

CONNECTIONS

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The Bundeswehr and Female Soldiers: The Integration of Women into the Armed Forces (2000–2015)

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Introduction

The turn of the new millennium represented a caesura for the Bundeswehr (German armed forces), because the composition of its personnel was to change quite dramatically following a decision by the European Court of Justice in January 2000, which demanded considerably more employment opportunities for women in the military as soldiers rather than solely in medical services as practiced before. In the years that followed, the number of female soldiers in the Bundeswehr increased from about 2% to about 10% by spring 2015.

The present article firstly outlines the history of women's participation in the German armed forces up through today. Secondly, it summarizes the findings of the various empirical studies that the in-house research institute of the German Ministry of Defense (formerly the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Research (Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut der Bundeswehr, SOWI)) and the Center of Military History and Social Sciences of the Bundeswehr (Zentrum der Bundeswehr für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften, ZMSBw) have undertaken in this context. Lastly, these empirical findings are put into a theoretical context.

Prologue: The Bundeswehr Meets Tanja Kreil

Women have long been involved in German war efforts. During World War I, women worked in the German armaments industries and were recruited for medical, secretarial, administrative, and combat support functions. Towards the end of the war, 500 of them were trained for service in the field of communication. In World War II, the inclusion of women in the war went even further, despite the pre-modern gender role views of the National Socialists. A very substantial number of women, about 450,000, were recruited for the Wehrmacht Assistance Corps (*Wehrmachthelferinnenkorps*), and tens of thousands were even assigned combat functions. However, this was not officially acknowledged, as their service was interpreted as merely assistance.¹

The recognition of women as official and regular soldiers was delayed until the Bundeswehr came into existence. The creation of the German armed forces, to be sure, was by no means something “natural” in the decade following the Second World War. In the end, Cold War turbulence in international relations in the late 1940s and early 1950s

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¹ Franz W. Seidler, *Frauen zu den Waffen? Marketenderinnen, Helferinnen, Soldatinnen*, Second Edition (Bonn: Bernard & Graefe, 1998).

persuaded the Western powers to view the rearmament of West Germany in a different light. As a result, in the mid-1950s, the Bundeswehr was established.

At that time, few considered female soldiers to be an issue. Yet the Bundeswehr soon employed thousands of women as civilian employees in the Federal Armed Forces Administration in functions that in many of the world's other militaries would be performed by people in uniform. It took another decade until the issue of women as regular soldiers began to be discussed in society and politics due to wide ranging democratization processes and significant socio-cultural and politico-cultural changes. Starting with the so-called student movement, various parts of German society turned into important social movements that called for political and societal participation. Among them were various women's groups that criticized the patriarchally structured German society and sought emancipation and gender equality, as laid out in various UN documents. Accordingly, there were also demands for equal access and participation to professions that hitherto had been male-exclusive domains, and very soon the male-dominated soldierly profession and the Bundeswehr faced pressure from society that soon translated into the political sphere, putting the issue of women in the military on the agenda.²

In late 1973, the German government, at that time a coalition of the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) and the Liberal Party (FDP), responded to these societal concerns by establishing the enquête commission, *Women and Society*. One result of this was Minister of Defense Georg Leber (SPD) opening the Bundeswehr to women. Thus, in autumn 1975, the year the UN had declared *Year of the Woman*, the first five women entered the Bundeswehr, soon to be followed by others. They served in the medical service only. Here, the German armed forces had been confronted with substantial recruitment problems since the early 1970s, rising to a gap of 1,300 longer-service volunteers in officer ranks.³ After some time, this access for women to military classifications and trades was extended to military bands because of the legal connection between medical service and military bands. The respective proposition reads that in the case of an emergency, the soldiers of the military bands are to be transferred to the medical service.

The discussion about extending female participation to new classifications gained renewed momentum in the early 1980s. In 1981, an independent *Long-Term Commission* analyzed the shifts and trends in West German demographics with an eye towards satisfying the Bundeswehr's personnel needs. One year later, the Commission submitted a report that in one paragraph recommended considering extending voluntary service of women in the armed forces to non-combat functions. However, throughout the 1980s, no such political move was initiated. Nevertheless, the issue remained on the agenda of social and political debate and soon further steps were taken to augment the representation of women in the armed forces. Since the beginning of 1991, all careers of the medical

² Swantje Kraake, *Frauen zur Bundeswehr. Analyse und Verlauf einer Diskussion* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992); Astrid Albrecht-Heide and Utemaria Bujewski-Crawford, *Frauen – Krieg – Militär. Images und Phantasien* (Tübingen: Verein für Friedenspädagogik, 1991); Martina Fischer, *Entmilitarisierung durch Streitkräfte-reform? Trends zu Freiwilligenarmeen und zur Einbindung von Frauen ins Militär* (Bonn: Arbeitsstelle Friedenstexte, 1997).

³ Seidler, *Frauen*, 223, 225.

and military musical service were made accessible to women;⁴ in 1994, Verena von Weymarn became Surgeon General, the first female general in German military history.⁵

In the late 1990s, female soldiers made up about 1.2% of all German soldiers. The number of women came close to sixty in the military bands and to 4,350 in the medical service, namely, approximately 400 medical officers, 700 medical officer candidates, 2,300 non-commissioned officers, two-hundred non-commissioned officer candidates, and one hundred in private ranks.⁶ In addition, at that time close to 50,000 women worked as civilian employees either in the armed forces or in the Federal Armed Forces Administration.

This means that towards the end of the millennium women in the Bundeswehr were still confined to non-combat roles, i.e., to the medical service and military bands, whereas in other countries the integration of women had progressed further, sometimes substantially.⁷ Although female soldiers were trained in the use of weapons, their utilization—except for cases of self-defense—was forbidden by Article 12a of the Basic Law, or constitution (*Grundgesetz*). This situation changed fundamentally at the turn of the century, in no small extent due to a woman named Tanja Kreil, who has been described by the media as embodying the male “nightmare of a woman with a gun in her hand”⁸ and indicating the end of the rule of men.⁹

The story reads as follows: in 1996, the nineteen-year-old trained electrician, Tanja Kreil, applied for voluntary service in the area of maintenance, i.e., in a combat support function. Her application, however, was declined by the Bundeswehr, with reference to the aforementioned Article 12a of the Basic Law: women serving in combat functions and with weapons in their hands was against the law. Kreil did not accept this decision

⁴ See also the findings of Ingrid Anker, Ekkehard Lippert and Ingrid Welcker, *Soldatinnen in der Bundeswehr. Kennzeichen des sozialen Wandels*, SOWI-Report 59 (Munich: SOWI, 1993); Paul Klein and Werner Kriesel, *Männliche und weibliche Bewerber für die Laufbahn der Sanitätsoffiziere der Bundeswehr – Ein empirischer Vergleich* (Munich: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, 1993); Hanne Isabell Schaffer, *Konkurrenz unter Frauen. Arbeitsbeziehungen von weiblichen Beschäftigten bei der Bundeswehr* (Munich: Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, 1994).

⁵ Seidler, *Frauen*, 227.

⁶ German Ministry of Defense, *Frauen in der Bundeswehr. Zahlenspiegel* (Dezember 1999) (Bonn: German Ministry of Defense, 1999) (in German).

⁷ Ekkehard Lippert and Tjarck Rössler, *Mädchen unter Waffen? Gesellschafts- und sozialpolitische Aspekte weiblicher Soldaten*, SOWI-Report 20 (Munich: SOWI, 1980); Joseph L. Soeters and Jan van der Meulen, eds., *Managing Diversity in the Armed Forces. Experiences from Nine Countries* (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, 1999); Gerhard Kümmel, ed., *Women in the Armed Forces of the World: Recent Trends and Explanations, Current Sociology* (London: Sage, 2002); Helena Carreiras, *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies* (London: Routledge, 2006).

⁸ Petra Kipphoff, “Die Berufung der Frau. Warum das Gewehr bei uns Männersache ist,” *Die Zeit*, 20 January 2000, 39.

⁹ Anne Zielke, “Der Körper des Gegners. Frauen dürfen an die Waffen: Endet damit die Männerherrschaft?” *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 17 January 2000, 14.

and went to the courts with the support of the German soldiers' union-like association, the Bundeswehr Association (*Deutscher Bundeswehr Verband*).

Part of her charge was that her application was illegally rejected by the Bundeswehr because of her sex, using a gender-specific argument that men were allowed to enter positions involving the use of arms while women were not. The argument ran counter to a February 1976 European Union (EU) directive (Council Directive 76/207/EEC) requiring Member States to follow the principle of equality of treatment in the workplace, i.e., prohibiting discrimination in the workplace for reasons of gender. The Administrative Court (*Verwaltungsgericht*) in Hanover found it necessary to have this checked and, in mid-1998, decided to suspend the court proceedings and ask the European Court of Justice (ECJ) in Luxemburg for an interpretation. Eventually, in January 2000, the ECJ ruled that the EU directive indeed applied also to the specific workplace of the armed forces, that it overrode the provisions of the German Law on Soldiers (*Soldatengesetz*) and German Regulations on Soldiers' Careers (*Soldatenlaufbahnverordnung*), and that community law governed matters of defense.¹⁰ Hence, the ECJ overruled the arguments of national sovereignty put forward by the German government.

