

# THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN ALBANIAN ARMED FORCES

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General Studies

by

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## ABSTRACT

THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN ALBANIAN ARMED FORCES, by MAJ Lorena PAPA, 98 pages.

The purpose of this research is to recommend ways to make the process of the integration of women and gender equality in combat units in Albanian Armed Forces more adaptable and efficient. Though significant changes have been done to increase of the number of women in the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF), there is still a gap in gender equality and in the opportunities that offer further advancement in the military career. An understanding of the history and roles of women in Albanian society will assist in analyzing the issues faced in the military concerning female career progression. Specifically, this research project will contribute the following: Highlight the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces; Research the critical role of Albanian society in military culture; and Explore the ways different countries integrate women in combat units.

The low representation of women in senior ranks, in decision-making and commanding positions, as well as the lack of women carrying combat roles in combat units, amplifies the necessity to implement new policies that support the integration of women in all spheres of the Armed Forces, especially those that offer equal leadership opportunities and promote diversity and inclusion. Women make many important contributions to the Army especially in the combat service support and combat support branches, and integrating women into Armies both within and outside Albania only makes the fighting force stronger. It is also necessary to break the glass ceiling and cultivate a culture and attitude of acceptance and equity within the military of the Albanian Armed Forces.

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## ACRONYMS

AAF	Albanian Armed Forces
CAF	Canadian Armed Forces
IDF	Israel Defense Forces
GS	General Staff
MOD	Ministry of Defense
NAF	Norwegian Armed Forces
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non Commissioned Officer
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
WWII	World War II



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

We must get more women into leadership positions around the world. We must do better in having women have strong voices and articulate those voices at the table . . . We need to empower them. We need to hold firm to our commitments on women, peace, and security, and say that if women's voices are not present, we are failing.

—Clare Hutchinson, NATO Special Representative for Women, Peace and Security, “Peace and Security Agenda: A Conversation with Clare Hutchinson”

Albania has a long military history dating back to ancient times. The ancient Illyrian army was a noteworthy army organized to operate in times of peace and war. Centuries that followed marked significant developments for the Albanian military especially during the occupation by the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century. At that time, Albania was organized in several principalities. Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg, the prince of Kastrioti principality and a brilliant military leader, joined the Albanian princes' forces and organized a small army, highly mobile in the remote terrain and with a high combative spirit. Over 25 years, from 1443 to 1468, he led the Albanian forces and defended his country and western Christian Europe, from one of the most superior military power of that time, the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

From that time and on, the military was only locally organized until 1878 when the League of Prizren was created, almost four centuries after the death of Gjergj Kastrioti-Skanderbeg. The League of Prizren brought a new development on the

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<sup>1</sup> Akademia e Shkencave e Shqiperise, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. 1 (Tirana, AL: Shtepia Botuese Toena, 2002), 349.

Albanian movement for gaining autonomy from the Turkish Empire and ensuring territorial integrity.<sup>2</sup> To achieve its goals, the League created the Albanian National Guard based on a volunteer military. This military force did not have a long life because it was dissolved after the fall of the League of Prizren in 1881.

The most significant achievement for the Albanian military came after the Declaration of Independence on November 28, 1912. Only six days after the declaration of Independence, on December 4, 1912, the Albanian National Army was established. During World War II, the military organization called the National Liberation Army was organized to fight for the liberation of the country in brigade and division size units.

After the end of WWII, the Communist system governed Albania for more than 40 years. After breaking with the major ideological powers of Russia (in 1961) and China (in 1978), Albania followed politics that led to the isolation of the country, and as a result, the main focus of the government went to the defense of the Albanian territory.<sup>3</sup> The regime built a vast military structure, called Peoples Armed Forces, organized in more than 22 Divisions with around 113,500 active personnel.<sup>4</sup>

However, significant changes happened to the military organization after the collapse of the communist regime in 1991. The AAF had to undergo an in-depth

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<sup>2</sup> Akademia e Shkencave e Shqipërisë, *Historia e Popullit Shqiptar*, vol. 2 (Tirana, AL: Shtëpia Botuese Toena, 2002), 78.

<sup>3</sup> BBC News, “Albania Timeline,” 24 January 2012, accessed 13 October 2018, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country\\_profiles/1004984.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1004984.stm).

<sup>4</sup> Dilaver Goxhaj, “Shifrat e plota të Armatimit dhe Teknikës Luftarake që Kishte Shqipëria përpara ‘90-s,” *Gazeta Dita*, 23 July 2018, accessed 26 February 2019, <http://www.gazetadita.al/dy-video-ushtria-shqiptare-dikur-dhe-sot/>.

transformation process and to overcome many challenges such as the changes of the old military leadership, the adaption of new military education, and the downsizing of military personnel. The old model of the military education indoctrinated by the communist principals created an urgency of adopting a new military education curriculum based on the western philosophy for education and training in order to provide critical and creative thinking officers that would face the rapidly changing environment. The enormous changes on the military structure transitioning from 22 divisions and consuming more than 20 percent of the country's GDP before the 1990s, to a small thoroughly professional force with around 9,000 active personnel and with a budget about 2 percent of the country's GDP in 2018, was another challenge that brought many social issues.<sup>5</sup> The Albanian government, under a multidimensional and complex transitional period, was unprepared with a legal framework to support the personnel that was forced to leave the Armed Forces; as a result, many military members found themselves unemployed.

Even though AAF had to deal with a long and complicated transitional period, the organization managed to generate a new professional force, able to fully accomplish the mission that derives from the Albanian constitution and to be interoperable with Albania's Allies and partners. The current Albanian Armed Forces consist of Land Force, Air Force, Navy, Support Command, and Training and Doctrine Command. Albania is a

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<sup>5</sup> Nazmi Cahani, "Transforming the Albanian Armed Forces, Overcoming the Challenges," (Strategy Project Paper, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, PA, March 2009), accessed 26 December 2018, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235039829\\_Transforming\\_the\\_Albanian\\_Armed\\_Forces\\_Overcoming\\_the\\_Challenges](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235039829_Transforming_the_Albanian_Armed_Forces_Overcoming_the_Challenges).

member of NATO since 2009 and continuously accomplishes its obligations and generates security in the region and beyond.

The general history of the AAF is usually laid without the mention of women. Though, several heroic women can be found in Albania's long history – one such example, Queen Teuta, reigning the Ardiaean Kingdom, part of Iliria (ancient region of the Albanian descend), and led its army from 230-228 B.C.<sup>6</sup> Another great example, Shote Galica, an Albanian brave fighter that fought against Serbs repression in Kosovo for several years from 1915 to 1927.<sup>7</sup>

However, the roles of Albanian women in the army were quite limited in the past. Imbedded within the history of the AAF, military employment of women dates back with their participation in the Albanian Armed Forces as early as World War II. Despite the low level of education and the lack of engagement in different spheres of life, more than 6,000 Albanian women joined the partisan war and fought side by side their male comrades. After WWII, the communist government that ruled Albania for more than 40 years, took many actions to improve the role of women in Albanian society. Women started to go to school to get a better education and, to work in different jobs that were previously deemed inappropriate for them. To put the women's emancipation in another level, in 1967, the Albanian government took a big step by offering the women the

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<sup>6</sup> Zymer Mehani, "Mbretresha Ilire – Teuta," *Une jam shqiptar* (blog), 9 August 2017, accessed 19 October 2018, <http://unejamshqiptar.net/blog/2017/08/09/mbretresha-ilire-teuta/>.

<sup>7</sup> Bedri Tahiri, "Shote Galica ne Letersine Shqiptare," *Albanian Press*, 11 March 2010, accessed 17 October 2018, <http://www.albaniapress.com/lajme/11147/SHOTE-GALICA-NE-LETTERSINE-SHQIPTARE.htm> l.

chance to join the Albanian Military Academy. All the young women that had graduated high school and had come from families with the appropriate background (supporting the communist government) were eligible to join the Military Academy. From 1967-1969, for the first time in the history of the Military Academy, 71 women were admitted into the school and received education and training identical to their male comrades'.<sup>8</sup> After being commissioned as officers, they integrated within the Army, Navy and Air Commands. The Military Academy commissioned its first 15 infantry women in 1970, who got assigned into different units.<sup>9</sup> A few of them progressed in commanding positions up to battalion level.<sup>10</sup> Women serving in the AAF played an important role as models for non-military women who were at the same time, increasing their roles and independence in society.<sup>11</sup>

Despite the considerable progress achieved during the Communist regime, the socio-economic problems and the unstable environment created by the hard political transition in 1991, had a massive impact in the society especially in changing the gender balance and reviving many patriarchal principles. Men were seen as more appropriate to

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<sup>8</sup> Kujtim Borici and Suzana Jahollari, *Oficeret shqiptare ne rrjedhen e historise* (Tirana, AL: Botime Enja, 2019), 10.

<sup>9</sup> Lida Grazhdani, *Pesha dhe bukuria e uniformes* (Tirana, AL: MEICO, 2014), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Borici and Jahollari, *Oficeret shqiptare ne rrjedhen e historise*. 65.

<sup>11</sup> Edlira Peço Baka, Etilda Slihi, and Eurona Leka, *Promoting Women in the Albanian Armed Force – From a Visible to an Operational Gender Balance* (Tirana, AL: Institute for Democracy and Mediation Centre for European and Security Affairs, June 2011), 3, accessed 20 November 2018, [http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PROMOTING-WOMEN-IN-THE-ALBANIAN-ARMED-FORCES\\_June-2011.pdf](http://idmalbania.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/PROMOTING-WOMEN-IN-THE-ALBANIAN-ARMED-FORCES_June-2011.pdf).

handle the harsh transition process and to take leadership responsibilities in different organizations including the AAF by directly influencing the role and position of women.

