understanding of the notion of the soldier and contribute to the new understandings of how the soldier could be perceived.

This section outlined the part of the Interview Guide, which focused on investigating the concept of a soldier within the three different layers look/act/speak. As I argued at the beginning of a section, the concept of indoctrination would be the relevant lens to understand the aspect of becoming a soldier. The aspect of becoming is highly relevant here as the chapter emphasized that the man is becoming rather than be a soldier. The aspect of becoming a soldier was brought into the dialogue together with the critical theory of gender performativity by Judith Butler. I am arguing that the different elements that Judith Butler applies to define the phenomenon of gender performativity are relevant to be used in explaining militaristic behavior as well. As an example, I argued that militaristic masculine behavior is manufactured by applying the same elements, such as repetitive discourse, acts, and gestures as Butler outlined by defining the theory of Gender Performativity. In addition, my point was to stress that the militarized masculine body is acting based on heterosexual conduct (one of the most important attributes related to the theory of Gender Performativity). The sense of coherence is the ultimate goal of the militarized masculine body. The construction of coherence on the militarized masculine body (the consolidated masculine body based on the heterosexual perception) conceals the gender discontinuities in terms of heterosexual, bisexual, gay, lesbian, and other contexts.

4.4. Policing Gender Norms within Militarized Setting in relation to the critical theory of Homonationalism by Jasbir Puar

The conversation with the interviewees shifted to the questions related to different gender norms, and their acceptance/rejection within militarism in order to complete the comparative analysis and explore if the militarized masculine body is in line with the characteristics related to hegemonic masculinities. Firstly, some questions were asked to investigate the interviewee's perception related to women's integration into militarism. I asked the interviewees to comment on what they think about the "Gender Equal military service among the European Union countries? Do they support that women the same as men should be equally called to complete military service?". I consider the inclusion of a significant percentage of women into the conscription process as a necessary element to intervene in unequal gendered relations. Instead of being the passive subjects, women would gain a voice within militarism. Cynthia Enloe (1988) claimed that back in the day women were strategically used in the militarized setting by claiming that they had a certain gendered function imposed by the patriarchy "*In each country military strategists need women. They need women who will act and think as patriarchy expects women to act and think. And they need women who will be disguised so that the military can remain the quintessentially "masculine" institution, the bastion of "manliness"*" (p. 220). The inclusion of women into compulsory militarism would strongly intervene in the current *Western* logic of militarism as women would not be seen as only "*patriarchy expects women to act and think*" (p. 220). Women would not be considered passive subjects without their voices. By taking an active position within militarism women would intervene in patriarchal militaristic settings by bringing up different perceptions towards highly gendered subjects, for instance: the notion of the soldier. Considering what was said, I would like first to outline the aspect of women's integration within militarism. Secondly, I am going to discuss the integration of other gender categories having people within the militarized setting.

The raised question on the Gender Equal Military Service demonstrated that most of the respondents positively evaluated women's inclusion in it. However, in order to integrate women into militarism equally in relation to men, many challenges were addressed by male respondents. I would argue that the accumulated data by the male respondents proposes an idea that the militarized masculine hierarchical order is not significantly intervened even if access is provided to women to join militarism. In many cases, the interviewees formulated their answers in a politically correct way by claiming that women are allowed to join militarism based on the same conditions as men but at the same time different obstacles are mentioned that hinder the women's successful integration into militarism. The mentioned argument is in line with the thought, expressed by Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) that “*the dominant group – the white, educated, heterosexual males [...] can adapt to new circumstances without breaking down the social-structural arrangements that actually give them their power*” (p. 577). The mentioned thought conveys the meaning that the patriarchal, heterosexual, masculine social structures are working as a shock absorber in a way that they are able to absorb any proposed changes in terms of gender issues by not changing the system itself. The answers of the respondents propose a similar logic. The answers of the interviewees are formulated in a way that they do not think about the significant societal interventions to integrate women into militarism. Instead, some alternative space is provided to include women and other minority categories based on the old normative masculine militaristic order in such a way of not breaking down the social-structural arrangements and not shifting the power relations. I would like to outline some answers from the interviewees to justify what was said. I will separate the answers of the interviewees which reflect the most visible contradictions. On the one hand, the interviewees agree that women should have the same conditions within militarism as men. On the other hand, the integrational issues are stressed. The relevant case would be Interviewee D. Once the Interviewee D was asked what he thinks about the Gender Equal Military Service, the interviewee commented as follows: “I am for it [...] I wanted to emphasize the wholeness. The wholeness to conscript everyone”. Then the interviewee started to recite some difficulties in integrating women based on the political perspective. However, his answer still sounded positive in terms of gender-equal conscription. Finally, once I asked the interviewee to answer if he perceives any direct integrational issues of women's inclusion into militarism, the interviewee commented as follows: “There is no space where these women could be accepted. Firstly, we need to expand the system [...] Also, women are more like caring people [...] There is a high demand for doctors in Lithuania. We are lacking the doctors in Lithuania”. I would conclude that the response of Interviewee D has a direct relation to what was said about the politically correct answers. From the first time, the interviewee agreed that women should be integrated into militarism equally as men. However, once I tried to complexify the interviewee's answer, the interviewee became a bit more subjective by claiming that rather than integrating women in the militarized section in Lithuania, it is better to relocate them to the medical sector as their soft characteristics such as caring of people would fit there. The Interviewee's D provided answer relates to the mentioned thought by Carrigan, Connell, and Lee (1985) that the male respondent formulates his answer in a way not to break down the social-structural arrangements but rather to adapt to them. Instead of thinking about the alternative way of how to disrupt the highly hierarchical militarized setting in Lithuania, the interviewee decided not to intervene at all by providing the option of relocation. The interviewee includes the stereotypical approach by justifying his opinion that women should be integrated into the sector of medicine rather than militarism due to their quality of caring for the people. A very similar answer was also provided by Interviewee C. On the one hand, Interviewee C claimed that gender is completely irrelevant once I asked them to comment on his opinion on drafting the all. On the other hand, Interviewee C contradicted himself by claiming that “Currently, the system would not be able to prepare such a big number due to the