This means that the steps taken to open the Bundeswehr to women do not stem from genuinely political initiatives as they may superficially seem, but rather from a court ruling that required the political sphere to take action.¹¹ As a consequence, for the German armed forces the new millennium began with a dramatic change – the prospect of including women in the military on a much larger scale than before. To complicate things further, this departure from the status quo was part of a larger picture of reform, restructuring, and profound changes, either already underway or impending. Its main objective was for the Bundeswehr to develop a “new profile of capabilities” as laid down by then-Minister of Defense Rudolf Scharping in his so-called *Cornerstones Memorandum*.¹²

The Research Project

Even prior to and especially following the ruling of the ECJ, there was a lively and controversial debate on the topic of women's inclusion in the military both within the armed forces themselves and within German society and academia at large. An essential reason for this was the vagueness of the ruling, as it only demanded that Germany open more classifications and trades than before without defining the scope and extent of this broader inclusion in detail. Therefore, one of the main issues discussed was the depth or degree of integration, and thus the question of whether certain areas, classifications, or trades should be denied to women, or whether the Bundeswehr should be completely

¹⁰ “EU-Recht erlaubt Frauen Dienst mit der Waffe. Der Europäische Gerichtshof widerspricht in seinem Urteil zum Tätigkeitsfeld von Soldatinnen in der Bundeswehr den deutschen Bestimmungen,” *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 12 January 2000, 10.

¹¹ See also Constanze Stelzenmüller, “Berufsverbot vor Gericht. Zwingen Europas Richter die Bundeswehr, Frauen an die Waffen zu lassen?,” *Die Zeit*, 5 January 2000, 6.

¹² German Minister of Defense, *Die Bundeswehr – sicher ins 21. Jahrhundert. Eckpfeiler für eine Erneuerung von Grund auf* (Bonn: German Ministry of Defense, 2000).

open. In order to tackle this question in particular, and to implement integration in practice in general, the Ministry of Defense established an intra-ministerial steering group and asked its in-house research institute, the Bundeswehr Institute of Social Research (SOWI), to scientifically aid and support this process.

First Recommendations from a Review of the Literature (January/February 2000)

In a first step, a survey of the international literature was undertaken, which led to several recommendations.¹³ In mid-February 2000, the researchers turned against the idea of defining off-limits areas, and instead advocated predominantly unrestricted access for women to the military. The Ministry of Defense eventually agreed with this option and, thus, the organization and implementation of this political decision began. Starting in January 2001, women became eligible to enter all military classifications and trades beyond those hitherto already open to them. Later, according to the group of researchers, integration was to be based on the *principle of voluntariness*: women would enter the military services voluntarily and would not be subject to conscription, as still was the case for men at that time. Also, integration was not to be grounded on the idea of affirmative action, but on the *principle of equality of treatment*. Thus, there was to be a gender-free or gender-neutral assessment of those who applied for military service, and everyone would have to pass the criteria for the requested position irrespective of their sex. Lastly, the researchers recommended the introduction of a gender training program.

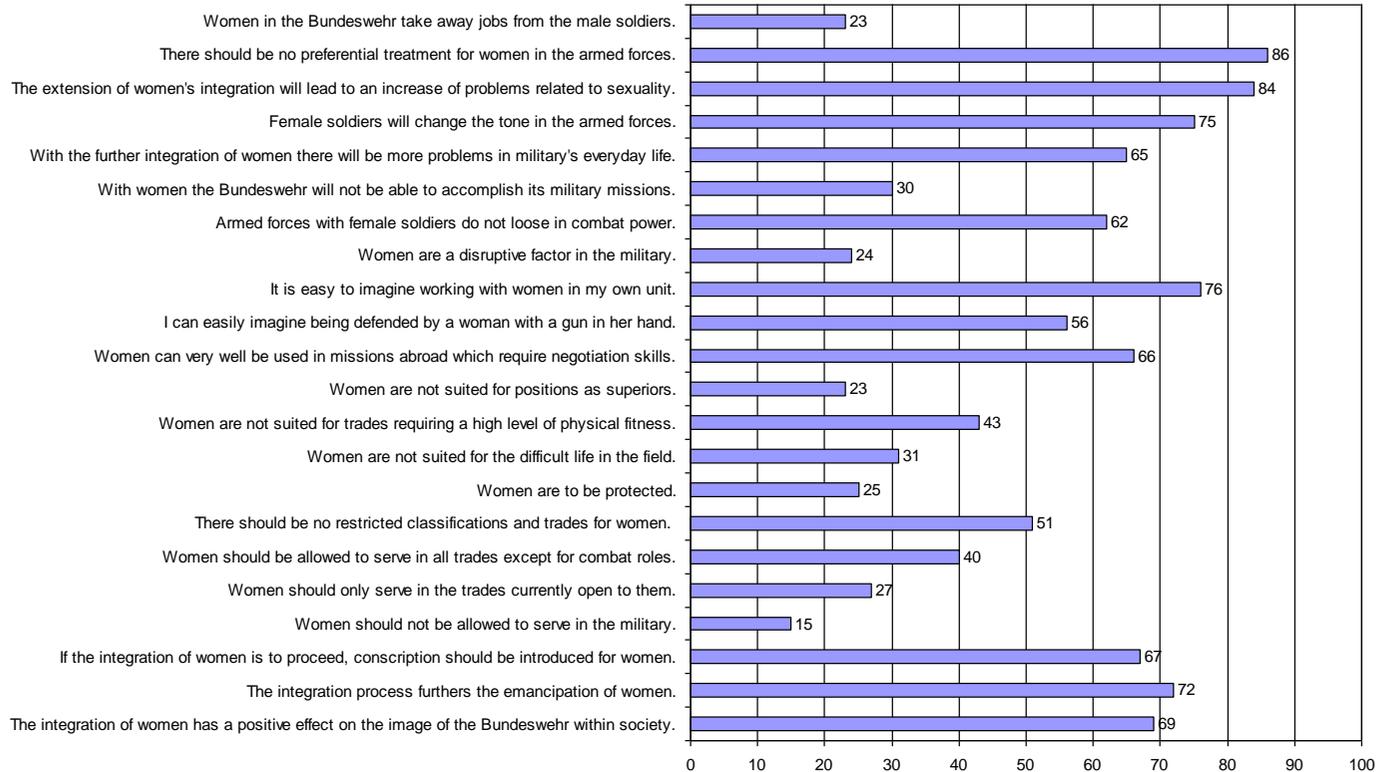
Surveying Male Soldiers (April 2000)

In addition to this, an empirical research project focusing on male soldiers was commissioned by the SOWI during the implementation stage of the further integration of women.¹⁴ Its main objectives were to gather information on the attitudes and perceptions of the male soldiers regarding the inclusion of women into the military; to find out whether male soldiers had reservations about female soldiers; to single out, if possible, in which areas, classifications, and trades these reservations were more pronounced than in others; and to identify soldiers or groups of soldiers that displayed more reservations than others. The questionnaire was sent to about 3,300 male soldiers in April 2000, when the political decision on the extent of integration was still pending. Almost 2,650 questionnaires were returned.

The data presented in Figure 1, showing the pattern of responses given by male soldiers, reveal mixed feelings and ambivalence. In the analysis, this ambivalence in attitudes consists of a mixture (1) of skepticism/reservations concerning change and curios-

¹³ Gerhard Kümmel, Paul Klein, and Klaus Lohmann, *Zwischen Differenz und Gleichheit. Die Öffnung der Bundeswehr für Frauen*, SOWI-Report 69 (Strausberg: SOWI, 2000).

¹⁴ Gerhard Kümmel and Heiko Biehl, *Warum nicht? Die ambivalente Sicht männlicher Soldaten auf die weitere Öffnung der Bundeswehr für Frauen*, SOWI-Report 71 (Strausberg: SOWI, 2001).



Source: SOWI Male Soldiers Survey 2000

Figure 1: Male Soldiers' Attitudes towards the Integration of Women into the Bundeswehr (2000); Percent "Agree."

ity about the future; (2) of classical/traditional prejudices against women and understanding combined with sympathy for the new or modern role of women in society; and (3) of fears of rising competition with women in the workplace and respect for the capabilities and the performance of women.

In detail, about 70% of the respondents thought that integrating women would buy the armed forces prestige and legitimacy within German society, thus improving civil-military relations in Germany, which would support the process of women's emancipation. On the scope of integration, 3/4 of respondents supported an integration of women that transcended the long-practiced restriction of women to the medical service and military bands. Even comprehensive inclusion, without any restrictions in terms of classifications and trades closed to women, was supported by a slight majority.

At the same time, however, the data reveal that there were soldiers who viewed women in the military as a matter of principle and were strictly opposed to any measures and policies taken to include women in the military (15%). 27% of the respondents preferred to uphold the status quo.