Until 1991, the AAF were organized only based on functions and not ranks. The new rank system law “Reassigning military ranks in Albanian Armed Forces” applied in the Armed Forces in 1991, shows that military women were not equally evaluated compared to male service members. Only 2 out of 70 female officers of class 1967-1969 were given the rank of lieutenant colonel and all the other females of that class and the following classes were given lower ranks. In 1992, because of the deep reforms taken in the Armed Forces and the effect of the new rank system a considerable number of female officers interrupted their military career.<sup>12</sup>

It took several years for the Albanian government, only by mid-2000, to get seriously engaged in achieving gender equality, increasing the participation of women in decision- making, and including them in leadership positions throughout different spheres of the society by implementing policies such as the National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality. The Ministry of Defense (MoD) adopted the recent National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020, seeking to promote the recruitment of women in the military, to increase the percentage of women in active duty, and help women in uniform develop their careers and take leadership positions.<sup>13</sup> Table 1 shows the women’s percentage per Force Command in the AAF.

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<sup>12</sup> Grazhdani, *Pesha dhe bukuria e uniformes*, 116.

<sup>13</sup> Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, *National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020* (Tirana, AL: Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, October 2016), 1, accessed 17 October 2018, <https://awenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/SKGJB-EN-web.pdf>.

Table 1. Female Military Service Status in 2016					
Service	Women	%	Men	%	Total
Army	161	7.2%	2095	92.8%	2256
Air Force	76	15.6%	413	84.4%	489
Navy	49	7.9%	575	92.1%	624
Support Command	173	14.8%	1000	85.2%	1173
TRADOC	73	19.5%	302	80.5%	375
MoD	91	26%	259	84.0%	258
GS	231	19.4%	1027	80.6%	1258
Total	854	14.0%	5675	86.0%	6525

*Source:* Albanian Human Resources Management Directorate, email to author, 25 January 2019.

The number of military women in the AAF in 2016 was 854, or 14.0 percent compared with the NATO average, which in the same year was 10.9 percent (2016).<sup>14</sup> Also in 2016, Albania had the highest percentage of women that served as reservist, with 35.5 percent, compared to the average of 10 percent of the total Reserve Service of NATO members and partner nations.<sup>15</sup> Strategic Document of Human Resources Management 2015-2019 of the MOD, aspires to reach the quota of 15 percent of women serving in the AAF by 2019.

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<sup>14</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), *Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives 2016* (Brussels, Belgium: NATO, 2017), 10, accessed 20 October 2018, [https://www.nato.int/nato\\_static\\_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf\\_2017\\_11/20171122\\_2016\\_Summary\\_of\\_NRs\\_to\\_NCGP.pdf/](https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_11/20171122_2016_Summary_of_NRs_to_NCGP.pdf/).

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.



While the percentage of military women is higher in the organization, the majority of them (officers and NCOs) are in lower ranks, and only a few of them have made it to senior ranks (Lieutenant Colonels and Colonels). Throughout the long Albanian military history, only one woman so far has been promoted to one-star general, Brigadier General Manushaqe Shehu in 2016.<sup>16</sup> Few women have been members of the promotion commissions (boards). Women have taken fewer leadership positions, compared with the number in service. In 2017, only two Albanian female military personnel held decision-making positions as the Head of Directorates in the Ministry of Defense and General Staff out of 20 positions.<sup>17</sup>

In 2017, for the first time in Albanian military history, a female officer, Brigadier General Manushaqe Shehu, held a Force Commander Position, TRADOC Commander (changed in 2018). Currently, AAF does not have female officers assigned as company commanders or executive officers and up. Regarding the commanding positions such as platoon leaders or platoon sergeants, only 32 female officers and 40 female Noncommissioned Officers were assigned to work on those positions in different units. Most of those commanding slots where women are serving are part of combat service support organizations. There is no data regarding the number of military women leading or working in staff sections in S2/G2 or S3/G3 areas or assigned in commanding positions in combat units, despite the lack of laws or regulations that prohibit the

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<sup>16</sup> Albanian Armed Forces, “Forcat e Armatosura të RSH për Herë të Parë Kanë një Gjenerale Femër,” 22 November 2016, accessed 30 November 2018, <https://aaf.mil.al/te-fundit/4011-forcat-e-armatosura-te-rsh-per-here-te-pare-kane-nje-gjenerale-femer>.

<sup>17</sup> Albanian Human Resources Management Directorate, email to author, 25 January 2019.

assignment of women. In the following table, data are presented on female officer leadership and commanding slots in 2017.

Table 2. Female Officer in Leadership and Commanding Positions in 2017				
No.	Slot	Total	Female	Male
1	Force Commander	5	1	4
2	Platoon Commander	285	27	258
3	Executive Officer/Company	65	4	61
4	Crew Commander/Ship Captain	53	0	53
5	Total	408	32	376

*Source:* Albanian Human Resources Management Directorate, email to author, 25 January 2019.

Regarding enhancement of female representation in diplomatic mission or NATO Headquarters in 2017, there were respectively 5 military women out of 61 Albanian military representatives in these offices, and only one woman held a leading position as a military attaché.<sup>18</sup> All of the above examples supported by empirical data are significant indicators that show that participation of women in all spheres of the military structure is limited and women do not have an equal opportunity for advancement compared to their male colleagues.

#### Problem Statement

Over the past 15 years, the Albanian Ministry of Defense and General Staff have taken valuable steps to achieve positive integration of women by continuing to recruit

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<sup>18</sup> Albanian Human Resources Management Directorate email.

and increase the participation of women in the AAF. Though significant changes have occurred, there is still a gap in gender equality and in the opportunities that offer further advancement in the military career of females. The low representation of women in decision-making and commanding positions, as well as the lack of women in combat roles, are important indicators that show the necessity of implementing and enforcement of new policies that support the integration of women in all spheres of the Armed Forces, especially those that offer equal leadership opportunities and promote diversity and inclusion. It is also necessary to break the glass ceiling and cultivate a culture and attitude of acceptance and equity within the military of the Albanian Armed Forces.

#### Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to offer recommendations about gender integration, especially in combat units, and embrace the unique potential of women by increasing the role of women in leadership in the Albanian Armed Forces. This research will recommend ways to make the process of the integration of women and gender equality in combat units more adaptable and efficient. Specifically, this research project will contribute the following: Highlight the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces; Research the critical role of Albanian society in military culture; and Explore the ways different countries integrate women in combat units.

By encouraging women to participate fully in operational activities and giving them valuable leadership experience while competing as equals amongst their male colleagues, they have an equal chance of career advancement, and thus, reaching their full potential to the benefit of gender equality in the workforce and the AAF. An

understanding of the history and roles of women in Albanian society will assist in analyzing the issues faced in the military concerning female career progression.

### Research Questions

#### Primary Research Question

How can Albania overcome the most significant challenges to integrating women in Albanian Armed Forces, especially in combat units?

#### Secondary Questions

1. What is the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces and how does this role currently affect the integration of women in combat units?
2. What is the single greatest societal influence on military culture and the role of women in combat units in Albania?
3. How do other armies integrate women into combat units?

### Definition of Terms

The following terms will be used throughout the study:

Culture: The term culture is defined as “the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group; also: the characteristic features of everyday existence (such as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Merriam-Webster, “Culture,” accessed 21 October 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/culture>.

Gender: The term “gender” refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men.<sup>20</sup>

Combat units: The term “combat units” is defined as “a collective name in a system of administrative, military reference to those troops within national armed forces which participate in direct tactical land combat.”<sup>21</sup>

Leadership: The term “leadership” is defined as “the role or the process through which a person influences people by providing purpose, direction, and motivation to accomplish the mission and improve the organization.”<sup>22</sup>

Society: The term “society” is defined as “an organized group working together or periodically meeting because of common interests, beliefs, or profession.”<sup>23</sup>

AAF: The term “AAF” is defined as “Albanian Armed Forces, including the Army, Navy, Air Force, Support Command and Training and Doctrine Command.”

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<sup>20</sup> United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of the Women, “Gender,” accessed 21 October 2018, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions.htm>.

<sup>21</sup> Robert S. Rush, *Enlisted Soldier’s Guide*, 7th ed. (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole, 2006), 11.

<sup>22</sup> Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), Army Doctrine Reference Publication (ADRP) 6-22, *Army Leadership* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2012), 1-1.

<sup>23</sup> Merriam-Webster, “Society,” accessed 21 October 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/society>.

### Assumptions

1. The Albanian Ministry of Defense and General Staff will increase the number of women in the Armed Forces as planned.
2. Women will be assigned to leadership positions in combat units.
3. The researcher remained unbiased, and her gender and experience did not influence the analysis and conclusions of the research.

### Limitations

There are three significant limitations to conducting this research. The first is the short time available to conduct and conclude the research. The researcher will work very hard with the committee to ensure staying on track with deadlines.

The second limitation is that data regarding the role of women during World War II, and the role of women in the Albanian Armed Forces during the Communist regime is minimal. Since the author is residing in the United States, the ability to use materials that are found in the Albanian Armed Forces Archives is impossible. Despite this gap in information, the author will narrow the focus of this research project to existing data available through the Combined Armed Research Library (CARL) and online sources.

The third limitation is the lack of ability to conduct surveys. A survey on the perception of Albanian society and combat units' personnel on the integration of women regarding leadership positions especially in combat units is not feasible at this time.

### Delimitations

This study primarily focuses on the role of women in the Albanian Armed Forces since World War II. The researcher has restricted the data collection to the period from 1939- 2019.

### Scope

The scope of this research includes an analysis of the role of women in the Albanian Armed Forces from 1939-2019. The analysis of the role of women in World War II, the position of women during the Communist regime, and Post-Communist transformation of the society and the Armed Forces after 1990, form the basis to determine if the role of women in the military has been influenced by the changes in the Albanian cultural environment. The research analyzes the Albanian population after 1990 to understand if it affected the position of women in the Albanian Armed Forces.