lack of infrastructure, bed, guns and etc. [...] However ... If a strong man is able to drop a grenade without efforts, the girl due to the physical body and its physical structure needs to learn of how to drop it". The provided answer is interesting due to addressing social-cultural as well as biological aspects by the interviewee. Similarly, as in the case of Interviewee D rather than thinking about the alternative ways of how to intervene the unequal social structure by including the significant number of women into militarism, the interviewee gives the reason why it is not possible. The interviewee does not think about the case that the system itself has to be changed, for instance: by including, updating the gender-equal policies related to militarism (in the Lithuanian context) or by including the quota which would document the specific number of women to collect every year. In addition, Interviewee C also included in his response the biological differences between men and women by claiming that women are physically weaker than men in completing certain militarized tasks. Due to physical weaknesses, women have to learn the strategy of how to compensate it. I would claim that this answer is also highly subjective as women's performativity can't be generalized. The significant variety of people, their qualities exist per gender and the assumptions as expressed by Interviewee C stimulate people to think based on binary, divisional terms that are not productive itself. I would argue that both Interviewees C/D speak from a privileged position holding the whole power within militarism. They look at the issue from the outside perspective rather than trying to understand women as the equal part of the military sector the same as men.

The significant part of the interview was also focused on understanding the interviewee's perception related to the integrational aspect of different identities having people into militarism, such as homosexual men or transgender people. The following question was raised "What do you think about the inclusion of different identity-having people, such as gay men, transsexual people, and disabled people into military service among the European Union countries?". Firstly, I would like to outline the most relevant answers of the interviewees to understand the general answering logic. I am arguing that homosexuality, and transsexuality within the military sector is compatible only if these people match the certain conditions which are imposed on them. Interviewee A claimed that homosexuality and militarism are compatible only if homosexual people are able to adapt themselves to the Western militaristic order. In general, the aspect of adaptability was mentioned the most by the interviewees once they commented on the homosexual, and transsexual people's integration within militarism. The concept of adaptability could be explained by outlining the answer of Interviewee E who claimed that "Homosexuality is kind of taboo in the Greek army. There are people I have seen, soldiers, at least in my point of view, they are homosexuals but they are trying to behave like they are not because of the pressure they have from the other soldiers". The answer of Interviewee E proposes an idea that homosexual male people have to perform based on the strict heterosexual, hegemonic masculine order once they are in the military based on the three aspects that were already mentioned in the thesis, namely look/act/speak. A similar answering logic was also presented by Interviewee F who explained the process of adaptability from the concept of conforming to the standard behavior. Once I asked the interviewee to comment on what the interviewee meant by saying that gay people are not able to be themselves in militarism and they have to adapt themselves (in the Dutch context), the interviewee commented in the following way: "They life is easier if they conform the standard behavior. That means they talk as the majority talk, so they are masculine. They behave as majority behaves, for example: making jokes together, meeting cool guys or whatsoever [...] They know once they conform to the standard behavior, their life will be easier". Consequently, the interviewee proposes an idea that the man who confirms the hegemonic masculine standard within militarism is able to integrate into the Western militarized setting more easily in