As regards gender images, the soldiers' responses indicate the persistence of traditional images concerning the role of women in society and vis-à-vis men. In this vein, in some segments of the sample, biologically-based perceptions and stereotypes came to the fore. Close to 1/3 of the soldiers deemed women unsuitable for the challenging life in the field, and more than 2/5 found women unsuitable for positions demanding high levels of physical fitness. Socio-cultural arguments could also be inferred. Almost 45% could not imagine themselves being defended by a female soldier with a gun in her hand, and 1/4 perceived women as the ones needing protection. Clearly, the classic gender-role ascriptions—the man as the protector and the woman as the protected—were still adhered to by a significant number of male soldiers. However, traditional gender images also left women a place in which they were thought to have a comparative advantage over men. Thus, 2/3 of the respondents held the communicative (and thus deescalating) skills ascribed to women in high esteem, in particular with regard to military operations other than war.¹⁵

Moreover, there were areas in which an erosion of traditional gender images could be inferred. No less than 77% of those surveyed found women suitable for positions as military superiors. A similar number, more than 3/4 of the respondents, claimed to not have any problems imagining female participation in their own unit. In addition, about 70% of respondents did not expect any disadvantage or hindrance to the realization of military missions due to the integration of women. In a similar vein, more than 60% did not anticipate any losses in combat power due to the presence of female soldiers. About

¹⁵ On the changing roles of the military, see Gerhard Kümmel, "A Soldier Is a Soldier Is a Soldier!?! The Military and Its Soldiers in an Era of Globalization," in *Handbook of the Sociology of the Military*, ed. Giuseppe Caforio (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2003), 417–433. In this context it is interesting to observe that the British military has tried to recruit women precisely on the basis of their specific, "female" competences, see Ronald Reng, "Weiblichkeit als Waffe. Das britische Verteidigungsministerium wirbt um Frauen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 12 January 2000, 13.

75% expected the tone (the way of speaking) in the German armed forces to change following an increase in the number of female soldiers.

On the negative side, more than 65% firmly believed that, in general, there would be more problems in their specific workplace once women were there. Also, roughly 84% anticipated an increase in the number of problems related to sexuality. Furthermore, the data showed a certain uneasiness, if not fear, among male soldiers not only about increasing competition in the workplace as a result of the inclusion of women, but also about the possibility that male soldiers would be put at a disadvantage (reverse discrimination). More than 1/5 of the men openly argued that women in the Bundeswehr would take away jobs from men. Thus, they explicitly stressed the necessity of equality of treatment. An overwhelming majority of 86% demanded that no preferential treatment be given to women on the grounds of their sex.

The analysis subsequently set out to find out whether certain groups of soldiers were more opposed to integrating women than others. The findings were very interesting and, at times, surprising. According to the data, men in the army harbored more reservations against women than those in the navy and air force. When comparing rank groups, officers showed fewer reservations than non-commissioned officers and rank and file soldiers. Yet, contrary to what might have been expected, younger men up to twenty-nine years of age were less inclined to laud the integration of women than men aged thirty and older. Also, shorter- and longer-service volunteers displayed more skepticism than career service members. The same applies to members of combat forces compared to those in non-combat areas. Lastly, men in the medical services showed much greater resistance towards the integration of women than men in all the other services, which runs against the well-known socio-psychological argument of the contact hypothesis.

Based on these empirical findings, the researchers recommended the introduction of what was called gender or integration training into military education and socialization. All the more so since not only the German police and German Border Guard (*Bundesgrenzschutz*), but also the armed forces from Scandinavian countries, Austria, Canada, and the United States, had devised and implemented similar programs in the past with positive results. The response to this advice was encouraging and the *Zentrum Innere Führung* ("Internal Leadership Center") in Koblenz was asked to devise a curriculum for such a program. This came into practice in November 2000, namely in courses for military leaders and trainers coming from military units in which the military education and training of servicewomen was to begin in January 2001. The objectives of the curriculum were defined as (a) improving men's acceptance of women; (b) developing an atmosphere of mutual trust, tolerance, and camaraderie between men and women; (c) bringing the relevant legal provisions to the men's attention; and (d) building and strengthening men's confidence in behavior towards women. This was thought to be achieved by following the principle of multiplication, i.e., these courses were organized centrally for a core group of soldiers that were deemed multipliers – who would pass their newly-gained knowledge on to the various subordinate military levels and soldiers. In other words, the integration training operated with the notion of a trickle-down or cascade effect. The concrete material contents of the curriculum centered on five different

areas. One dimension was legal, in which the participants were familiarized with the legal provisions valid from then on. Here, particular attention was given to sensitization regarding the issues of sexual harassment and sexual violence. The next dimension focused on the general or average physiological differences between men and women, pointing to a special need for focused physical training programs for women. The third addressed general psychological differences between the sexes, in particular different response and coping strategies of the sexes towards stress, and discussed prevailing traditional gender images. In the fourth dimension, differences in communicative behavior (direct versus non-direct styles of communication) were taught to the participants. The final dimension involved motivational aspects.¹⁶

In the meantime, in the summer of 2000, the first job interviews and aptitude tests were conducted with female applicants. Simultaneously, steps that most parties involved deemed necessary were taken to revise the German constitution. At the end of October and in early December 2000 respectively, the German parliamentary bodies, the *Bundestag* and the *Bundesrat*, with 2/3 majorities, voted for the revision of the aforementioned Article 12a of the Basic Law. Following this, and starting in January 2001, practical and unrestricted integration began and women entered the Bundeswehr, usually in bi-monthly cohorts, in trades hitherto precluded for women. This opened the door for another module of commissioned empirical research in this field.

Surveying the Class of 2001

The research findings and the widespread assumption in the Bundeswehr and German Ministry of Defense that the German armed forces would change quite dramatically due to the full-scale and thorough integration of women persuaded the Defense Ministry to commission an evaluative research project by the SOWI. Thus, the women who entered the Bundeswehr in 2001 were surveyed in the first few weeks of their military career in order to capture an initial, early picture of their attitudes and perceptions, which could later on be compared to the attitudes and perceptions displayed after serving in the military significantly longer.¹⁷

The survey of the class of 2001 firstly aimed to sketch a profile of the “typical” female soldier and identify potential, perceived, or real problems with the integration process. The questionnaire was sent to some 2,740 women in the first few weeks of their basic training and more than 40% responded. This profiling of the “typical” female soldier revealed that, on average, women were 21 years old and about 7/10 came from villages and small towns. Women from the new *Bundesländer* (federal states) were clearly

¹⁶ Zentrum Innere Führung, *Maßnahmen zur Integration von Frauen in die Streitkräfte im Bereich der Aus- und Weiterbildung* (Koblenz: Zentrum Innere Führung, 2000); Zentrum Innere Führung, *Frauen in den Streitkräften. Ausbildung Integration*, Working Paper 2 (Koblenz: Zentrum Innere Führung, 2000).

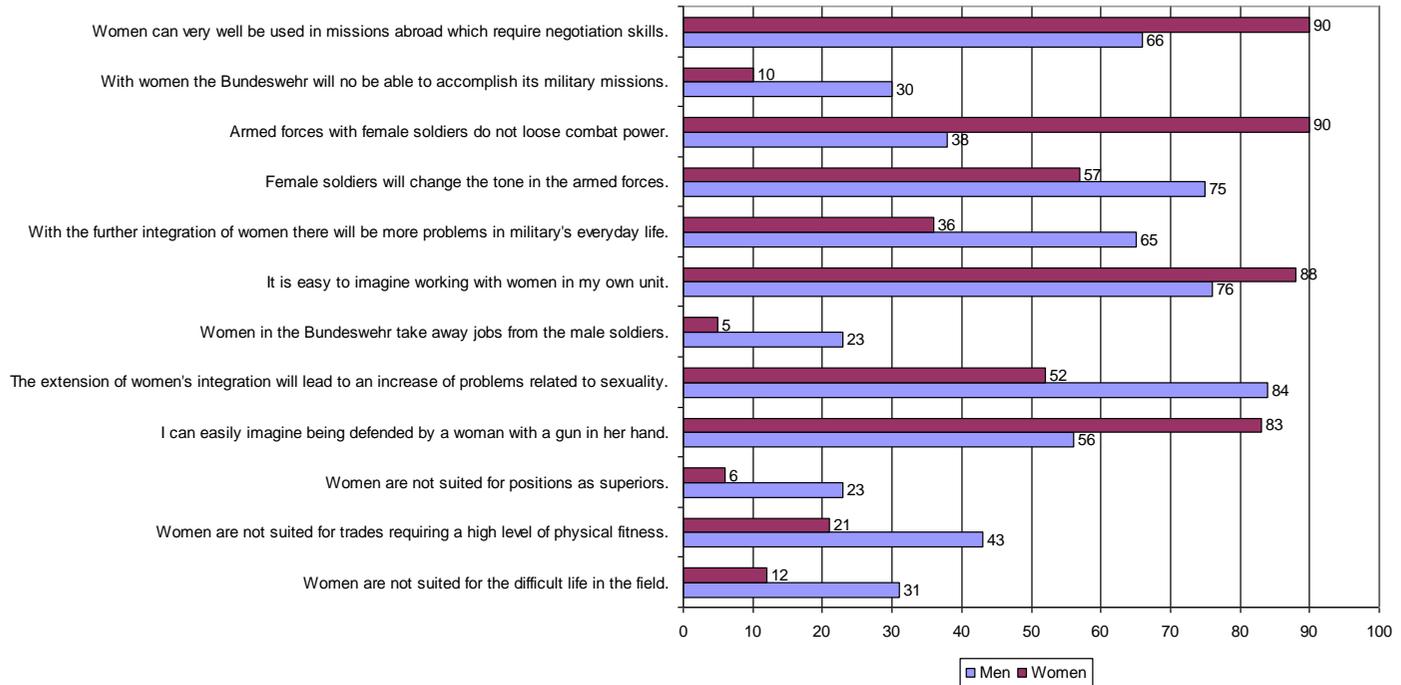
¹⁷ Gerhard Kümmel and Ines-Jacqueline Werkner, eds., *Soldat, weiblich, Jahrgang 2001. Sozialwissenschaftliche Begleituntersuchungen zur Integration von Frauen in die Bundeswehr – Erste Befunde* (Strausberg: SOWI, 2003).

overrepresented when compared to their representation in the general population. Indeed, 44% were raised in the territory of the former German Democratic Republic. Although only 11% were unemployed prior to their military career, this may be explained by pointing to the more intense economic problems of these areas when compared to the old *Bundesländer* and to the much greater social experience of working women. This disproportionately high number of women coming from the East was also reflected in religious—or rather non-religious—affiliations, as the group that did not adhere to any religion had over time become the largest one. More than 60% had a secondary school diploma (*Realschulabschluss*), and another 25% had a high school diploma (*Abitur*). Close to half of the women had a lasting relationship with a boyfriend or were married; only 4% already had children. Almost all servicewomen reported having had a positive role model, as their mothers had worked in the past or were still working.