The analysis of previous and current policies regarding the gender perspectives will offer a better understanding of all the actors involved in gender integration. These policies may one day support the progression of women to senior ranks, and operational leadership positions in the Albanian Armed Forces. The history and the effectiveness of military events in Canada, Israel, and Norway, countries that successfully have integrated women in combat units are analyzed to understand the complexity of gender integration in AAF.

### Summary

This chapter presented general information about the role of women in the Albanian Armed Forces and stated the need for finding ways to close the gender gap that

exists in the AAF. During the last decade, the number of women in the Albanian Armed Forces has increased, but their participation in all spheres of the military structure is still limited. Women do not have the same opportunities as their male' colleagues to acquire leadership positions, and there is a lack of trust in military culture for integrating women in combat units. This paper will offer some recommendations on how the Albanian Armed Forces can overcome the challenges of increasing the number of women, integrating them in leadership positions, and changing the male-dominated culture that exists in the military with respect to female progression.

Chapter 2 will provide information from a thorough literature review. Chapter 3 will outline the research methodology to analyze the information collected, Chapter 4 will analyze the information collected in Chapter 2 and will offer answers regarding secondary questions, and Chapter 5 will offer some conclusions and recommendations.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

The primary purpose of this study is to provide recommendations about gender integration, especially in combat units, and embracing the unique potential of women by increasing their role in leadership positions in the Albanian Armed Forces.

This chapter will provide a historical background to answer the research question through the thorough review of literature relevant to this topic. The literature review focused on the different phases of Albanian history, essential schools of thought on the subject of women in the military, and different policies that will be analyzed into four sections.

The first section is a review of literature about the position of women in Albanian society, and their role during World War II. The literary focus of this section is on the integration and the role of women in uniform in Albanian Armed Forces, and their contribution in influencing the overall Albanian society during the Communist system of government from 1945 to 1991.

The second section will analyze different resources in order to describe the significant changes that took place in Albania after the collapse of Communism in 1991. The specific investigation will focus on the ways political and social changes impacted the society of Albania and the role of women in it.

The focus of the third section is literature that shows the engagement of the Albanian Government, the Ministry of Defense and civilian society, in gender perspectives and gender equality in Albanian society over the last decade. This third section will also focus on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council

Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, including reports about the gender perspectives to be analyzed from NATO sources.

The final section will review sources about successful integration and the role of military women in Canada, Israel, and Norway. A detailed description of the history and the chronology of military events in those countries will help the researcher to understand the complexity and have a better picture of the issues and obstacles required to be overcome in order for successful integration to occur.

### Section I: Literature on Women and Society during World War II and the Communist System

The engagement of the Albanian women in World War II, especially in partisan activities changed many of the old attitudes about gender roles. It served as a catalyst for spiritual and mental emancipation of women and their involvement in many areas of life previously considered taboo to them. The analysis of the proceeding articles may help the reader to become familiar with the position of women in the Albanian society and to understand the specific contribution given during World War II.

*Gruaja në Luftë, një Mrekulli Shqiptare* (The Woman in War, an Albanian Miracle) journal article by Pellumb Xhufi provides essential information about the position of women in the society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and their contribution during WWII. According to the author, Albanian society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century was based mainly on prejudices and old concepts. The women were considered the “weak sex and

were intended to give birth to children and bring them up.”<sup>24</sup> Women by large scale were uneducated, and very few of them were involved in public activities out of the home.

Further, Xhufi examines the social and political changes in the Albanian society after the beginning of WWII. Albania aligned itself on the side of the Allies (against the Axis) and fought against the occupations with the Albanian Armed Forces, at that time called National Liberation Army. AAF was organized to fight for the liberation of the country in brigade and division size units, and part of these units were over 6,000 women.<sup>25</sup> Women’s involvement in the front line was a sign showing that Albanian society was breaking the old rules and mentality.

The author cites the head of the British military mission, General Edmond Davis in Albania in 1943, who felt surprised by women’s sudden engagement in the War. General Davis described courageous women in wartime as, “The partisan women who ruled and commanded, the women who fought in the same way as men and fell on the front line, who suffered in the Fascist prisons and did not escape from torture and death”.<sup>26</sup>

*Gruaja Shqiptare në Luftën Partizane*, (The Albanian Woman in Partisans’ War) written by Bernard Zotaj offers a broad picture of the engagement of women in World War II. He discusses the number of Albanian partisans’ women and their contribution to

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<sup>24</sup> Pellumb Xhufi, “Gruaja në luftë, një mrekulli shqiptare,” *Gazeta Shqip*, November 2, 2014, accessed October 12, 2018, <http://gazetashqip.com/lajme/2014/11/02/gruaja-ne-lufte-nje-mrekulli-shqiptare/>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

combat units during World War II. Women were assigned and successfully executed a large number of tasks in attacking brigades and divisions. In some of the attacking units, for instance, in the III, V, XX, and XVIII Brigades, women were approximately 30 percent of the total number of the partisans.<sup>27</sup> For example in thirteen partisan brigades, approximately 100 women were responsible for the youth education at the brigade, battalion and company level.<sup>28</sup> For their great heroism and high acts of bravery during the war, many women were honored by the government and received the title, People's Hero of Albania.

One of the most prominent heroes of Albania during World War II is Margarita Tutulani (1924 - 1943). Despite her young age, she was a leading figure in one of the anti-Fascist protests that drew thousands of people on November 28, 1942, in Berat, her hometown.<sup>29</sup> A couple of months later on July 4, 1943, the fascist government arrested her and her brother. They were both tortured while in prison in front of each other and then they were killed.<sup>30</sup> Her extraordinary bravery and brutal death became an inspiration for many young people to join the resistance against Fascism in Albania.

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<sup>27</sup> Bernard Zotaj, "Gruaja Shqiptare në Luftën Partizane," *Gazeta Telegraf*, 5 November 2018, accessed 12 November 2018, <http://telegraf.al/dossier/gruaja-shqiptare-ne-luften-partizane/>.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Qani Duraj, "Heroinat e Luftës sonë Antifashiste," *Gazeta Dita*, 30 November 2017, accessed 11 November 2018, <http://www.gazetadita.al/heroinat-e-luftes-sone-antifashiste/>.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Elsie, *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History* (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd., 2012), 451.

Another symbol of the bravery demonstrated by the Albanian women during WWII is Liri Gero (1926–1944).<sup>31</sup> Liri Gero was involved with the resistance opposing the Fascist occupation at a very young age. She joined the 16th Albanian Attacking Brigade in September 1943.<sup>32</sup> On 6 October 1944, in one of the battles against the German forces, she was wounded, and Germans captured her. The German forces tied her to a tree, poured gasoline, and set her on fire causing a brutal death. For her great heroism, she posthumously received the title People's Hero of Albania.

Another well - known hero is Persefoni Kokedhima. She was born in 1924, and at a very young age, she joined the Communist Youth and the resistance against the Germans.<sup>33</sup> She joined the VI Albanian Attacking Brigade in September 1943 and was recognized as a courageous fighter.<sup>34</sup> The Germans forces captured her, and she ended up a prisoner of war in German hands. Because she did not reveal information about the other partisans, she was tortured and hanged. Her heroism and bravery was an inspiration to the other partisans.

*Oficeret Shqiptare neRrjedhen e Historise*, (Albanian Female Officers in the Course of History) written by Kujtim Borici and Suzana Jahollari, is a curriculum collection book primarily focused on the Albanian female officers from WWII to today.

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<sup>31</sup> Elsie, *A Biographical Dictionary of Albanian History*, 452.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Agim Jazaj, "Tri bijat e Vlorës, Heroina të Popullit," *Gazeta Koha Jone*, 4 April 2018, accessed 20 November 2018, <https://www.kohajone.com/2018/04/04/tri-bijat-e-vlores-heroina-te-popullit/>.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

The book provides an insight into the lives of many military women, including experiences, struggles, and commitment to achieve success. A chapter of this book offers information about some of the women that held commanding positions during WWII.<sup>35</sup>

The references outlined below are significant because they provide essential background about the Albanian society during the communist regime. Albania, devastated by the second World War, with a ruined economy and a destroyed infrastructure, entered a new era under communist rule. The communist party seized governmental power and ruled Albania for almost 50 years. The Communist ideology saw the family as the foundation of the socialist society, where women should have an essential and equal role with men. During that period, the government took several steps to change the position of women within society and also change gender relations. Several authors writings will be reviewed to analyze the social changes in Albanian society, the emancipation of women and their integration in Albanian Armed Forces. These writings provide insight into the second secondary question: What is the most significant single societal influence on the military culture and the role of women in combat units in Albania?

*Women and Migration in Albania: A View from the Village* by Julie Vullnetari, examines some aspects of women's emancipation in Albanian society under the communist system. According to the author, women's emancipation became a vital objective of the post-war Communist government with the main principle that the emancipation of the whole society could not happen without women's emancipation. The

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<sup>35</sup> Borici and Jahollari, *Oficeret Shqiptare ne Rrjedhen e Historise*, 40.

government worked toward dramatic improvement in literacy rates and increased participation at all levels of education. In the 1980'-s almost half of university students were women. Women's participation in politics greatly improved between 1970-1990, when women constituted around 30 percent of the People's Assembly representatives, compared to nearly 0 percent in 1945.<sup>36</sup> By 1989 around 80 percent of working-age women were employed outside the home.<sup>37</sup> However, Vullnetari emphasizes the critical point that a majority of women were employed in medical services, education, social welfare, and the textile and shoe industries while few held leadership positions.<sup>38</sup>

*From Equality without Democracy to Democracy without Equality? Women and Transition in Southeast Europe*, an article by Ulf Brunnbauer, analyzes the ideological doctrine of the Communist regimes (almost half century) in southeastern Europe (including Albania) on creating forced equality in the society, and the reaction of those societies during the hard transition after the end of the regime. The communist regime increased the participation of women in paid employment and made dramatic improvements in education with the main purpose to improve the position of women in the society. The author brings as example Albania, with almost half of all women employed and half of Albania's university students female in 1989.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Julie Vullnetari, "Women and Migration in Albania: A View from the Village," *International Migration* 50, no. 5 (October 2012): 171, accessed 2 December 2018, <https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/377066/>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ulf Brunnbauer, "From Equality without Democracy to Democracy without Equality? Women and Transition in Southeast Europe," *South-East Europe Review* 3, no.