comparison to other identity-having people¹⁴. An interesting answer was also provided by Interviewee D who claimed that homosexual males are able freely to function within the militaristic setting only if he is not harassing others in the job environment. Harassment should be understood as a sexual *gesture/act* when the homosexual male soldier gently harasses the heterosexual male soldier within the militaristic section. Interesting to notice that Interviewee D did not consider the heterosexual gendered relations by providing his answer, for instance: the situation of harassment when the heterosexual male harasses the heterosexual female, which could be considered a quite common case in the Western militaristic setting. I would also argue that the answer of Interviewee D is interesting in a way that it partially relates with the thought of Jones, Koshes (1995), such as: “In the many military settings in which soldiers do not readily access to heterosexual partners, what are the effects of the presence of a known homosexual person?” (p. 19). The answer of Interviewee D was grounded by the idea that homosexuals could be perceived kind of soft danger in militarism as they might harass others. (Interviewee D: “I do not see any difficulties [...] They should not just harass in the job environment. This is the only thing which could annoy”). The mentioned quotation by Interviewee D is directly in line with the notion said by Jones, Koshes (1995) who wrote about what kind of impact homosexuals could have on the discipline in the area of militarism. In other words, the discipline of militarism could be affected due to homosexuals as they might distort it. Homosexuals could be depicted as a certain type of sexual seducer that disrupts the certain military order.

In terms of the integration of transsexual people into militarism, it is obvious that the lack of practices considering all four analyzed countries was noticed. In other words, the integration of transsexual people within militarism is not a widespread enough phenomenon within militarism to draw extensive conclusions. However, I would like to present one of the most relevant answers in terms of transsexual people's integration within militarism which I was able to gather. Interviewee A claimed that: “Transsexual people could be accepted to the army if they pass the medical test [...] The choice of gender as I know so far is two, namely man and woman. The transsexual people who completed the operation due to which the organs were amputated, this surgery is considered as the amputation of limbs. Due to it, an individual could be considered as not fit for military service. However, this information could be not fully accurate as I am not a medical employee”.¹⁵ The answer of Interviewee A proposes an idea that matching the binary gender marking criteria (female/male) as well as not completing the gender affirmation surgery were considered one of the most important aspects for transsexuals to be selected in militarism in the context of Lithuania. In addition, similarly, as in the case of the integration of homosexual people, the concept of adaptability would be relevant to describe the situation of transsexual people's existence within the sector of militarism. Transsexual people have to adapt themselves within the sector of militarism, for instance: by matching the strict gender marking criteria female/male (at least in the case of Lithuania). The mentioned statement strictly contradicts the previously discussed thought by Hayward (2008) who in the article *More Lessons From a Starfish: Prefixial Flesh and Transspeciated Selves* claimed that the concept of transsexuality should be understood as the desire to remain transsexual as the third gender category. Considering the answer of Interviewee A, this thought would be rejected within the sector of militarism (at least in the case of Lithuania). In terms of other countries such as Greece, the interviewee mentioned that he has never heard about the cases of transsexuality in the Greek army. In the case of the Netherlands, the interviewee mentioned that these people exist in the Dutch militarized setting and they are able to have support such as mentors to help to find their way out (Interviewee F). However, I wanted to ask some

¹⁴ We are directing here more to the concept of soldier.

¹⁵ Referring to the case of Lithuania.

detailed questions about the integrational issues of transsexual people in the Dutch army, but the interviewee was not able to comment on it. I conclude that this also proves the case that transsexuality is not a widespread phenomenon in the Dutch case and due to it, the answer to the more in-depth, situational questions are complicated.

The information presented above proposes an idea that the discussed identities, such as homosexuality and transsexuality is compatible with militarism only if these people adapt themselves to the strictly masculine militarized setting. I would like to bring in dialogue the gathered theoretical information together with the critical theory of homonationalism by Jasbir Puar (2017). Puar introduces the concept of homonationalism as the emergence of national homosexuality in a highly dense book *Terrorist Assemblages. Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2017). Puar (2017) claims that “there is a commitment to the global dominant ascendancy of whiteness that is implicated in the propagation of the United States as an empire as well as the alliance between this propagation and this brand of homosexuality” (p. 2). Puar (2017) argues that there is a tight relationship between the nation, its egalitarian perception of the acceptance of certain homosexuals within the state, and the race (ascendancy of whiteness in comparison with others). Puar mostly argues in the context of the United States. However, the scholar agrees that certain parts of her theory have some affinities in the Western European countries, especially in the former imperialistic countries such as the United Kingdom or the Netherlands. The scholar uses the concept of *U.S. sexual exceptionalism* by consolidating the picture of the United States as a national normative country in which the racialized *others*, mostly Muslims are rejected based on the certain assumptions that this diaspora presumably carries in terms of LGBTIQ+ topic. Puar (2017) argues that certain categories of races are being rejected within the nationalistic framework based on the narrative of the war on terror. The scholar argues “as the U.S. nation-state produces narratives of exception through the war on terror, it must temporarily suspend its heteronormative imagined community to consolidate national sentiment and consensus through the recognition and incorporation of some, though not all or most, homosexual subjects” (p. 3-4). The mentioned thought could be explained as the case when non-inclusive narratives are constructed in a way by creating exceptional national subjects, whose purpose is to antagonize the different groups of people within the nation. Puar (2017) claims that homonationalism helps to construct the “narratives of excellence, excellent nationalism when the national population comes to believe in its own superiority and its own singularity” (p. 5). The purpose of creating such kind of narrative is to exclude some subjects. The excluded subjects are racialized based on the elements such as ethnicity or class. Puar claims that such kind of narratives are applied to consolidate the political stances against immigration or cultivate certain culturally intelligible stereotypes against certain diasporic groups such as Middle Eastern immigrants in the context of the United States. Especially such kind of narratives are cultivated by right-wing parties, the relevant example would be *the Party for Freedom* as in the case of the Netherlands. The mentioned narratives are created in a way to depict certain diaspora, such as Middle Eastern people as culturally backward in terms of LGBTIQ+ topics or mark them by the terroristic threat.