More than 60% were non-commissioned officers, while about 28% chose officers' careers. In most cases servicewomen, both officers and non-commissioned officers, opted for quite "traditional" occupational slots in administrative, logistical, and maintenance functions. Nevertheless, some 17% and 19% percent respectively joined the combat and combat support forces. The army received the bulk of the incoming servicewomen. Their motivations to join the military were basically circumscribed by three dimensions: (a) comradeship, i.e., some longing for community; (b) general occupational characteristics like job security, good salaries, and reasonable career prospects; and (c) specific characteristics of the soldierly profession such as adventurism and testing one's physical and mental limits.

In addition to the class of 2001, the questionnaire, for comparative reasons, was also sent to female soldiers who had been soldiers prior to 2000, as well as to male soldiers. Attitudinal congruence emerged regarding the basic principle that would guide the integration process. Overwhelming majorities of more than 80% of both sexes wanted integration to be based on the principle of equality of treatment and equal opportunity. Much the same can be said, although at a somewhat lower level, for the presumption that female integration into the military advances the cause of women and furthers emancipation. Apart from this, the data analysis rendered two areas that were or could be problematic in the future course of integration.

The first problem resonated with the social side of integration as distinct from the technical side of integration. When it comes to military life, in everyday situations as well as in the context of concrete missions, considerable difference and variation in the attitudes and perceptions between the sexes was found. Whereas overwhelming majorities of both men and women could easily imagine cooperating well with the women in their own unit, and about double the number of men than women anticipated an increase of problems in everyday military life; life in the military was expected to become more complex and difficult in the future. Moreover, every fifth male soldier had some reservations in regard to women in leadership functions. Not surprisingly, the percentage of women who argued the same was five times less. In a similar vein, with integration, much more men than women expected increasing difficulties related to sexuality. Here, only half of the women agreed to this point, while more than 4/5 men did so.



Source: SOWI Integration Survey 2001

Figure 2: Attitudes of Male and Female Soldiers towards the Integration of Women into the Bundeswehr (2001); Percent “Agree.”

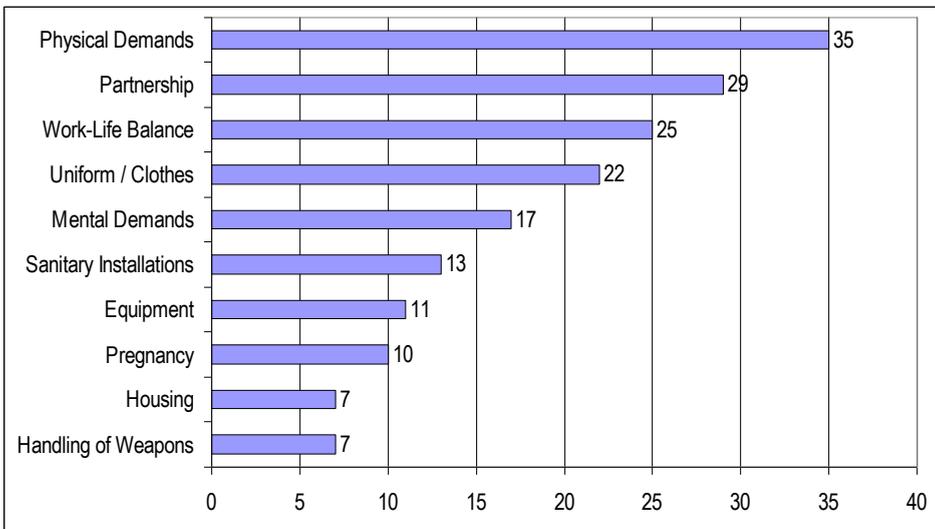
With regard to military effectiveness, 43 % of male soldiers deemed women unfit for physically demanding classifications and trades; this percentage was more than double than that of the women. This skepticism points to a rather widespread perception that combat, actual fighting, is a male business. Similarly, more than 3/5 of men anticipated some damaging effects of female integration on military combat capabilities. Interestingly, this is somewhat qualified, with only 30 % of men stating that following female integration, the Bundeswehr would no longer be able to fulfill its military tasks. By contrast, 9/10 of the women did not expect this to happen, and were thus confident in the military capabilities of women. The same percentage of women also thought that women were perfectly suited for military missions other than war, i.e., the de-escalation of conflict situations, due to their presumably better developed social skills.

These data not only show that fighting was still predominantly considered a male business, but also provide evidence that soldierly interaction was perceived to become more difficult and strenuous once men did not have to deal with other men only, but had to include women in the equation.

The second field where problems were either already present or were expected is circumscribed by the notion of "greedy institutions."¹⁸ This term denotes both the family/partner on the one hand, and the military on the other, as forces that pull the individual soldier in opposite directions; he or she is, so to speak, torn between these two demanding institutions. Harmonizing them, making them compatible, was perceived as a legitimate problem. One indicator of this compatibility problem was found in the much less pronounced enthusiasm or approval for the decision of the females to join the military on the part of the servicewomen's male partners. Whereas 80 % of fathers and 74 % of mothers, sisters, and brothers of servicewomen were reported to have viewed positively the decision of their daughters/sisters to voluntarily join the armed forces, only 47 % of partners were equally positive or enthusiastic. Another indicator that corroborated the centrality of this problem is mentioned in Figure 3. Speaking of perceived difficulties and problems in their military career, the demanding criteria of physical fitness were followed by partnership problems and difficulties in harmonizing one's family life with one's occupational life.

A third, and final, indicator was found in the coincidence of (a) the notable majority of about 60 % that even in this early stage were determined to stay in the military much longer than their contract ran; (b) the preference and desire for long-term work; and (c) the 75 % majority that wanted to have children later on in their life. Interestingly, and also quite surprisingly, the topic of sexual harassment/sexual violence ranked comparatively low when it came to difficulties, but also to doubts, fears, and apprehensions. Sex-

¹⁸ Mady Wechsler Segal, "Toward a Theory of Women in the Armed Forces: Applications to the Future," in *Armed Forces at the Dawn of the Third Millennium. SOWI-Forum International 16*, ed. Jürgen Kuhlmann and David R. Segal (Munich: SOWI, 1994), 347-368; Mady Wechsler Segal, "Gender and the Military," in *Handbook of the Sociology of Gender*, ed. Janet Saltzman Chafetz (New York: Kluwer/Plenum, 1999), 563-581.



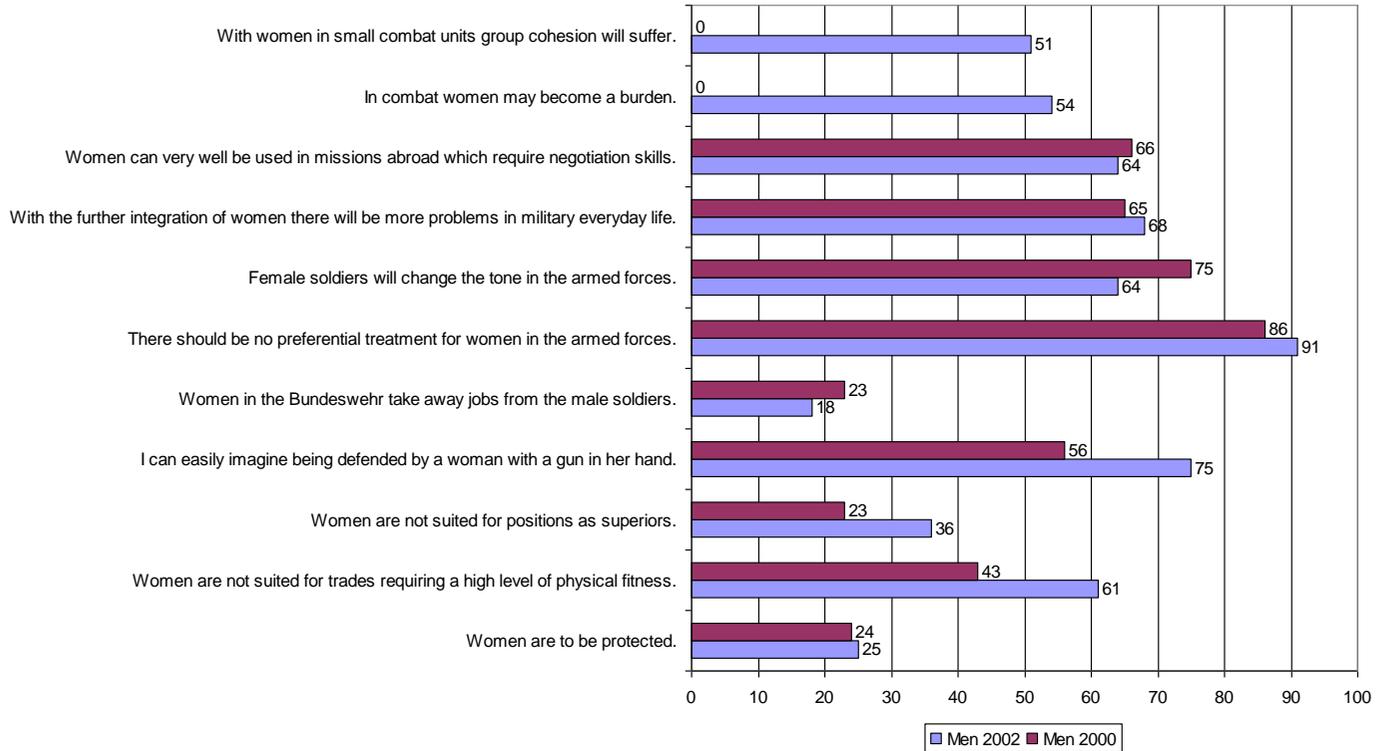
Source: SOWI Integration Survey (2001)