*Pesha dhe Bukuria e Uniformes* (The Burden and the Beauty of the Uniform) is a memory book written by LTC (retired) Lida Grazhdani, one of the first 71 females that joined the Officers school in 1967. The author brings her memories, and the experience lived during the military school years. Based on Grazhdani's memories most of the 71 women volunteered to join the Military School and a few of them were forced by different circumstances. Women were not integrated in mix platoons but had their own separate platoons, such as infantry, communication and finance, and the main reason for that decision was to give the society enough time to accept that move.

*Roli Emancipues i Gruas si Pjesë e Forcave të Armatosura* (The Emancipation Role of Women as part of the Armed Forces) written by Etleva Smaci offers some data about Albanian women's journey in the Albanian military. The main focus of the article is the analysis of the conditions and circumstances of the Albanian Armed Forces after the end of WWII, and specifically analyzing military women that joined the military school for the first time in 1967. According to Smaci, the inclusion of women in the military did not come as a result of their efforts of improving their social status or as part of any female movement rather fulfilling a quest directed by the communist system. The political factor, and the total isolation of the country saw the necessity of preparing military women to contribute in the defense of the country, if the need arose.

*"Promoting Women in the Albanian Armed Forces: From a Visible to an Operational Gender Balance"* is a policy brief written by Peço, Salihi, and Leka that focuses on the opportunities and obstacles of changing gender relations within the

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1 (2002): 152, accessed 3 December 2018, <https://epub.uni-regensburg.de/14097/1/brunn1.pdf>.



traditionally male-dominated Albanian Armed Forces. The writing provides some information regarding the role of women in the military during the Communist Regime. The authors claim that the integration of women in the military environment was an important part of the Communist doctrine and was used as a model of social promotion.<sup>40</sup> “Women officers before the 1990s were seen as models of social promotion and strategic factors. Somehow the women’s positions in the armed forces before the 1990s gave them a supreme role – impacted definitively by the ideological approach of their inclusion in the Army...”<sup>41</sup>

The above-stated literature offered some information about the unpredictable participation of Albanian women in combat units during WWII and the profound transformation of the Albanian society during the Communist regime. These writings will help to answer the first secondary question of the research: What is the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces and how do these roles currently affect the integration of women in combat units?

## Section II: Literature on Political and Social Changes in Albania after the Collapse of the Communist Regime

Since the culture shapes the climate, the people, and the atmosphere in an organization, it is critical for this research to understand how the Albanian society culture influences the role of military women into the AAF. Albanian society was unprepared to face the vast changes that happened after the political transition from the communist

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<sup>40</sup> Peco-Baka, Slihi, and Leka, *Promoting Women in the Albanian Armed Force*, 3.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

regime to the Democratic governor. Massive migration, high rate of unemployment, and the lack of strong state structures affected all the spheres of society especially women's position in it. Many authors have studied the transformation of Albania society after 1990, and the deep gender discrimination created. By analyzing some of these articles, the researcher will have a better understanding of how the changes in a society influenced military culture.

*Gender Equality and Democracy*, an academic writing by Ronald Inglehart, Pippa Norris and Christian Welzel, analyzes the connection between gender equality and democracy. According to the authors, the support for gender equality is not just a consequence of democratization but a part of a broad cultural change that transform many aspects of industrialized societies and supports the spread of democratic institutions. It has been argued that “the role of cultural change in values towards gender equality in public life, the process of modernization and economic development, cultural legacies represented by religious values, and democratic political institutions” are key elements that lead toward both the rise of women in public life and the development of democracy.<sup>42</sup>

Nicola Nixon in the article *You Cannot Eat Shame with Bread': Gender and Collective Shame in Albanian Society* describes the problems of the Albanian society and the position of women in it, after the collapse of the communist system. Nixon highlights that, the high numbers of unemployment, massive migration, and the lack of strong state

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<sup>42</sup> Ronald Inglehart, Pippa Norris, and Christian Welzel, “Gender Equality and Democracy,” *Comparative Sociology* 1, no. 3 (December 2002): 236, accessed 19 December 2018, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235644019\\_Inglehart\\_R\\_P\\_Norris\\_C\\_Welzel\\_2002\\_Gender\\_Equality\\_and\\_Democracy](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/235644019_Inglehart_R_P_Norris_C_Welzel_2002_Gender_Equality_and_Democracy).

structures were the main factors that weakened gender equality and pushed the people to see the families as the primary source of security. The author argues that many of the problems that the society faced after 1990 were inherited from the past. Although the Communist regime had the emancipation of women in society as part of its political propaganda, this goal was only symbolically achieved because the reality was more complex.<sup>43</sup> The argument of Nixon about the reason why gender equality was rejected after the Communism collapse was that the society wanted to break all the connections with the brutal communist regime, and gender equality was one of those elements that meant a return to strong patriarchal principles that the Albanian society had before being ruled by the Communists.<sup>44</sup>

An article co-authored by Russell King and Julie Vullnetari, titled “*A Population suddenly on the Move: Migration and Changing Gender Relations in Albania*” offers a broad picture of the Albanian society after the collapse of the communist regime. The article states that after 1990, almost one-fifth of the population, especially men, migrated away from Albania, an essential element that dictated the role of women at home. Since there were no policies in the countries where the Albanian migrants worked that enabled the migrants to have their families with them, women in Albania were forced to focus

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<sup>43</sup> Nicola Nixon, “You Can’t Eat Shame with Bread’: Gender and Collective Shame in Albanian Society,” *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 9, no. 1 (March 2009):119, accessed 3 December 2018, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248955767\\_’You\\_can’t\\_eat\\_shame\\_with\\_bread’\\_Gender\\_and\\_collective\\_shame\\_in\\_Albanian\\_society’](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248955767_’You_can’t_eat_shame_with_bread’_Gender_and_collective_shame_in_Albanian_society’).

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 120.

more at home and take responsibilities for the care of the family members.<sup>45</sup> The contribution of Albanian women in public, political, and economic spheres considerably decreased and reinforced traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity. Balancing a career while taking care of the family members was a crisis that did not find support from society or the government.

*Gender and Migration from Albania*, an article by Guy Stecklov, Calogero Carletto, Carlo Azzarri, and Benjamin Davis examines Albanian women's access to migration opportunities and decision-making. The authors discuss that gender inequality in Albania changed rapidly, because of the severe economic crises and migration. Men dominated the exodus of the Albanian population after 1991, and those women that migrated "were solidly entrenched in other people's decision making".<sup>46</sup> The labor market decreased the employment opportunities especially for women and the labor force participation reached 70.5 percent for men and 46.7 percent for women by 2003."<sup>47</sup> Those changes led to deep gender discrimination in the labor market and awakened the traditional gender role and inequalities within the household despite the improvement of women's status in the public sphere over the Communist era.

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<sup>45</sup> Russell King and Julie Vullnetari, "A Population Suddenly on the Move: Migration and Changing Gender Relations in Albania," *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society* 5, no. 2 (April 2012): 214, accessed 6 December 2018, [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260085911\\_A\\_population\\_on\\_the\\_move\\_Migration\\_and\\_gender\\_relations\\_in\\_Albania](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/260085911_A_population_on_the_move_Migration_and_gender_relations_in_Albania).

<sup>46</sup> Guy Stecklov, Calogero Carletto, Carlo Azzarri, and Benjamin Davis, "Gender and Migration from Albania," *International Migration Review* 40, no. 4 (December 2006): 781, accessed 10 December 2008, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2006.00043.x>.

<sup>47</sup> Stecklov et al., "Gender and Migration from Albania," 780.

The article *Gender-Related Human Resources Policies in Armed Forces*, published by Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces offers some information about the changes that women in the military faced after the political changes in the 1990s. According to the article, because of the transformation of the AAF and the rapid gender changes in the society, many women lost their commanding functions and remained in positions such as secretaries, logistics, offices administrators or managers of maintenance compartments.<sup>48</sup> Many women could not be part of the new rank system and kept the old ranks, a move that did not favor their career's advancement but shortened their service in the AAF.

*Transforming the Albanian Armed Forces, Overcoming the Challenges*, is a strategic research project by Major General Nazmi Cahani, that reflects the in-depth transformation process of Albanian Armed Forces after 1991. The author analysis the deep reforms taken by the democratic government in order to transform the Armed Forces, from a huge eastern oriented organization to a new western type and western-oriented one, smaller in size, aspiring to join the NATO.

*The 2016 Summary of the National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations* to the NATO Committee on Gender Perspectives (NCGP) presents information on the implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and on the integration of gender perspectives in the armed forces of 28 NATO member nations, followed by 13 NATO partner nations. The

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<sup>48</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, *Albania: Gender-Related Human Resources Policies in Armed Forces* (Tirana, AL: Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, 2017), 2, accessed 16 December 2018, <https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/115437/2107302/Albania-Human-Resource-Defence.pdf>.

study offers data on the Representation of Men and Women in the Armed Forces, Applications and Successful Recruitment, Retention Statistics, Services and Ranks and Integration of Gender Perspectives in the Armed Forces.<sup>49</sup> An important part of the summary is the “detailed profiles of all NATO member and partner nations in national legislation, programmes and policies related to the advancement of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions in the armed forces.”<sup>50</sup>

In 2006, the World Economic Forum introduced *The Global Gender Gap Report* with the primary purpose to track countries gender equality gaps and their progress over time. The report provides rankings and country comparison across regions and beyond. The Global Gender Gap Report 2017, measured the progress towards gender parity on a scale from 0 (imparity) to 1 (parity) in 144 countries within the domains of Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival, and Political Empowerment.<sup>51</sup> The 2017 report ranks Albania 38th in Global Gender Gap score by making up notable progress compared with the Global Gender Gap score report of 2006 where Albania ranked 61 out of 115 countries compared, especially on the Political Empowerment sub index compared .<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> NATO, *NATO Summary of the National Reports*, 7.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> World Economic Forum, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2017*, 2 November 2017, accessed February 28, 2019, <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2017>.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

### Section III: Literature on Policies Implemented in Support of the Gender Integration

Women have made advances in Albanian society over the past few decades with respect to equality in different spheres of public life. Gender equality in Albanian society is seen as very important to the political, economic, and social development of the country. Specific policies are enforced by the government related to the implementation of gender perspectives in the Albanian institutions including the AAF.