I am arguing that the proposed elements of homonationalism by Puar (2017) could be relevant by thinking about the empirical data of my thesis, especially by considering the answers of the interviewees on the topics of homosexual or transgender people integration into militarism. This section demonstrated that the interviewees narrated their answers in a way to claimed that only certain types of homosexuals or transgender people could be accepted into the militarized setting. The interviewees claim that only the men who confirm the standard behavior within militarism are accepted in the militarized setting. The interviewees directly separated that adaptability (Interviewee A as an example) or gender performance based on the heterosexual

masculine matrix (Interviewee E as an example) are the necessary qualities for a man to be successful within the militarized setting. Consequently, I am arguing that the concept of homonationalism by Puar (2017) could be connected to the empirical data of the thesis through the mechanism of filtering it out. By filtering it out I mean that in both cases (the original text of Puar and the empirical data of the thesis), only certain types of homosexuals are accepted based on selected characteristics. The presented notion by Puar (2017) gives an idea that the American LGBTIQ+ people who have some relation to the Middle East context are rejected to be included in the singular unity of homonationalism. In the case of the empirical section, different identity having people such as homosexuals or transgender are rejected to be included in militarism if they do not adapt themselves based on heterosexual thinking logic. Only homosexuals who act based on heterosexual masculine power order would be included in the militarized setting. Consequently, I am arguing that the application of homonationalism helps to disclose the narratives under which the unequal, non-inclusive mechanisms are created through the process of filtering them out. The application of homonationalism discloses the mechanisms by which homosexual people are filtered out in a non-inclusive way by emphasizing that some of them are included, and some excluded in a particular setting, such as militarization.

By considering of what was said, I would argue that the concept of political correctness is relevant to describe the situation of women within militarism. The interviewees agreed that women and other categories of minorities should be included in the sector of militarism. However, the empirical data of the thesis demonstrated that a lot of integrational issues were also separated by the interviewees. The section argued that the separated issues to include women, as well as other minorities in the militarized setting could be considered as the filtering it out mechanism. The principle of filtering it out was the main thread that helped me to connect the empirical data of the thesis to the original theory of homonationalism by Puar (2017). I argued that in both contexts (the homonationalism in the United States, as well as the militarized setting as my topic of the thesis talks about), filtering it out is the main aspect that helps to investigate the non-inclusive policy that is cultivated to filter the homosexuals out based on the certain characteristics. In the case of the United States, only homosexuals who are grounded by whiteness are included in the concept of homonationalism while in the case of the militarized setting, only homosexuals who match the heterosexual, masculine order (conforming to the standard behavior) could pass the criteria of serving to the country.

5. Discussions of Findings

The thesis investigated the main three concepts, namely Western Masculinities, Hegemonic Masculinities and Militarization of the Masculine Body within the European Union countries. The thesis tried to understand how the eight interviewees defined the mentioned concepts. The main hypothesis of the thesis was formulated Whether the militarized masculine body one of the contemporary hegemonic types of masculinities in the European Union context and if yes, what are the main characteristics that validate this notion? The raised hypothesis is complex in a way that yes/no answer is not possible. Any polarization to answer the question should be rejected. In a broad sense, we could agree that the Militarization of the Masculine Body has some affinities to Hegemonic Masculinities. However, as the findings of the research demonstrated, the militarization of the masculine body the same as hegemonic masculinities are highly complex concepts that have a lot of nuances.