Figure 3: Anticipated Difficulties and Problems by Female Soldiers (2001); Percent "Agree."

ist language and sexual harassment were named by just 8 % of female soldiers when they were asked about apprehensions they might have with regard to their being female in a previously predominantly male environment. Indeed, the perception of servicewomen at the beginning of their military career was that the Bundeswehr provided a rather secure occupational context in this regard. What worried them more was unfair behavior by their male and female comrades and superiors, each ranging between 13–18%, and unfair behavior by female comrades, which was mentioned by 18%, which ranked at the top of the list.

These data were proof that the incoming servicewomen were highly motivated to prevail in this hitherto male-exclusive occupational field, and did not cultivate unrealistic expectations about their life in the military. They entered the social space of the military well-informed. Nevertheless, some doubts did remain on their side, but, generally speaking, at a relatively low intensity level. Yet the analysis revealed considerable potential for future trouble. Here, it was the harmonization of occupational and family demands on the one hand, and the notable differences and gaps in attitudes of men and women that may translate into behavior in the social interaction of men and women in the Bundeswehr on the other, that must be mentioned.

This interpretation is strengthened by notable changes in the attitudes of male soldiers between 2000 and 2002. Indeed, a comparison of the data from the survey of male soldiers in 2000 with those of the SOWI's general armed forces survey of 2002 shows that the skepticism with regard to the physical and military capabilities of women and to military effectiveness had become more pronounced in the meantime.



Sources: SOWI Male Soldiers Survey 2000; SOWI Soldiers Survey 2002

Figure 4: Male Soldiers Attitudes towards the Integration of Women (2000 – 2002); Percent “Agree.”

Thus, the researchers argued that problems would probably emerge only over the middle- and long-term, paradoxically in the course of a “normalization process.” This pointed to the necessity of continued efforts in managing gender relations in the Bundeswehr, of structurally and persistently establishing gender mainstreaming training programs within the organization. The social integration of female soldiers was to be perceived as a permanent effort. Establishing, maintaining, and promoting the social integration of servicewomen was a constant challenge requiring persistent attention. The recommendation, then, was to pay increased attention to the social side of integration, as well as to somehow accommodate both “greedy institutions,” i.e., the family and the military. In this regard, steps thus far undetermined were added to the discussion, namely: (1) the introduction of part-time working schemes and childcare policies in the Bundeswehr; (2) the creation of a surplus pool of personnel that would compensate for maternity and family leave; and (3) the “permanentization” and intensification of gender mainstreaming programs.

The Ministry of Defense did take up some of these recommendations. It established, in a pilot project, twelve so-called family care centers all over Germany, which include various types of childcare ranging from childcare throughout the Bundeswehr itself to childcare in cooperation with local institutions and companies. Further on, *Zentrum Innere Führung*'s gender training program was modified and subsequently referred to the manual, Acting as Partners (*Partnerschaftlich handeln*), of the *Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung*, which was adapted to the military.¹⁹ This program followed a more decentralized approach and thus brought gender and integration training to military training and education institutions. The program was launched in 2003.²⁰ From then on, it was no longer a separate section in military education, but was to become a basic element of military education. Last, but not least, the Bundeswehr began debating the options and possibilities of making working hours more flexible and implemented a gender mainstreaming program in cooperation with the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs.²¹ Here, the debate focused on adapting the civilian Law on Mainstreaming (*Bundesgleichstellungsgesetz*) to the military sphere, which was eventually accomplished and put into practice in 2005. This Law on Mainstreaming in the Military (*Soldatengleichstellungsdurchsetzungsgesetz*) takes a recruitment and human resources perspective and tries to improve the attractiveness of the Bundeswehr as an employer by various means that aid the work-life balance and prevent discrimination against

¹⁹ Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung, ed., *Partnerschaftlich handeln: Mitarbeiterorientierte Personalpolitik in der Ausbildung. Ein Bausteinmanual für TrainerInnen und AusbilderInnen* (Cologne: Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung, 2001).

²⁰ For an evaluation of the program see Michael Hahn and Cornelia Helferrich, *Gender-Fragen in männlich dominierten Organisationen. Erfahrungen mit der Fortbildung “Partnerschaftlich Handeln” bei der Bundeswehr* (Cologne: Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung, 2007).

²¹ Michael Meuser and Claudia Neusüß, *Gender Mainstreaming. Konzepte, Handlungsfelder, Instrumente* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004).

women.²² In this vein, for example, it allows for part-time work and telecommuting in the military for family reasons, and calls for the election of Mainstreaming Commissioners (*Gleichstellungsbeauftragte*). Furthermore, it aims to double the percentage of women in the military from 23% in the medical services to 50%, and from some 6% on average in the non-medical services to 15%. Though affirmative action measures were consciously left aside, one instrument to achieve this is to employ positive discrimination of female service members in cases in which the male and the female applicant for a military position show equal performance. In this situation, the Ministry of Defense commissioned a further study on gender integration in the German armed forces.

The Integration Climate in 2005 and in 2011

Following this, the SOWI research project was resumed and another research module started that aimed at evaluating the integration climate in the Bundeswehr, first in 2005 and then in 2011.²³

The first study in 2005 again used a questionnaire that was sent to more than 5,300 male and female soldiers.²⁴ The data showed a continuingly high willingness of female soldiers to meet the performance of male soldiers and to successfully integrate into the military. They usually followed a policy of adapting to the military organizational culture that they found, and which was defined by men. Accordingly, the data revealed phenomena of “women-prejudiced-against-women,”²⁵ i.e., female soldiers took over the reservations and the stereotypes of male soldiers towards women in the military.

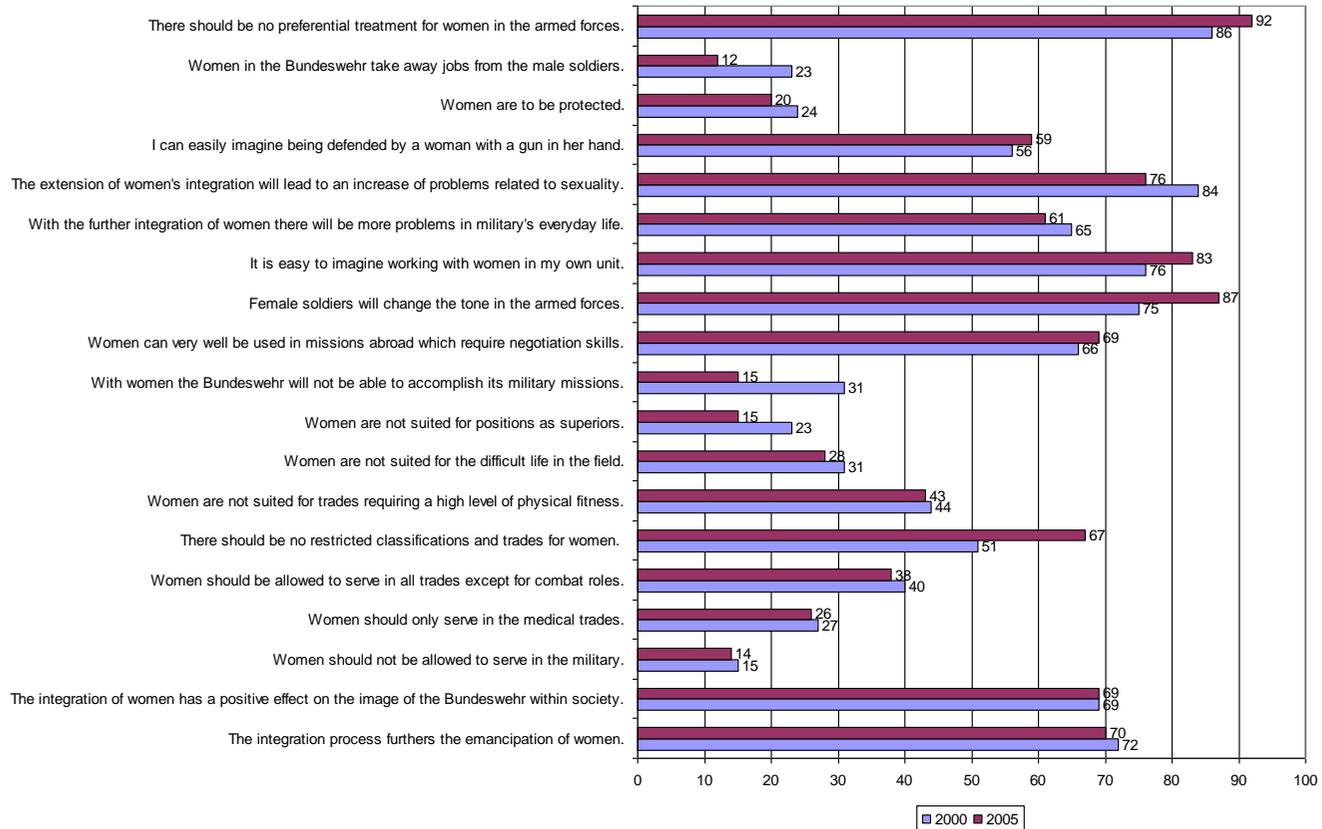
More important for the purposes at hand, however, are the data for the male soldiers. When comparing men’s attitudes and opinions as they came up in this study with those of male soldiers in the study of the year 2000 (see Figure 5), there were clear signs of a more positive attitude towards the integration of women that can be inferred from responses to a number of items. Most importantly, in 2005 about 2/3 of the men agreed to the unrestricted access of women to the Bundeswehr, compared to about 50% in 2000. In addition, the percentage of men who viewed female superiors critically was eight per-