The “Law on Gender Equality in Society” adopted in 2008 required the government and other public institutions to ensure the principles of adequate protection from gender discrimination and to guarantee the support of gender equality in the society.<sup>53</sup> The implementation of that law led to the approval of the “National Strategy for Gender Equality and Domestic Violence 2011-2015” in 2011. In terms of the AAF, this strategy encouraged the development of gender policies and equal chances for women in decision making/leadership positions and in the peacekeeping missions.<sup>54</sup> In the same year 2011, the MoD published the document “Human Resource Management Strategy in the Armed Forces, 2011-2013” requiring that 15 percent quota in the AFF personnel should be women.<sup>55</sup> In February 2011, Albanian military women established

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<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, *National Strategy on Gender Equality and Reduction of Gender-Based Violence and Domestic Violence 2011-2015* (Tirana, AL: Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, 2011), 6, accessed 28 December 2018, <https://www.svri.org/sites/default/files/attachments/2016-07-21/Albania.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>55</sup> Ministria e Mbrojtjes, *Strategjia e Menaxhimit të Burimeve Njerëzore 2011-2015* (Tirana, AL: Ministria e Mbrojtjes, 2011), 12.

the association “Women in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Albania.” The main objectives of the association were supporting the advancement of women in the military career and implementing the resolution, “Women, Peace and Security” in the AAF.<sup>56</sup> The establishment of the Sector of Equal Opportunities/Chances in the Centre for Personal Recruitment in 2012, would support the promotion of equality of opportunities in the recruitment of men and women in the Armed Forces and monitoring the implementation of different policies on gender equality.<sup>57</sup>

The National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 aims to eliminate gender-based discrimination, empower girls and women and guarantee factual and equal participation in political and public decision-making. Through policies and regulations that derive from this National Strategy, the Ministry of Defense and the AF General Staff aim to achieve 15 percent representation level of women in uniform in recruitment by 2020 and to facilitate the promotion of women in ranks and career promotion process.<sup>58</sup> In one of the speeches that the Albanian MoD gave to a group of young recruits in February 2019, she mentioned that “opening the Armed Forces to Albanian women and young ladies is a necessity.”<sup>59</sup> She also accepted that offering

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<sup>56</sup> Suzana Jahollari, “Albanian Armed Forces: An Overview of the Current State of Women’s Involvement in the Albanian Armed Forces,” (PowerPoint presentation, Tirana, AL, 2012), slide 4, accessed 4 January 2019, [https://www.nato.int/issues/women\\_nato/meeting-records/2012/pdf/Albania\\_NATO\\_conference.pdf](https://www.nato.int/issues/women_nato/meeting-records/2012/pdf/Albania_NATO_conference.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance, *Albania: Gender-related Human Resources Policies in Armed Forces*, 6.

<sup>58</sup> Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth, *National Strategy and Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020*, 42.

<sup>59</sup> Ministry of Defense, “Xhaçka Meets New Recruits: Opening of Armed Forces to Women, a Necessity,” 19 February 2019, accessed 21 February 2019,



women a “real career” in the Armed Forces will take time and will need strong support to move forward.

#### Section IV: Literature on History and the Chronology of Military Events in Canada, Israel, and Norway

A global search of the history and the chronology of military events in Canada, Israel and Norway will provide interesting points of view to understand the combat barriers and the ways used by these countries to attract, and integrate women in combat units.

#### History of Women in the Canadian Armed Forces

Women have a long history of military service in Canada. They started to serve in the Canadian Armed Forces as nurses since 1885.<sup>60</sup> More than 7500 nurses served overseas during the First World War and Second World War.<sup>61</sup> After the end of WWII, women were part of the Canadian military organization, working in administrative and supportive roles but they did not have the right to join the Military Academy and have a long military career.<sup>62</sup> During 1960-1970, women in Canada, supported by society, started feminist movements in support of peace and disarmament, equality in education

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<http://www.mod.gov.al/eng/index.php/newsroom/999-xhacka-meets-new-recruits-opening-of-armed-forces-to-women-a-necessity>.

<sup>60</sup> Mishall Rehman, “Canadian Armed Forces and Women Over the Years,” *Courier News*, 13 March 2018, accessed 6 January 2019, [couriernews.ca/2018/03/13/canadian-armed-forces-and-women-over-the-years/](http://couriernews.ca/2018/03/13/canadian-armed-forces-and-women-over-the-years/).

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

and employment, birth control and an end to violence against women.<sup>63</sup> This feminist movement led the Canadian Royal Commission on the Status of Women (established by the Canadian Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson in 1967) to make several recommendations to the Government of Canada to increase equal opportunities for Canadian women.<sup>64</sup> The Royal Commission on the Status of Women made 167 recommendations and six of them aimed specifically at the Canadian Armed Forces:

- standardize military enrolment criteria;
- establish equal pension benefits for women and men;
- open Canadian military colleges for women to attend (which happened in 1979);
- open all military trades and officer classifications to women; and
- the release of servicewomen upon the birth of a child.<sup>65</sup>

After the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, Canada adopted the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom in 1982, which prohibited discrimination based on race, nationality, color, religion, sex, age, and physical

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<sup>63</sup> Veronica Strong-Boag, “Women’s Movements in Canada: 1960–85,” The Canadian Encyclopedia, 12 September 2016, accessed 11 January 2019, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/womens-movements-in-canada-196085>.

<sup>64</sup> Cerise Morris, “Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada,” The Canadian Encyclopedia, last modified 21 March 2017, accessed 11 January 2019, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/royal-commission-on-the-status-of-women-in-canada>.

<sup>65</sup> National Defense and Canadian Armed Forces, “Historical Milestones of Women in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 7 March 2019, accessed 10 March 2019, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=historical-milestones-of-women-in-the-canadian-armed-forces/izkjr17h>.

disability.<sup>66</sup> The Charter of Rights required the Armed Forces to consider the equality of women in the services and to allow them into all military roles. Several initiatives were taken after the adoption of the Canadian Charter of Rights, and in 1989 the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ordered the Canadian Forces to open all the combat roles and to integrate women in those occupations, (with the only exception in submarine service which opened in 2000).<sup>67</sup> In doing so, Canada became the first NATO country that opened all occupation to women. A year later in 1990, the Minister of the National Defense created an Advisory Board on women to monitor the progress of gender integration in the Canadian Armed Forces.

During the first years, the Canadian Forces found difficulty in attracting and integrating women in the combat units and military culture was one of the most significant barriers. Women accounted for only 3.9 percent of officers and 1.4 percent of noncommissioned members in combat units in 2001 and the highest rank held by a military female serving in the Canadian Army was Colonel; in the Air Force, Brigadier-General; and in the Navy, Captain.<sup>68</sup>

These last decade-specific policies are enforced related to the implementation of gender perspectives in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). A big issue that made the

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<sup>66</sup> Sisters in Arms, “History of Women in Combat: Canada,” accessed 15 January 2019, <https://sistersinarms.ca/history/history-of-women-in-combat/>.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Angela R. Febbraro, “Women, Leadership and Gender Integration in the Canadian Combat Arms: A Qualitative Study,” (Defence Research and Development, Toronto, CA, 2003), 1, accessed 20 March 2019, file:///C:/Users/IMSD/Desktop/Case%20Studies/Canada/GenderIntegrationCanadianArmy\_Can.pdf.

transition rough in early years was sexual harassment. The Canadian Armed Forces applied anti-harassment provisions and completed a system-wide “Training Needs Analysis” of all training and education programmers related to harmful and inappropriate sexual behavior.<sup>69</sup> In 2016, the Chief of Defense Staff (CDS) issued a directive on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, including the mandatory requirement to take the Status of Women in Canada on-line Gender-Based Analysis Plus Course.<sup>70</sup> According to 2016 Summary of National Reports of NATO Member and Partner Nations to NCGP, the percentage of women in active duty in the Canadian Armed Forces, was at 15.7 percent, approximately 15000 women in the Regular Force and Primary Reserve. Women made up 10.2 percent strength of the Special Operations Command.<sup>71</sup>

The number of ranks occupied by women officers and Non-Commissioned Officers has been increased recently. In January 2017, the CAF resulted with the highest number of female General Officers in the history with a total of 12 Generals including one Lieutenant General, two Major Generals/Rear Admirals, and nine Brigadier Generals, also four senior Chief Warrant Officers/Chief Petty Officers occupying senior appointments.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> NATO, *NATO Summary of the National Reports*, 10.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>71</sup> Rehman, “Canadian Armed Forces and Women Over the Years.”

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

## History of Women in Israel Defense Forces

The creation of the Jewish state in 1948 in the middle East was very contested by the Arab countries; therefore, the new state had to create a well – maintained military force that would face any kind of aggression for a long time. This military force is known as the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). Through the Defense Service Law in 1949, the government mandated military service not only for men but also for women. Despite the essential role played in the IDF, women for many years were not allowed in combat roles. Most of the women held traditional roles such as teachers, nurses, and secretaries and few of them worked in positions such as intelligence, maintenance, communications, and military police.