I would like to discuss the main research question of the thesis which would also help to outline the raised hypothesis. The main research question was raised in a way to understand *How is the militarization of the masculine body as one type of contemporary hegemonic masculinities constructed in practice in the European Union countries?* The different layers could be applied by considering this question. If we apply physical appearance, we could say that the militarized masculine body matches the physical identity of young men, grounded by the age bracket from twenty to thirty-five years old. In other words, the strong build, athletic man who should be able to complete the physical tasks. The militarized male should act in a precise manner, be always attentive to the delegated orders. In addition, the militarized masculine body should walk up straight and precisely by wearing the uniform. The militarized masculine body should demonstrate the sense of wildness once needed to defend his existence within the militarized setting. In addition, the speaking should be grounded by shortness of sentences, precise communication, and even a bit of broken sentences, marked by the phrases *Yes, Sir; No, Sir*. In addition, some interviewees agreed that the sense of confidence is a highly appreciated quality as well. Most of the respondents agreed that softer skills such as emotionality, complex communication grounded by long sentences as well as the lack of physical strength are considered characteristics that are not in line to militarism. However, important to stress is that the mentioned definition is only relevant if we consider so-called one of the lowest ranking persons in the army, namely a soldier. Different characteristics would be appreciated if we consider the different actors within militarism. Based on what was said, we could agree that the militarized masculine body has some affinities to hegemonic masculinities based on the three layers, namely act, look and speak. As outlined in the theoretical part of the thesis, hegemonic masculinities are grounded by qualities such as exaltation of physical strength, strict heterosexuality, and opposition to effeminacy. The two examples in literature, namely the novel *An Arab Melancholia* by Abdellah Taïa (2008) and the short story *Uncle* by James, G.W. (2009) were provided as examples to illustrate this point. The main protagonists of both pieces of literature illustrated how strongly the hierarchical, hegemonic masculine power penetrates the social fabric considering totally opposing geographical contexts, namely: Morocco and the United States. The inner conflict is the way to reject the inner feminized self for the sake of subjugating to the normative heterosexual masculine order. Both protagonists illustrated the cases of effeminate men with the characteristics opposite to the hegemonic masculinities, outlined in the theoretical part of the thesis. By keeping in mind what was said, both categories of masculinities, namely hegemonic masculinities and militarized masculinities have some common attributes. In both cases of masculinities, certain similar qualities are appreciated or rejected. The strong physical body, rigid walk as well as precise cognitive thinking grounded by shortness of sentences, and confidence was detected as the qualities that are relevant for

both categories of masculinities. In order to complete an in-depth analysis, the theory of *Gender Performativity* by Judith Butler (2017) was applied by bringing into dialogue the empirical data of the thesis. The critical theory of Butler (2017) helped to understand that the militarized masculine man is constructed based on similar aspects, which Butler outlines by explaining *Gender Performativity*.

The emotional aspects of masculinities by the interviewees were investigated through the more personal questions related to the Ideal Masculinity, which were raised during the interviews. The answers varied significantly which also helped to understand that the experiences of the respondents to the same topic significantly differ. As the section 4.1. *The Ideal Masculinity and its relation to the Father Role* demonstrated the role of the father is one of the most repetitive thinking patterns which was addressed by the majority of the respondents considering their ideal type of masculinities. Some of the respondents mentioned that they were raised in a hard-masculine way, mostly influenced by the role of the father, which illustrated the hegemonic type of masculinities as in the case of Interviewee B. The others commented that their relation towards masculinity was nurturing due to the more gendered egalitarian characteristics of their father as in the case of Interviewee H. Furthermore, the respondents exist who claimed that the practice of masculinity (the role of the father) was missed once they grew up, and that had a negative impact, for instance: they had to put extra effort into how to proceed with certain masculine assignments, for instance: how to drive a car (it was the case of the Interviewee D).