²² Maja Apelt, Cordula Dittmer, and Anne Mangold, “Die Bundeswehr auf dem Weg zur Gleichstellung der Geschlechter?,” in *Frauen im Militär. Empirische Befunde und Perspektiven zur Integration von Frauen in die Streitkräfte*, ed. Jens-Rainer Ahrens, et al. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2005), 123.

²³ Gerhard Kümmel, *Truppenbild mit Dame. Eine sozialwissenschaftliche Begleituntersuchung zur Integration von Frauen in die Bundeswehr*, SOWI Report 81 (Strausberg: SOWI, 2008); Id., *Truppenbild ohne Dame? Eine sozialwissenschaftliche Begleituntersuchung zum aktuellen Stand der Integration von Frauen in die Bundeswehr*, Research Report (Potsdam: Zentrum für Militärgeschichte und Sozialwissenschaften der Bundeswehr, 2014).

²⁴ Kümmel, *Truppenbild mit Dame*.

²⁵ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, “Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women,” *American Journal of Sociology* 82:5 (1977): 980; see also Bettina Heintz, Eva Nadai and Regula Fischer, *Ungleich unter Gleichen. Studien zur geschlechtsspezifischen Segregation des Arbeitsmarktes* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1997), 44.



Source: SOWI Male Soldiers' Survey 2000; SOWI Integration Survey 2005
 Figure 5: Male Soldiers' Attitudes (2000–2005); Percent "Agree."

cent points less than before. Also, considerably less male soldiers than before thought that female soldiers would take away their jobs. Instructive also is that the percentage of those men who feared that the German armed forces could not meet their military missions was cut by half.

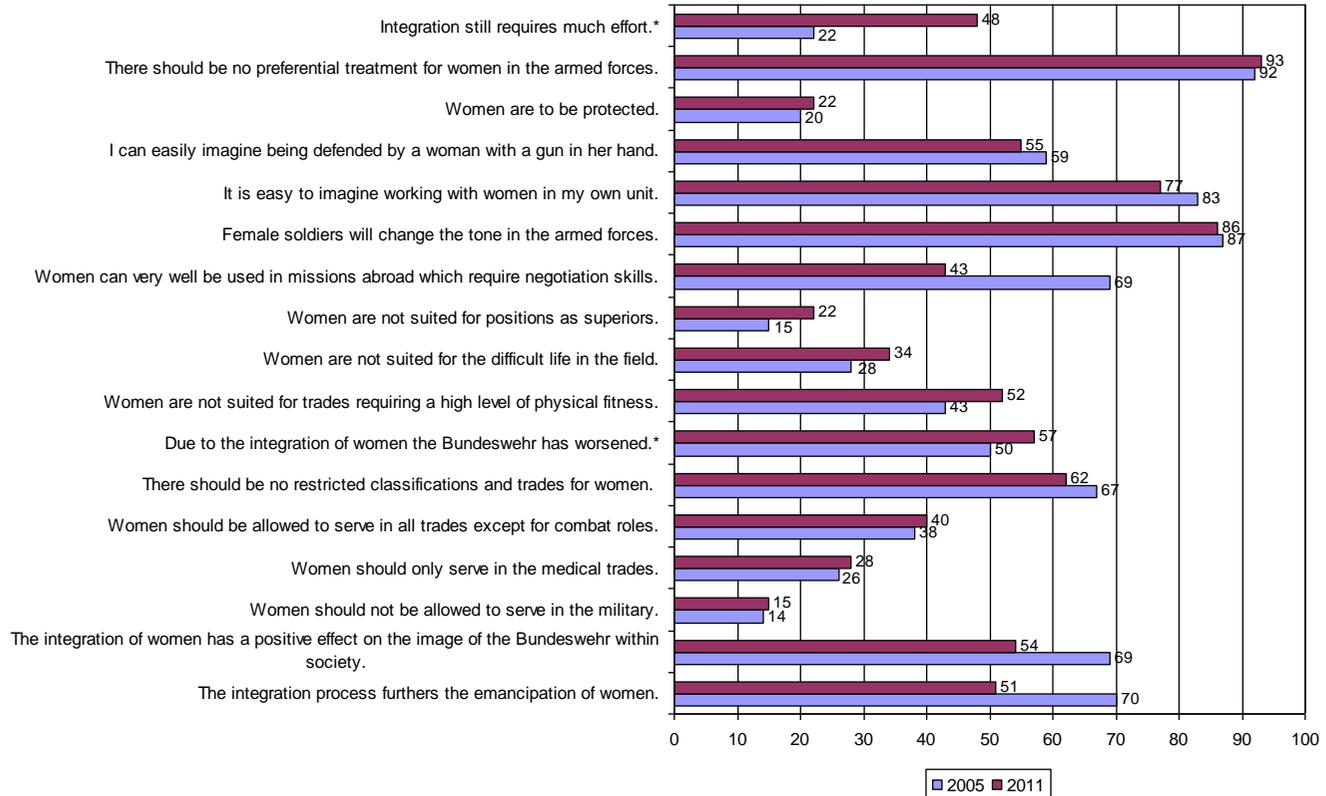
Yet, the study revealed findings that gave reason for concern. The data showed that men and women differed in basic attitudes and norms. In general, compared to female soldiers, male soldiers adhered to a more negative general image of human beings, showed more patriotism, and were more inclined to advocate an active foreign policy for Germany and to use military means and military force. Next, with regard to some items, there was no change between 2000 and 2005. For example, the percentage of men who deem women physically incapable for the military remained almost the same. In addition, the susceptibility of men to violations of gender justice increased, which was largely due to the Law of Mainstreaming in the Military. At the same time, about 28 % of male soldiers explicitly viewed the performance of female soldiers as worse than that of men, and between 1/5–1/4 of men stated they did not have confidence in female soldiers in military missions abroad. Lastly, almost 4 % of women reported having been the object of attempted or perpetrated sexual violence and rape.

Given these findings, the study argued for the resumption of specific gender training in order to tackle the issues that turned out to be problematic and, in the end, to uphold the military readiness, performance, and effectiveness of the Bundeswehr.

In 2011, ten years after the unrestricted opening of the German armed forces to women, questionnaires were sent to 8,500 women, i.e., every second female service member at the time, and to 6,000 men. Responses came in from some 3,000 female and close to 1,800 male soldiers.²⁶

According to the data, there were some problems that both male and female soldiers identified. Both men and women reported a decreasing attractiveness of the Bundeswehr as an employer. In this regard also, both sexes perceived striking a balance between work and life as a Bundeswehr soldier to be very difficult. Apart from that, the study proved sexual harassment to be a continuing phenomenon in the military, with 3 % of the female soldiers reporting having been sexually assaulted and raped in the Bundeswehr. Nevertheless, female soldiers showed a robust willingness to perform well as soldiers. Some other findings even pointed towards improvement of the integration climate in the Bundeswehr. In this vein, for example, the percentage of men who expected an increase of problems in military everyday life decreased from 61 % in 2005 to 55 % in 2011. Furthermore, one could observe some tendencies towards mental and attitudinal congruence between men and women, which may further integration. While in 2005 45 % of women advocated an active foreign policy for Germany, by 2011 this increased to 57 %. Also, in 2011, more women viewed the use of military force to advance national interests to be necessary in some cases (65 %) than in 2005 (50 %). In addition, between 2005 and 2011, the confidence of female soldiers in their own capabilities and performance had grown quite considerably.

²⁶ Kümmel, *Truppenbild ohne Dame*.