Even though the role of women in the establishment of the IDF was evaluated as important, still women did not get the positions that they deserved. The Defense Service Law created a semi inclusion for women in the military, because not all women were drafted in the compulsory service. Only Jewish single (women were perceived as mothers) women were drafted and not allowed to participate in combat units, but only in secondary roles, mostly as secretaries or logisticians. During the Arab-Israel war of 1973, Israeli military forces were caught by surprise and showed some lack of preparation. This led to a feminist movement that asked for a reconsideration of women’s status in IDF and their integration in more army roles, even though not too many changes happened.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Martin van Creveld, “Armed but not Dangerous: Women in the Israeli Military,” *War in History* 7, no. 1 (January 2000): 91, accessed 12 January 2019, file:///C:/Users/IMSD/Desktop/Case%20Studies/Israel/ArmedNotDangerous\_Isr.pdf.

According to a report by the Committee for the Status of Women in Israel published in 1976, only 30 percent of all military roles were open to women.<sup>74</sup>

The gender lines created for several decades in IDF, started to decrease after significant changes to implement greater gender equality and to integrate women into what previously were considered to be primarily male army roles took place in the IDF in the 1990s. Alice Miller a young female aviation engineer, supported by the feminist organization “The Women’s Network,” and “The Knesset Committee on the Status of Women,” played an essential role in putting pressure on the military and beginning a legal struggle to challenge the traditional gendered division of labor.<sup>75</sup> In 1994, Miller took the IDF to court for excluding women from pilot training courses since that exclusion violated women’s right to equal treatment. In 1995, the Supreme Court gave the right to Miller and ordered the IDF to open combat positions for women.<sup>76</sup>

In early 2000, several provisions for equal military service for men and women forced by the Equality amendment to the Defense Service Law granted female soldiers

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<sup>74</sup> Ricardo Tarrascha, Orit Lurie, Ran Yanovich, and Dan Moranc, “Psychological Aspects of the Integration of Women into Combat Roles,” *Personality and Individual Differences* 50, no. 2 (January 2011): 305, accessed 13 January 2019, file:///C:/Users/IMSD/Desktop/Case%20Studies/Israel/PsychologicalAspectsInCombat\_Isr.pdf.

<sup>75</sup> Noya Rimalt, “Women in the Sphere of Masculinity: The Double-Edged Sword of Women’s Integration in the Military,” *Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy* 14, (June 2007): 1104, accessed 1 February 2019, <https://scholarship.law.duke.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1135&context=djglp&sei-redir=1&referrer=https%253A%252F%252Fwww.bing.com%252Fsear>.

<sup>76</sup> Dafna N Izraeli, “Israel Defense Forces,” *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Women*, 1 March 2009, accessed 20 January 2019, <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/israel-defense-force>.

equal rights as a male soldier to fill all positions in the military. As a result, the IDF started to deploy women in the artillery corps, infantry units, armored divisions, diving repair unit, and elite combat units.<sup>77</sup>

The changes in law increased the number of women in combat units. In 2000, women started serving in a “light infantry” unit entitled Caracal Battalion.<sup>78</sup> The establishment of the Caracal Battalion was to help the integration of women into the IDF’s combat system. The battalion was composed of 70 percent women and 30 percent men. Israel’s female combat soldiers are also found in the Lions of Jordan battalion that guards the border with Egypt and Jordan.<sup>79</sup> The two mixed-gender units are seen as crucial to the defense of Israel.

Meanwhile, a debate between forces that were pushing for greater gender equality in the military and those calling to reinstate hierarchical gender segregation started to be very active. The gender integration in the military encountered opposition from a part of the society, especially from religious Zionism, an ideology that combines Zionism and Orthodox Judaism. Zionism rabbis claimed that “men serving alongside women could not observe the Jewish modesty laws.”<sup>80</sup> They argued that gender integration would make it

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<sup>77</sup> Izraeli, “Israel Defense Forces.”

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Rowan Scarborough, “Israeli Women’s Combat Roles Exaggerated, Military Traditionalists Say,” *The Washington Times*, 25 May 2015, accessed 14 January 2019, <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/may/25/womens-combat-roles-in-israel-defense-forces-exagg/>.

<sup>80</sup> Orna Sasson-Levy, “Research on Gender and the Military in Israel, from a Gendered Organization to Inequality Regimes,” *Israel Studies Review* 26, no. 2 (Winter 2011): 90, accessed 17 January 2019, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/>

difficult for religious men to serve in field units at all. In 2002, in order to accommodate the religious needs, the IDF established requirements for gender segregation in mixed units and allow religious men and women to serve in gender-homogeneous units.<sup>81</sup>

Despite the debate, as the result of the policy changes in integrating women in combat units in IDF, the number of women enlisted in combat units has significantly increased. According to IDF, nearly 50 percent of Israel's lieutenants and captains were females in 2015. A female Lieutenant Colonel pilot was named commander of a flight squadron in January 2018, for the first time in IDF history.<sup>82</sup> Four women finished the tank commanders course and started their service as tank commanders in July 2018.<sup>83</sup> More than 1,000 women enlisted in IDF combat units in 2017, making it the highest number of women enlisted in combat units in IDF history.<sup>84</sup> To promote the empowerment of military women, the IDF' founded the Women's Affairs Advisor Unit

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nization\_to\_Inequality\_Regimes.

<sup>81</sup> Levy, "Research on Gender and the Military in Israel."

<sup>82</sup> Jewish Virtual Library, "Women of the Israel Defense Forces: History in Combat Units," accessed 25 January 2019, <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/history-of-women-in-idf-combat-units>.

<sup>83</sup> Israel Defense Forces, "Tank Commanders Break Gender Barriers," 28 June 2018, accessed 26 January 2019, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/soldiers-of-the-idf/tank-commanders-break-gender-barriers/>.

<sup>84</sup> Judah Ari Gross, "Breaking Record, more than 1,000 Women Join IDF Combat Units this Summer," *The Times of Israel*, 8 August 2018, accessed 26 January 2019, <https://www.idf.il/en/minisites/soldiers-of-the-idf/by-the-numbers-idf-women-in-combat/>.



in 2001, which is still active.<sup>85</sup> This unit is responsible for assisting women in breaking gender barriers and providing them with equal opportunities in the IDF.

### History of Women in Norwegian Armed Forces

For many years, Norway has been the model to the world when it comes to gender equality. Gender equality throughout Norwegian society has also had a significant influence on the Norwegian Armed Forces. Women in the Norwegian Armed Forces started to serve in both officer and enlisted ranks in military posts during World War II, since 1938.<sup>86</sup> After the end of WWII, women were allowed to serve only as reservists voluntarily until 1977. In 1985 the Norwegian Parliament passed a resolution that allowed women to have equal opportunities in the military and serving in all combat functions, nearly 30 years earlier than the United States.<sup>87</sup> The implementation of that policy allowed the Norwegian military women to be integrated and to serve under the same rules and regulations as men and also made the Norwegian Armed Forces a model to follow by the other NATO countries.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Israel Defense Forces, “IDF Chief of Staff Appoints New Advisor on Women’s Issues,” 8 August 2011, accessed 26 January 2019, <https://idfspokesperson.wordpress.com/2011/08/08/idf-chief-of-staff-appoints-new-advisor-on-womens-issues/>.

<sup>86</sup> Frank Brundtland Steder, “Is it Possible to Increase the Share of Military Women in the Norwegian Armed Forces?” *International Relations and Diplomacy* 2, no. 5 (May 2014): 293, accessed 27 January 2019, [https://www.ffi.no/no/Forskningen/strategiske-analyser-fellessystemer/Forskning\\_paa\\_aarskull/Documents/International%20Relations%20and%20Diplomacy%20ISSUE%205%202014\\_Frank-Steder.pdf](https://www.ffi.no/no/Forskningen/strategiske-analyser-fellessystemer/Forskning_paa_aarskull/Documents/International%20Relations%20and%20Diplomacy%20ISSUE%205%202014_Frank-Steder.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Committee on Women in NATO Forces, “Norway,” updated 26 March 2002, accessed 27 January 2019, <https://www.nato.int/ims/2001/win/norway.htm>.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

The Ministry of Defense and the Chief of Defense remained focused on improving the policies governing and offering women equal opportunities. They developed a Strategic Plan for Gender Equality in the Armed Forces in 1998, with the main objectives of proficiency enhancement, marketing, family policy, and real career opportunities.<sup>89</sup> During the same year, 1998, the Chief of Defense published the Chief of Defense Personnel Policy and Armed Forces Ethical Tenets document with the primary objective to offer equal opportunities for women. The General Staff assigned in the eighties and early nineties, contained several officers responsible for the implementation of the Gender Equality policies, and to ensure that female soldiers were getting the same treatment as their counterparts.<sup>90</sup> However, in 2002, women made only 0.7 percent of the NAF.

The past decade, the NAF has taken several steps to attract more females in the Armed Forces and break down military gender barriers. One of them was the establishment in 2014 of the Jegertroppen (“Hunter Troops”), an all-female special forces unit part of Norway’s Armed Forces’ Special Command. The main reason of the establishment of that unit was the need to use it for special operations in places like Afghanistan where the Afghan culture prohibits male troop’s communication with Afghan women.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> NATO, Committee on Women in NATO Forces, “Norway.”

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Carlo Angerer, “Inside the World’s First All-Female Special Forces Unit: Norway’s Jegertroppen,” *NBC News*, updated 17 April 2017, accessed 20 February 2019, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/inside-world-s-first-all-female-special-forces-unit-norway-n746041>.