Furthermore, the theoretical chapter proposed the idea that one of the most efficient ways to compare hegemonic masculinities to militarized masculine bodies is to consider the aspect of gender norms within militarism. The section 2.3. *Hegemonic Masculinities and its main characteristics* in the theoretical part of the thesis outlined that the subjugation of women and other minority categories, such as effeminate men, homosexuals, and transsexuals to hegemonic masculinities is one of the most obvious characteristics of *Hegemonic Masculinities* itself. The section of the empirical part (4.4. *Policing Gender Norms within Militarized Setting in relation to the critical theory of Homonationalism* by Jasbir Puar) presented to understand the relation between the Militarized Masculine Body and minority Categories. I would like to focus on the relation between the Militarized Masculinity and the integrational aspect of women as well as homosexual and transsexual people into militarism. I noticed two different patterns of how the answers were provided by the respondents, considering the integrational aspect of women and other minority categories, such as homosexual men or transsexual people. If we consider women and their integrational aspect of, I would say that the word addition or compliments a relevant expression to describe their situation within militarism. If we consider homosexuals or transsexuals, I use the concept of looking outside in to define their situation. By the words addition or compliment, I consider that respondents agree that women exist within militarism, the phenomenon is already in militarism and it is quite widespread to call it a compliment to the main gender category (male) while in my opinion, most of the respondents look to homosexuality or transsexuality as the phenomenon which still not there, not in the setting of militarism or simply from the perspective of outside in. By outlining the integrational aspect of women within militarism, a lot of difficulties were raised, which hindered the successful integration of women within militarism. The physical qualities of women were one of the most repetitive. Some interviewees agreed that women are seen as physically weaker to perform certain tasks. In addition, the answers of the respondents proposed an idea that the stereotypical perception still exists to define the situation of women in militarism. The right example would be the case of *Interviewee E* who commented that some male military personnel still treat women as subjects which is characterized by their physical attractiveness. The

mentioned answer was emphasized by phrases such as: “What a nice woman, what a beautiful girl”. Consequently, the existence of women within militarism is not equal to men as they still could be described by the phenomenon, such as masculine warriors to protect feminine beautiful souls. In addition, I also got an impression by analyzing the responses of the interviews that some of the interviewees tried to search for the reasons why women's integration within militarism is not fully possible in comparison to men. As an example, the Lithuanian respondents (the Interviewees C/D) mentioned that drafting all, including men and women would be difficult due to the lack of infrastructure, and finances. At the same time as the solution, Interviewer *D* proposed an idea about alternative military service in case we want to call everyone equally without separating the gender. It was suggested the different locations, and functions of alternative military service, such as the option to serve close to the hospital, and rescue service. The mentioned concept as well as the functions that were proposed to integrate different people within militarism confirms the thought that women are perceived as complementary within militarism. By applying the concept of alternative military service, women as well as other minority categories would be redirected to different departments within militarism in such a way as to preserve and not intervene in the highly masculine concept of a soldier. Rather than creating a new awareness of a soldier, the redirection aspect is chosen by moving women based on the option of alternative military service as an example. Considering what was said, we could agree that the affinity between hegemonic masculinities and militarized masculine bodies exists in a way that in both cases the subjugation principle to women is visible. In the case of the militarized setting, the subjugation of women is reflected through the so-called tolerant way. Due to the societal changes, the militarization institutions accept women in their community. However, the acceptance process is highly nuanced, based on certain (unwritten) rules. Women are not considered to be fully equal to take the same positions as men, for instance in the case of a soldier. The investigated physicality of a soldier, based on the three layers: act, look, and speak prove it.

Most of the respondents agreed that homosexuality and militarism are compatible. In other words, homosexuality is existing within militarism. However, the answers of the interviewees proposed an idea that it is still considered as an exception rather than as normativity. In addition, the answers of the interviewees suggest that certain rules exist for a homosexual man to be accepted in the militarized community. In other words, homosexual man has to match certain criteria that are obviously not applying to heterosexuals. By reflecting on the interviews, I got a sense that some of the interviewees answered the questions related to the integration of homosexual men into militarism from the perspective of the outside in. In other words, they look at these questions in a way that it is not a widely manifested phenomenon to which particular attention should be given. In order to stress the fact that the interviewees formulate their questions in a highly categorized way, I decided to apply the critical theory of homonationalism by Jasbir Puar (2017). I related the original text of Puar (2017) by investigating the interviewee's perception of gender minorities and their integration into militarism. The analysis helped to understand that homosexual people are filtered out in a non-inclusive way by emphasizing that some of them are included, and some excluded in a particular setting, such as militarization. The empirical section demonstrated that only the homosexuals who adapt to the heterosexual masculine power dimension would be able to be successful in militarism. Consequently, the mentioned information proposed an idea that adaptability is a highly relevant concept for a homosexual man to become successful in the sector of militarism. The homosexual man has to adapt to the strict heterosexual conduct which exists within militarism rather than being themselves and exposing their identities. In terms of transsexuality, the gathered information is quite poor to complete an in-depth analysis. However, the respondents confirmed the thought that there are not a lot of cases of transsexual

people existing within the military setting. In addition, I would like to echo Interviewee D who projected his answer to the future in terms of transsexual people's integration into militarism by saying that "transsexuality and its integration could be considered in the future in the case of Lithuania. However, the societal norms have to be changed". In conclusion, if we consider one of the most relevant qualities of hegemonic masculinities, such as hegemonic masculinities are constructed in subjugation to other types of masculinities such as homosexuals, we could agree that militarized masculine body has some affinities to hegemonic masculinities. The subjugation principle in the militarized setting is obvious, which is reflected through the already well-outlined concept of adaptability. The concept of adaptability is reflected in a way that the homosexual man adapts to heterosexual male culture in such a way confirming that heterosexual masculine order subjugates the other gender identities within militarism. By thinking in this way, we can agree that the affinity between the militarization setting and hegemonic masculinities is visible.