Source: SOWI Integration Survey 2005, SOWI Integration Survey 2011; *: SOWI Soldiers Survey 2003, SOWI Integration Survey 2011

Figure 6: Male Soldiers' Attitudes (2005 – 2011); Percent "Agree."

Overall, however, the data clearly point to a strain on the integration climate in the Bundeswehr on the side of male soldiers between 2005 and 2011. This is illustrated by the men's responses to quite a few items. Some of the most important ones are as follows: in 2005, 28% of the male service members perceived women as unsuited for the demanding life in the field; in 2011, this percentage was 34%. Compared to 44% of men who in 2005 deemed women unable to serve in physically demanding functions, more than every second man argued so in 2011 (52%). In addition, the skepticism of men with regard to women in positions as military superiors had become more nuanced between 2005 (15%) and 2011 (22%). At the same time, the number of men who perceived a positive discrimination of women violating the principle of equality of treatment increased between 2005 and 2011. More men thought that the performance of women was rated too positively by military superiors (51% compared to 39%), that women had better career perspectives (62% compared to 53%), and that military superiors treated female soldiers in a better way (33% compared to 15%). Also, there were more men in 2011 compared to 2005 who perceived a loss of military effectiveness, and who thought that the Bundeswehr had undergone a negative development due to women's integration. There were also less men who trusted female soldiers with regard to military missions abroad, and who thought it possible to work well with women. Lastly, as a general impression, the number of men who thought that integration would require much further effort more than doubled from 22% in 2005 to 48% in 2011.

The basic finding of this research, the strain of the integration climate on the side of male soldiers, was explained by the fact that the Bundeswehr had paid less attention to the issue of integrating women into the armed forces for quite some time, and that other things ranked higher on the agenda – such as the suspension of conscription and, in particular, the military missions abroad, foremost the mission in Afghanistan. Given this finding, the study advocated resuming the gender integration program and making it visible on its own.

The study was released for publication after Ursula von der Leyen became the first female Minister of Defense in German history in December 2013 and was presented to the public in late January 2014. This was clearly a sign of renewed attention to this issue and of renewed resolve to do something to improve the situation. Thus, in July 2014, the study was broadly discussed during a high-ranking symposium at the Führungsakademie in Hamburg, including a keynote speech by the Minister of Defense. Here, the findings of the study were put into context and compared to the gender situation in different institutions, such as businesses, the Federal Police, and the armed forces of other countries. Following this symposium, *Zentrum Innere Führung* was asked to establish working groups on certain topics. This is already well under way and it is expected that these working groups may come up with concrete proposals on how to improve the integration climate in the Bundeswehr by the end of 2015.

Conclusion

By way of concluding the present article, the author aims to present the empirical findings in a theoretical perspective. There are several avenues to do this. Those presented as follows are based on a gender and neo-institutionalist approach.

With regard to gender, it can safely be said that the gender system in Germany as well as in modern societies in general is subject to change. In the analysis of Norbert Elias, this is part of what he calls an “emancipatory trend.”²⁷ Hence, the overall direction seems to point to full-scale equality of women vis-à-vis men both in formal and in real terms. Nevertheless, this process might be neither one-dimensional nor smooth, thus constituting the need for more, and more comprehensive, research. The question then is whether and to what extent the German armed forces are involved in and affected by these processes. The empirical studies presented above point to an affirmative answer, i.e., the Bundeswehr cannot distance itself from developments going on in the greater society. Nevertheless, it may be too far-fetched to hypothesize or assume civil-military congruence in this regard.²⁸

The attitudes of German male soldiers towards the integration of women presented above clearly indicate the necessity to speak of masculinity in terms of masculinities.²⁹ Quite a few men display modern conceptions of a man’s and a woman’s role in society. Yet, resistance can also be observed and, as a reaction to the perceived shifting gender order, a renewed emphasis on traditional gender images. Hence, focusing on men, one may distinguish four different types: traditional men, insecure men, pragmatic men, and new men.³⁰ Those men cultivating reservations against the integration of women into the armed forces may be grouped on the basis of the two different sources that guide their thinking and nourish their reservations.

The first type or group may be called the *traditionalists*. Their images of the military, the soldier, of men and women, and of the division of labor among the sexes within society are the classical, traditional ones. The preference for denying women access to the military and for confining them to certain classifications and trades is thus based on the binary construction of men and women, which, *inter alia*, ascribes to males the roles of fighting, killing, and protecting, while females are ascribed the roles of caring, being protected, and giving birth to and bringing up children; thus, male aggressiveness is

²⁷ Norbert Elias, *Studien über die Deutschen. Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1989), 33–37.

²⁸ Hanne Isabell Schaffer, *Lebenskonzepte und Zeiterfahrungen junger Männer. Zur Bedeutung gewandelter Lebensvorstellungen für die Bundeswehr* (Munich: SOWI, 1992).

²⁹ Robert W. Connell, *Der gemachte Mann. Konstruktion und Krise von Männlichkeiten* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1999); Michael Meuser, *Geschlecht und Männlichkeit. Soziologische Theorie und kulturelle Deutungsmuster* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1998).

³⁰ Paul M. Zulehner and Rainer Volz, *Männer im Aufbruch. Wie Deutschlands Männer sich selbst und wie Frauen sie sehen. Ein Forschungsbericht*, 3rd ed. (Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 1999); Therese Steffen, ed., *Masculinities – Maskulinitäten. Mythos – Realität – Repräsentation – Rollendruck* (Stuttgart – Weimar: J.B. Metzler, 2002).

juxtaposed with female peacefulness.³¹ In this sense, it may be inferred that the military in general (and the Bundeswehr, also) may be particularly attractive to men who deem the military as a place where the world is still in balance, i.e., where the traditional gender system is still valid. Yet traditionalist thinking is not the only source of reservations, nor is it necessarily the predominant one.

A second type or group may be referred to as the *status inconsistent*s. They perceive women as a socio-economic threat because of the increasing competition in the workplace due to the presence of female soldiers. This perception is based on the grounds that their socioeconomic and professional situation, and hence their future, is insecure. In addition, they fear that they themselves will be discriminated against and that women will be given preferential treatment. In their view, it is they who are put at a disadvantage, and not the women. The *status inconsistent*s can typically be found among the younger and contract soldiers, i.e., the shorter- and longer-service volunteers. Here, indeed, the socio-economic, workplace-related competition from women is much more real than for career service members. Male soldiers in the medical services who had already been working with women prior to the ECJ ruling showed surprisingly strong reservations. It could have been assumed that gender relations in the medical service, i.e., in an area where the integration of women into the military had a substantial history, were, or in the meantime have become smooth. However, once the fact that women in the medical service were exempt from guard duty in the past—a task that had to be done by male soldiers in the medical service—is taken into account, it becomes clear that the reservations of men had some real substance, and that there was a subjective feeling of having not been treated equally, along with a sense that justice in gender relations was not assured in the workplace.³² Because of this suspicion of or belief in reverse discrimination, they explicitly pointed to the necessity of equality of treatment of men and women in the armed forces.

In empirical reality these two types may very well overlap. Nevertheless, distinguishing between them analytically is important because underlying them are two different sources motivating the negative attitudes towards the ongoing inclusion of women into the armed forces, which in turn necessitates a broader approach in managing this issue and therefore different tactics in dealing with these attitudes. The two types identified, the *traditionalist* and the *status inconsistent*, resonate with the findings of socio-psychological research on stereotypes. Negative attitudes towards women—just like

³¹ Margarete Mitscherlich, *Die friedfertige Frau. Eine psychoanalytische Untersuchung zur Aggression der Geschlechter* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1985); Jean Bethke Elshtain, *Women and War* (New York: Basic Books, 1987); Tordis Batscheider, *Friedensforschung und Geschlechterverhältnis. Zur Begründung feministischer Fragestellungen in der kritischen Friedensforschung* (Marburg: BdWi-Verlag, 1993); Karen O. Dunivin, "Military Culture: Change and Continuity," *Armed Forces & Society* 20:4 (1994): 531–547; Ruth Seifert, *Militär, Kultur, Identität. Individualisierung, Geschlechterverhältnisse und die soziale Konstruktion des Soldaten* (Bremen: Edition Temmen, 1996); Meuser, *Geschlecht*.

³² Hans Werner Bierhoff, Ronald L. Cohen, and Jerald Greenberg, eds., *Justice in Social Relations* (New York – London: Plenum, 1986).

those towards ethnic or racial minorities—may be seen as stereotypes and prejudices following the classical definition by Gordon Allport.³³ Several decades ago, stereotypes and prejudices against women were more openly expressed. This situation has changed remarkably because of the observed significant shifts in the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and politico-cultural spheres.³⁴ In general, living conditions, education, and job opportunities for women have improved substantially in recent decades; also, socio- and politico-culturally, in many societies women are increasingly considered equal to men. This points to the formation of perceptions in society that are based on images of egalitarianism.³⁵ Nevertheless, it is hardly possible to argue that gender-based discrimination in the workplace and in society at large has been completely eliminated in modern societies. Rather, discrimination against women can be observed when examining the division of labor in the families and in the ratio of women working in the top echelons of business, politics, and academia.