Norway was the first NATO country that implemented universal conscript service in mid-2016, and following that year, approximately 30 percent of conscripts were female.<sup>92</sup> Some units in NAFs have introduced shared living rooms for women and men on a voluntarily basis. The arguments that support that step are that sharing living rooms helps to build team cohesion and to prevent sexual harassment.<sup>93</sup>

According to a 2016 NATO Summary of the National Reports, Norway had the most substantial increase of the women in the Armed Forces compared with other NATO members, comprising of 10.7 percent of the Norwegian Armed Forces personnel.<sup>94</sup> The same source shows that the distribution of men and women by rank in the Norwegian Armed Forces was almost the same in 2016. Many Norwegian military women with the General ranks have served in the higher command levels. Examples include Chief of the Air Forces, United Nations Force Commander, Chief of Staff of the Norwegian Home Guard, and The Royal Norwegian Air Force submarine commanders and have successfully shown that women can succeed in these positions.

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<sup>92</sup> Anne Kari H. Ovind, “Women in the Armed Forces is about more than Gender Equality,” *Huffington Post*, 3 August 2017, accessed 11 February 2019, [https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/anne-kari-h-ovind/women-armed-forces\\_b\\_15228408.html](https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/anne-kari-h-ovind/women-armed-forces_b_15228408.html).

<sup>93</sup> Nina Rones, “Gender-Mixed Army Dorm Rooms, 50% Women and All-Female Special Forces Training: How Does Norway’s Radical Attempt to Integrate Women in the Military Work?” *Res Militaris* 7, no. 2 (August 2017): 1, accessed 23 February 2019, [http://resmilitaris.net/ressources/10270/15/res\\_militaris\\_article\\_rones\\_mixed-gender\\_rooms\\_in\\_the\\_norwegian\\_armed\\_forces.pdf](http://resmilitaris.net/ressources/10270/15/res_militaris_article_rones_mixed-gender_rooms_in_the_norwegian_armed_forces.pdf).

<sup>94</sup> NATO, *Summary of the National Reports*, 10.

## Summary

This chapter reviewed key literature that will provide the development of primary and secondary research questions. The sources in the literature review were organized in four sections. Starting with the history of women in Albanian Armed Forces, the significant changes of the Albanian society after the collapse of Communism, the engagement of the Ministry of Defense and Albanian Armed Forces in the integration of women in the military, and concluding with the history and the role of women in Canadian, Israel, and Norwegian Armed Forces.

The next chapter offers the research methodology that will be applied to analyze the literature and answer the research questions in chapter 4

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The main purpose of this research is to provide recommendations about gender integration, especially in combat units, and embracing the unique potential of women by increasing the role of women in leadership in the Albanian Armed Forces.

The aim of Chapter 3 is to describe the methodology that will be applied in Chapter 4, and also to address the process that will be followed to answer the main question: How can Albania overcome the most significant challenges to integrating women in Albanian Armed Forces, especially in combat units? An important role of the research is answering the secondary questions:

1. What is the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces and how does it affect the integration of women in combat units-today?
2. What is the single greatest societal influence on military culture and the role of women in combat units in Albania?
3. How do other armies integrate women into combat units?

#### Qualitative Research

The author used as the primary method for the research the qualitative research methodology. The qualitative research methodology offers the researcher the possibility to explore the problem and allows her to get a detailed understanding of the research..<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc, 2013), 48.

By analyzing data about the changes in Albanian society starting from WWII until today, the researcher presents an in-depth picture of the influence of the society in the integration of women in AAF, and also better fit for answering the primary and secondary questions related with the problem. Qualitative research presents a challenge in terms of the interpretation of a large amount of data collected because of the complexity of the materials, and the extensive time required to conduct valuable research.

### Case Study Methodology

According to John W. Creswell, there are five approaches to inquiry data in qualitative research: narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study.<sup>96</sup> The author used the case study research for data collection. Different sources of information such as documents, articles, and reports about the gender integration, in Albanian Armed Forces are collected to develop this research.

The researcher selected a collective case study to illustrate different perspectives on the issue and present an in-depth understanding of the case. A detailed description of the history and the chronology of military events in Canada, Israel, and Norway, countries that successfully have integrated women in combat units, helped the researcher to understand the complexity and have a better picture of the cases. By analyzing these cases studies, also the researcher provides interesting insight into opportunities and initiatives that could be used to further gender integration in the AAF.

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 69.

## Data Collection

There are different methods and procedures for data collection in qualitative research. Creswell includes in the data collection four primary methods: observation, interviews, audiovisual materials, and analyzing documents. The method used in this research is analyzing documents or materials from different sources. Analyzing documents or materials helped the researcher to get significant points of view about the topic area as well as insight from other researchers also attempting to understand how to improve gender integration.

By analyzing previous research, critical information is discovered that informs the researcher and aides in the quest to conduct further research to provide answers to additional questions. When analyzing previous documents, the researcher should ensure that he/she is not overlapping with previous research.

A combination of literature from the Combined Arms Research Library (CARL), Fort Leavenworth, online through web searches, NATO sources, assistance from the Institutional Research and Assessment Division (IRAD), Directorate of Academic Affairs, The Army University were used to gather a wide range of information relating to the development of the main research question and secondary questions. The literature that offers information about the changes that Albanian society went through during the communist regime, the transition after the regime collapse and the current situation of women in the military were thoroughly and diligently researched.

## Data Analysis

The researcher approached this problem by using the case study method to analyze qualitatively different materials, reports, news and articles in order to understand

the values of the Albanian culture, the position of women in Albanian society, and the attitude of the society toward women in uniform. Gathering and analyzing data from different sources will provide insight into the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces from World War II, through today. Finally, reviewing cases studies of countries that successfully integrated women in combat units including Canada, Israel, and Norway will provide insight into opportunities and initiatives that could inform further gender integration in the AAF.

### Role of the Researcher

Gathering and analyzing the appropriate literature for conducting proper qualitative research is a challenge for the researcher. An essential role of the researcher when using qualitative case study methodology is identifying the cases that provide valuable insights about the issue and are worthy of study. Deciding the boundaries of a case and constraining it in terms of time, events, and processes are very important too. The researcher's skills and knowledge on the topic can influence the effectiveness of the research. It is crucial that the role of the researcher is to be unbiased and not to influence the analysis of the research despite the gender and personal experience of the researcher.

### Summary

This chapter described the methodology used during this research. Qualitative research, case study methodology, data collection, and data analysis form the basis for the analysis in the next chapter. The qualitative and analytical research method of various materials of different stages of Albanian society, and the analysis of the cases studies of Canada, Israel, and Norway, countries that successfully have integrated women in combat



units, helps the researcher to understand the complexity of the issues and to answer the primary and secondary research questions. The next chapter analyzes the collected data to answer the primary and secondary research questions.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS

Opening the Armed Forces to Albanian women and young ladies is a necessity! So we cannot have the best, the most talented, the most dedicated ones if we exclude the right half of Albanians just because they are women and the Army is a place for men. We need the talent of each boy and every girl!

—Olta Xhacka, Minister of Defense (Albania), “Xhacka Meets New Recruits: Opening of Armed Forces to Women a Necessity”

Chapter 3 described the methodology used during this research. The purpose of Chapter 4 is to analyze the literature in order to develop responses to primary and secondary research questions. By exploring the historical role of women in Albanian Armed Forces, the perception of the society and its influence on the military culture, and challenges that other countries had in integrating women in combat units, the researcher will provide the necessary information to understand the complexity of the issues and the current situation of women in Albanian Armed Forces.

This chapter starts with the findings of the three secondary questions that are the main substance for answering the primary research question.

What is the historical role of women in the Albanian Armed Forces and how does it affect the integration of women in combat units today?

Albania has a long history, dating back thousands of years. Given this long and traditional history, it is unsurprising that in the early 20th century, it was a dominated patriarchal society. Women’s role in Albania was to stay home, take care of the family and raise children. Less was done toward decreasing the high number of illiterate women, improving their level of education and involving them in public activities.

Even though women were not allowed to play a significant role in public life because of the traditional patriarchal norms, it did not mean that they lacked the physical and mental capacities compared to men, rather, society would not allow them to use their physical prowess and intelligence in “non-traditional” venues (ie: outside the home). From Albanian history, it is clear women could be successful beyond their traditional roles. For example, many joined the Albanian resistance against several enemies. They fought with great heroism and became an inspiration for other generations.

As discussed in chapter two, the beginning of WWII saw the most remarkable moment in the history of Albanian women’s movement. More than 6,000 women joined the Albanian National Liberation Army and gave their contribution to the liberation of the country, despite society’s challenging stereotypes.<sup>97</sup> Many women contributed to the war by conducting noncombat activities such as nurses, cooks or guerilla activities but a small amount of women distinguished themselves by integrating into partisan combat units.

Although there was a lack of education, and experience regarding fighting and leading military units, women executed a large number of tasks within attacking brigades and divisions by displaying great courage and skills. They showed that they had all the capabilities to carry out “men’s tasks,” and possessed the same nationalism and patriotism toward their country as their male counterparts. Their great intellectual and social leadership accomplishments proved that they deserved to be involved in the front

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<sup>97</sup> Xhufi, “Gruaja në Luftë, një Mrekulli Shqiptare.”

lines of the war and the nation needed them there for success against the enemies. Their achievements also helped to build their reputation as skilled leaders.

Several arguments such as morale and cohesion, physical abilities, or abuse by the enemy, are used by many countries as “facts” for not allowing women in ground close-combat roles. But Albanian women with their performance in WWII, offer another reality. The morale and cohesion argument concludes that female integration in small mixed-gender tactical teams risks the maintaining the team’s cohesion and puts the close-combat operations success in danger. Bernard Zotaj, an Albanian military historian, stated that Albanian women performed in the front line of war various combat tasks assigned to them, they even held commanding positions in different units, by performing high discipline and motivation without impairing cohesion in the units.<sup>98</sup> Partisan women such as Hibe Palikuqi, was a company commander in one of the battalions of the XVIII attacking Brigade, Jolanda Klosi-Xhuvani, was the deputy commander of the second battalion, part of the XVII attacking Brigade and more than 47 other women, commanded and successfully achieved the unit mission without negatively affecting the cohesion.<sup>99</sup>

Even the demanding physical requirements in mountainous terrain and icy weather conditions did not deter the women from fighting heroically. They demonstrated that physical strength and aggressiveness when in direct contact with an enemy were not obstacles. They successfully achieved combat effectiveness. Women such as Margarita Tutulani, Liri Gero, Persefoni Kokedhima and many other heroines, are great examples

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<sup>98</sup> Zotaj, “Gruaja Shqiptare në Luftën Partizane.”