I consider that a more comprehensive understanding of militarized masculinities as well as hegemonic masculinities was reached by reflecting on the theoretical as well as empirical chapters of the thesis. The thesis helped to understand how different four European Union citizens, who have direct experience in militarism define militarized masculinities and different characteristics related to it. In addition, the thesis drew some common lines between two concepts, namely militarized masculinities and hegemonic masculinities. The common attributes were identified by considering the subjugation principle of women and other minority categories such as homosexuals or transsexuals to militarized masculine bodies that could be defined by the concept of *center*. I hope that the thesis will also help to bring additional awareness in terms of militarism and the multiplication process of the concept of militarism based on the societal level. In addition, the thesis focused not only on investigating the topic via the categorical masculine analysis but also a bit to exposing the emotional aspects of masculinities. I consider that the thesis not only generated some advanced knowledge towards the mentioned concepts but also worked as an inspirational paper to think about the limitations of the thesis as well as the future development trajectory of the paper. In terms of the limitations of the thesis, a couple of aspects are worth to be outlined. Firstly, as discussed in the theoretical part of the thesis, the paper mainly focused on the categorical analysis of investigation of the case study. As Waling (2019) in her article *Rethinking Masculinity Studies: Feminism, Masculinity and Poststructural Accounts of Agency and Emotional Reflexivity* claims, categorical analysis hinders revealing the complex nature of masculinities, mainly considering agency and emotional reflexivity. Consequently, more advanced research should be conducted by reflecting on the individual cases of militarized masculinities, the inner masculine self within the militarized setting, and how the concept of self-agency is affected within the militarized setting. In addition, the research material of the thesis was quite limited, mainly focusing on the male professionals within the militarized setting. Consequently, the importance of looking at different layers within the society, for instance: only focusing on women professionals within the militarism or individuals outside the militarism would be beneficial. In terms of the development trajectory of the thesis, I would like to outline on the thought that was developed together with the second reader of the thesis Laxman Belbase. During the conversation with Laxman, we discussed the possible development trajectory of the thesis. Consequently, Laxman proposed an idea to apply an ethnographic research approach by analyzing the individual case studies with militarism. In other words, to look at the different stages of life in militarism per one individual and understand how masculinities or any gender or social norm evolves at other times. In order to do so, Laxman emphasized two points: the first point was related to the thought of understanding how evolution happened once the soldiers joined the army, what were their initial thoughts about the army, how they fit into it,

and what were the main challenges. All their experience should be built on the logic of how it was and how it is now. In other words, to complete comparative analysis. Furthermore, the other important point would be to connect individual understanding, the individual notions to institutional comprehension. Further research should seek to understand if a significant discrepancy exists when we talk about the individual level of masculinity within militarism in comparison to the institutional framework. The research should deepen the knowledge in terms of understanding if the gap exists between the individual level of militarism and what is really expected or happened based on the institutional militarized framework. In other words, the military as an institution could be different from one soldier's experience, and one soldier's narrative, for instance: some studies were created that describe the processes when individuals do not agree to implement certain orders/tasks but due to the hierarchy, they are pushed to do it. This is especially relevant in War or post-War countries. I consider an interesting project would be to analyze the discrepancy between the individual notion of a soldier or masculinity and militarization as an institution. By thinking about the completed thesis, the chosen approach is more fusion. I do not merely focus on one specific target group of the research and then compare the answers within the other groups of the research but try to find the join patterns within the raised research (sub)questions and the main hypothesis of the thesis. I am trying to find the connections between the answers provided by the respondents to work on the hypothesis and the research question. I consider that due to the restriction of the time and length of the thesis, it was a wise decision to do so. However, I consider this master thesis project as only the initial phase, the foundation of my future projects. The conducted research helped me to reveal how complex the topic is and how many different paths could be chosen to approach the topic.