However, in the recent past, the phenomenology of these discriminating attitudes towards women has changed. Open, manifest expressions of prejudices against women have become less visible, whereas subtle forms have increasingly shaped the gender landscape. In the literature on sexism at least two forms of sexism are distinguished: (1) *traditional sexism* characterized by an emphasis on differences between the sexes, a belief in the inferiority of women compared to men, an adherence to classical gender roles, and a strong opposition towards women assuming non-traditional roles; and (2) *modern sexism* consisting of denying the persistence of discrimination against women, criticizing the economic and political demands of women, and strongly opposing any affirmative action measures on behalf of women.³⁶

In addition to this, the empirical findings of the research on the integration of women into the Bundeswehr corroborate Rosabeth Moss Kanter's concept of tokenism. This concept refers to Georg Simmel's work on the implications of the number of members of

³³ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley, 1954).

³⁴ Ronald Inglehart, *Kultureller Umbruch. Wertwandel in der westlichen Welt* (Frankfurt am Main – New York: Campus, 1989); Bernard Schäfers and Wolfgang Zapf, eds., *Handwörterbuch zur Gesellschaft Deutschlands* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1998).

³⁵ Janet T. Spence and Eugene D. Hahn, "The Attitudes Toward Women Scale and Attitudes Change in College Students," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21 (1997): 17–34; Jean M. Twenge, "Attitudes Toward Women, 1970-1995: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21 (1997): 35–51.

³⁶ Francine Tougas, et al., "Neosexism: Plus Ça Change, Plus C'est Pareil," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 21:8 (1995): 842–849; Janet K. Swim and Laurie L. Cohen, "Overt, Covert, and Subtle Sexism. A Comparison Between the Attitudes Toward Women and Modern Sexism Scales," *Psychology of Women Quarterly* 21 (1997): 103–118; Thomas Eckes and Iris Six-Materna, "Leugnung von Diskriminierung: Eine Skala zur Erfassung des modernen Sexismus," *Zeitschrift für Sozialpsychologie* 29:3 (1998): 224–238; Anke Schmermund, "Gründe für die Unterrepräsentanz von Frauen in Führungspositionen und die Notwendigkeit von Frauenförderung. Die Bewertung einer Personalentscheidung auf Führungsebene in Abhängigkeit vom Geschlecht der urteilenden und der sich bewerbenden Personen" (diploma thesis, department of psychology, Philipps-University Marburg, 1998).

a smaller group within a larger group for social interaction, and has already been developed in the 1970s. Her organization-sociological study, “Men and Women of the Corporation,” is considered the classical reference to her concept.³⁷ The meaning of the word “token” is “sign,” and implies that the members of a minority group within the larger dominant group are not considered individuals, but representatives and symbols of the minority group at large. This severely impacts their status and role within the larger group. Kanter speaks of “tokens” if the smaller social category differs from the larger group in a central criterion and makes up less than 15 % of all the members of the group.³⁸ In the present case, this central criterion is biological sex, which places women as a minority group in the larger group of the military organization, which is dominated by men. This, then, applies to most militaries in the world, as there are few countries in which female soldiers constitute more than 15 % of the military.

In essence, then, for Kanter the social interactions between the members of the minority and the dominant group are a function of the percentage ratio of the two groups in a given organization, implying that the negative interaction effects for the minority group decrease as the share of the minority group members increases.³⁹ Her prediction is that with a minority group of up to 15 % (“skewed group”) of the overall group, social interactions between the members of the minority and the majority group are the most problematic. Here, the most intense integration problems will occur. As Kanter writes, the “form of a group with a skewed distribution of social types generates certain perceptions of the tokens by the dominants. These perceptions determine the interaction dynamics between tokens and dominants and create the pressures dominants impose on tokens.”⁴⁰

Three aspects come into play here, which lead to specific interaction dynamics. First, there is visibility. This implies that the term token indicates that members of the minority group can easily be identified as belonging to the minority group, and they are also perceived as symbols of the minority group, which puts them in the position of being attentively and critically observed by the dominants, which Kanter refers to as “overobservation.”⁴¹ In practice, this means that the “poor” performance of a female soldier is not considered to be poor the performance of an individual female soldier, but rather signals the poor performance of all female soldiers, i.e., of the minority group at large.⁴² This puts enormous pressure on the members of the minority group to perform well.

³⁷ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Men and Women of the Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 208.

³⁹ Rosabeth Moss Kanter, “Some Effects of Proportions on Group Life: Skewed Sex Ratios and Responses to Token Women,” in *Women and Symbolic Interaction*, ed. Mary J. Deegan and Michael Hill (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1987), 297.

⁴⁰ Kanter, *Men and Women*, 282 f.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 210.

⁴² Christine Cnossen, “Frauen in Kampftruppen: Ein Beispiel für ‘Tokenisierung,’” in *Soziale Konstruktionen – Militär und Geschlechterverhältnis*, ed. Christine Eifler and Ruth Seifert (Münster: Westfälisches Dampfboot, 1999), 240.

Second, assimilation refers to processes and effects persuading tokens to act as the dominants expect them to. Thus, they agree to stereotypical female role definitions and prescriptions ascribed to the social category of women by the dominant male group. This also implies that, as a general rule, women do not challenge the organizational culture in the military that has been shaped by men. Rather, they take over and assimilate to the present organizational culture.

Third, polarization means that tokens become the object of strategies of division by the dominant group. Confronted with the hitherto largely unknown presence of women in the military, male soldiers heighten the boundaries of the dominant organizational culture, stress differences instead of similarities, and try to establish a certain distance towards the tokens. Usually, this leads to the marginalization and isolation of the tokens. Sexual harassment is one such polarization strategy.

Although there is some empirical evidence that Kanter's mathematical and linear approach is imperfect,⁴³ others have corroborated her findings.⁴⁴ The present empirical findings, in turn, can very well be contextualized within Kanter's concept of tokenism.

Lastly, the present empirical findings can be placed within organization theory. Organization theory suggests that there is a tendency towards homogeneity in organizations leading towards institutional isomorphism; that is, in this case, over time military organizations will become increasingly alike with regard to the role of women in the military. In their work, Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell explore the "startling homogeneity of organizational forms and practices."⁴⁵ To this end, they highlight that "in the initial stages of their life cycles, organizational fields display considerable diversity in approach and form." Yet, "once a field becomes well established (...), there is an inexorable push towards homogenization."

Furthermore, in the case of the German armed forces, such institutional isomorphism is furthered by the organizational pressure that comes from the membership of Germany in NATO. Indeed, NATO members share central values and are culturally, economically, and politically quite similar: all democracies, all market economies, all fairly open societies, all part of a special in-group communication within NATO. There is a close

⁴³ See, e.g., Scott J. South, Charles W. Bonjean, William T. Markham, and Judy Corder, "Social structure and intergroup interaction: men and women of the federal bureaucracy," *American Sociological Review* 47 (1982): 587–99; Nina Toren and Vered Kraus, "The effects of minority size on women's position in academia," *Social Forces* 65 (1987): 1090–1100; Janice D. Yoder, "Rethinking tokenism: Looking beyond numbers," *Gender and Society* 5:2 (1991): 178–192; Jutta Allmendinger and J. Richard Hackman, "Akzeptanz oder Abwehr? Die Integration von Frauen in professionelle Organisationen," *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 46:2 (1994): 238–258; Heintz et al., *Ungleich*, op. cit.

⁴⁴ See Eve Spangler, Marsha A. Gordon, and Ronald M. Pipkin, "Token Women: An Empirical Test of Kanter's Hypothesis," *American Journal of Sociology* 84:1 (July 1978): 160–70; see also Birgit Riegraf, *Geschlecht und Mikropolitik. Das Beispiel betrieblicher Gleichstellung. Opladen* (1996).

⁴⁵ Paul J. DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell, "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48:2 (1983): 148.

military cooperation among NATO countries and a NATO-wide transnational military and organizational culture.⁴⁶ This generates socialization and convergence effects across NATO Member States and their militaries. Taken together, these theoretical considerations suggest that female integration into the militaries of NATO countries would look quite similar.

In addition, one may assume that such pressure towards institutional isomorphism does not only come from military organizations, but also from other organizations and institutions. In particular, one may think of the military as a state institution, i.e., the armed forces are contextualized by society in the ensemble of other state institutions. In these institutions, gender mainstreaming is well underway and sometimes further developed than in the military. This urges the military to also take the path of gender mainstreaming. Furthermore, since state institutions, and thus also the Bundeswehr, are in need of societal legitimacy, they are requested and feel obliged to follow the (perceived) expectations of society. Very much the same effect is being exerted by the fact that the military competes with civilian employers in the labor market in order to meet its human resources and recruitment needs. Therefore, the armed forces must closely observe and sometimes follow practices in the business world, for instance with regard to job opportunities for women and work-life balance in order to remain an attractive employer.

The empirical reality with regard to the integration of women into the armed forces reveals that although some trend towards institutional isomorphism does exist, there is no such thing as complete homogeneity. Rather, there is considerable variance to be observed. Sometimes, the militaries of the world respond to societal expectations and to societal legitimacy needs by establishing well-known rationality facades that merely feign or only partly respond to and follow these expectations. With regard to the present case, the integration of women into the Bundeswehr, we may well close by arguing that the litmus test for such institutions is currently underway.

⁴⁶ Joseph L. Soeters, "Value Orientations in Military Academies: A Thirteen Country Study," *Armed Forces & Society* 24:1 (1997): 24.

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