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Appendix

The Interview Guide

This *Interview Guide* was created by focusing on the individuals who have/had a direct connection to the field of militarism, such as veterans, former employees related to militarism, military reservists, soldiers, administrators, etc. The *Interview Guide* was created by applying information related to the theoretical part of the thesis. The theoretical part of the thesis is divided into main five chapters. Consequently, the questions were prepared by considering the following chapters, namely: the definition of Western Masculinities as well as Hegemonic Masculinities and main characteristics; Militarized Masculinities and their main characteristics. Important to stress that the questions were constructed in a way to test the main hypothesis of the thesis *if the militarized masculine body is one of the contemporary hegemonic types of masculinities and if yes, what are the main characteristics that validate this notion?* In addition, I also considered the sub-question of the research, defined as *How do Western citizens characterize the militarized masculine body; what are the main peculiarities in terms of their thinking logic?*

1 PART OF THE INTERVIEW (getting to know each other / starting the conversation)

- **(Introducing each other).** Could you please introduce yourself, outlining some facts from your professional as well as personal life? Could you also please mention your nationality, age and the exact (former) job-title.
- **(For starting the discussion).** Have you ever thought about masculinity in general and your relation to masculinity? Was it any situation that encouraged you to think about masculinity? You can refer to your childhood, for instance: the ideal masculinity that influenced you once you grew up.

2 PART OF THE INTERVIEW

DEFINING THE WESTERN MAN

- What are the most typical characteristics (physical as well as psychological) that characterize the Western man?
 - Would you consider that a Western man is born with these characteristics (the characteristics are hereditary in the *masculine body*) or he is gaining and developing them once he is growing up? Please explain your answer.
- Do you perceive the significant difference between men and women and their social role in society? In other words, do the social characteristics of masculinity are opposed to femininity and if yes / no, please explain what motivates you to think like this?
 - What is your opinion about the statement that men are more willing to be grounded by the ‘hard’ characteristics, such as physical strongness, rationality, and calculative mindset, while women are more by ‘soft characteristics’, such

- as emotionality, passivity, and obedience? What is your opinion about generalizing these statements and making them valid?
- If I would ask you to define the most common attributes of masculinities in terms of the country where you come from, how would you identify them? Do you think it is very different in comparison to the masculinities of other European Union countries (as an example)?
 - What is the dominant masculinity when you look at how masculinity is constructed in relation to military – defense – War?

3 PART OF THE INTERVIEW

(WESTERN) MASCULINITIES AND MILITARISM. GENERAL QUESTIONS.

- Please describe the main characteristics (inner/outer) of how a soldier (a person of an army) should be defined based on the three points: how he should look, act and speak. In case you think one out of three dimensions are not relevant, please explain why?
- Please explain what kind of general characteristics an individual who would like to relate his/her/they career to militarism should have? You can explain your answer based on three layers (look/act/speak) or choose the most important and outline them.
- What is your opinion about the statement that a man who could be described as *white, heterosexual, able-bodied, speaking a standard (rigid) language* would easier integrate himself into the militarism in comparison to the man who would be defined by a more *soft* characteristics, rounded by emotionality, speaking in long sentences, not able to demonstrate advanced physical strength?

4 PART OF THE INTERVIEW

POLICING GENDER NORMS

- What do you think about *Gender Equal* compulsory military service among *European Union* countries? Would you support that women the same as men should be equally called to complete compulsory military service? Please explain your answer.
 - Do you perceive any challenges to include women in compulsory military service? What do you think about popular discussions in the mass media that women are more willing for the *Peace* rather than to *War* (*popular narrative to divide the gender roles of a man and a woman*)? Please explain your answer.
- What do you think about the inclusion of different identity-having people, such as gay men, transsexual people, disabled people into compulsory military service among European Union countries?
 - Do you think that homosexuality, transsexuality and militarism are compatible? What kind of challenges do you perceive to integrate homosexual men or transsexual people into militarism? Please explain your answer.

5 PART OF THE INTERVIEW¹⁶

TESTING THE MAIN WORKING MECHANISMS OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITIES

You are able to see on the screen seven different political leaders, which illustrate different political ideologies. They are stated as follows: the former U.S. president Barack Obama; the former U.S. president Donald Trump, the current U.S. president Joe Biden, the current Russian president Vladimir Putin, the current Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the current French president Emmanuel Macron and the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Based on the pictures which you see on the screen, I would like to ask you the following question.

- Imagine that you have to select the *Minister of Defence* of a particular *European Union* country out of these seven public figures. Which one out of these depicted public figures would you choose and why? If it is easier, you can select one concrete country. Which physical and character features of the political leader help you to accept the decision?
- Social media is one of the most efficient tools to attract people's attention to militarism nowadays. Imagine that we need to create an advertisement whose main goal is to attract more men to join the military as reservists in a particular *European Union* country. The advertisement has to include the male soldier. In what kind of action would you depict the soldier (e.g. shooting, running, listening to the instructions) and why? Which characteristics as well as physical features would you like to emphasize by the created advertisement?



¹⁶ Important to mention that the fifth part of the Interview Guide was not integrated to the empirical part of the thesis. I decided to focus on the first four parts. The answers of the respondents in terms of the fifth part of the thesis did not provide me such relevant data as the first four parts.