<sup>99</sup> Borici and Jahollari, *Oficeret Shqiptare ne Rrjedhen e Historise*, 6.

that show the successful performance of women in support of the unit mission. Not only did the women demonstrate physical and intellectual courage but also moral fortitude under torture. Four Albanian women were hanged or burned by the enemy for participating in the war and not sharing information about their comrades.<sup>100</sup> These examples of courage and heroism are significant lessons that should be taught throughout current Albanian military history and education, highlighting the all genders can be great soldiers and or leaders.

It is essential to understand that the masculine culture that existed in Albanian society during WWII was much more profound and broader than today, but still, it did not become a barrier to stop the participation of women in war. Women in particular are equal in their male counterparts' expression of patriotism and willingness to sacrifice for their country. Even though women did not have a legal obligation to join the partisan units, they chose and continued to fight and defend their country with their full potential. They did so alongside their male comrades with a great determination and strong will. AAF can learn these lessons and build from the foundation that women have given to the history, to improve its capability and recognize the important part all of its citizens can play in securing Albania from potential conflicts and future wars.

The main focus of the communist regime that ruled Albania from 1945 until 1991 was to defend its territorial integrity from any kind of aggression. For that reason, the regime built a vast military structure called the People's Armed Forces organized in active, reservist and volunteer forces. The government recognized that the women's role

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<sup>100</sup> Zotaj, "Gruaja Shqiptare në Luftën Partizane."

during WWII was beneficial and that including them at the Albanian Military Academy in 1967 would only make the People's AF stronger. For the first time, 71 women joined the military school and received education and training identical to their male' comrades. They received the commission as officers in 1969 and started serving in active forces in different positions in Land Forces, Navy and Air Force Commands. In 1970, 15 female officers graduated from the infantry school and were assigned in different positions including the combat units.<sup>101</sup> Giving women the chance to be in combat units was just the first step in creating a stronger and more sustainable force. The heroism, bravery and patriotism showed by women during the war served as inspiration for generations to come. Many of the women that volunteered to be part of the Military school in 1967, came from families that had played an important role during the war. Forty-three out of 71 females that joined the Military school in 1967, had one of their parents' participate in WWII.<sup>102</sup> Furthermore, the mothers of 13 female students, had been partisan in different attacking units. These women proved to the leadership and the country that they were ready to be part of the military organization and successfully command even on the front lines, when called to duty for their nation's survival.

Another milestone that positively impacts the gender integration in the AAF is the Albanian Constitution. The Albanian Constitution mandates the Albanian Armed Forces among other branches, to safeguard the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country; support and protect the civilians in time of peace, crisis and war; and

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<sup>101</sup> Borici and Jahollari, *Oficeret Shqiptare ne Rrjedhen e Historise*, 6.

<sup>102</sup> Grazhdani, *Pesha dhe Bukuria e Uniformes*, 36.

contribute to the peace and security in the region and beyond.<sup>103</sup> In respect of the Albanian constitution, all of the Armed Forces personnel have the same rights and obligations to contribute to the AAF. It seems extremely apparent that if women proved to be successful in much worse conditions 75 years ago during WWII, with no law supporting gender integration, they can be successful in today's environment where many things have been improved.

During the past 20-30 years, males have been predominant in all levels of the military structure. The AAF does not have any regulation that restricts the assignment of women in combat units. On the contrary, it and applies the same standards for female officers and NCOs in allowing them to get assigned in all positions in AAF, including, the combat positions. However, the current data do not support that the position assignments are equitable. Historically it has been shown that more than 47 women held commanding positions during WWII in 13 partisans' brigades and around 100 of them led the Youth organizations in the attacking units. While in 2017, only 32 female officers held commanding positions such as platoon leaders, and none of them in influential leadership positions such company or battalion commanders.

Through the long journey of women in AAF, officially since 1967, only one female officer so far has been promoted to brigadier general in 2016, brigadier general Manushaqe Shehu.<sup>104</sup> The low percentage of women in commanding positions and senior decision making are indicators of the gender discrimination that still exists in AAF. The

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<sup>103</sup> Grazhdani, *Pesha dhe Bukuria e Uniformes*, 40.

<sup>104</sup> Albanian Armed Forces, "Forcat e Armatosura të RSH për Herë të Parë Kanë një Gjenerale Femër."

lack of gender equality is known and identified by the military leadership. Specifically the Minister of Defense declared in January 2019 that AAF is still far from the real opening as a career opportunity of each girl and woman who wants to join and serve into the military organization.<sup>105</sup>

Meanwhile, civil and military leadership in Albania is now, different from many other countries that did not have that combat experience with women, and has so many great examples to learn from and apply in order to support the integration of women into the military organization. Through the analysis of the history about the role of women during the WWII and Communist regime, this research shows that the participation of women in combat units has not had a harmful impact, but on the contrary, it has strengthened the organization and has offered great examples to the Albanian society of what women can accomplish when given the opportunities and proper training. Women have successfully integrated into combat units, built a strong relationship with their male's colleagues and even lead them in the most difficult terrains and possess the same patriotic feelings, morale, and courage.

What is the single greatest societal influence on military culture and the role of women in combat units in Albania?

In order to have a clear picture of gender issues in the Albanian Armed Forces today, it is essential to study and understand the cultural dimension and different aspects of the Albanian society from WWII to today, and its influence on the military culture. Albanian society has undergone significant changes over the 20th century and the

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<sup>105</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Xhaçka Meets New Recruits."



beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. These changes have defined the role of women in Albanian society across all aspects to day to day activities. Through the long history, the patriarchal society set the conditions for the production of hegemonic masculinity and the subordination of women limiting female contribution to all aspects of Albanian lifestyles outside of the home.

Before the WWII period, Albania was in poor economic conditions, and still suffering the consequences of the long occupation by the Ottomans. The life into the society was organized based on prejudices and old misconceptions. The fundamental tenets of the traditional society were rooted in the central function of the family unit and strong patriarchal principles where family membership follows the male line and the position and social roles within the family were attributed according to gender, generation and age.<sup>106</sup> The lack of access to education for women, (more than 90 percent of women were illiterate) and the patriarchal behavior of the society became barriers for women to reach their full potential as contributing citizens of Albania. Even the unprecedented engagement of women in WWII was not seen as real emancipation of the society for increasing gender equality, but more as a patriotic need to support the partisan war and help the country to achieve freedom. After the threat was dissolved, traditions went back into effect.

During the period of 1945-1991, Albania was ruled by a totalitarian regime. The communist regime in Albania produced many supportive policies that reduced the gender gap that existed among men and women in Albanian society. The emancipation of

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<sup>106</sup> Vullnetari, "Women and Migration in Albania," 169.

women started with a dramatic improvement in literacy rates. The number of women participating in all levels of education increased continually and helped women to work in different jobs that previously were deemed inappropriate for them. Women also started to play a more diverse role in public life. By 1989 around 80 percent of working-age women were employed outside the home, almost half of university students were women, (only 3 percent of secondary-school students in 1945 were girls), and around 30 percent of the People's Assembly representatives were women compared to nearly 0 percent in 1945.<sup>107</sup> They were found in many social sectors, such as in occupation, legal rights, education, medical services, political participation, and other areas, improving Albania's GDP and making the country more stable against threats.

However, despite the government's efforts in making profound changes in gender integration and women's social status in the society, many authors raise their doubts about the true nature of changes at the individual and family level that maintained patriarchal values and structures of masculine control. Of course, changing the mentality and the masculine culture of a society that has held it for a long time is a complex and a long process. Success will take not only political desire but also the desire of the society to achieve effectiveness. According to Vullnetari, the roots of patriarchy in the private sphere were not fundamentally shaken, and a real feminist movement did not emerge during the communist regime. The author Ulf Brunnbanner in the article "From equality without democracy to democracy without equality?" cites that "[one] of the communist defining features was the ideological commitment to creating equality between men and

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<sup>107</sup> Vullnetari, "Women and Migration in Albania," 173.

women, albeit by administrative fiat rather than a sustained change in attitudes toward gender relations.” During his analysis, the author finds that the progress on gender equality under communism remained ambiguous, and it did not correspond to social reality. The absolute values replaced the patriarchal values and structures of the family patriarch. Many others argue, in the same way as Vullnetari and Brunbaner, that the communist regime forced the society to accept the gender equality by applying very harsh laws and policies. The changes did not come as a will of the people, or as feminist movement supported by the society, and therefore the masculine dominance inside the boundaries of the house did not improve much. For sustainable changes to occur, the Albanian people, individuals, the families as a whole, and society itself must understand and support the benefits that come to a Nation and its people by fully integrating all genders of its citizenship.

It is clear, that Albanian women improved their social status in the society even if dictated by laws and policies forced by the regime. The inclusion of women in the military school in 1967, almost 10 years before women were allowed to join the West Point Academy in US, was seen as the last manifestation of women entering the most traditional male domain.<sup>108</sup> Military women offered a new model that promoted social changes but was deeply influenced by the ideological approach of the communist system.<sup>109</sup> The historian Etleva Smaci, argues that the inclusion of women in the military

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<sup>108</sup> Peco-Baka, Slihi, and Leka, *Promoting Women in the Albanian Armed Force*, 2.

<sup>109</sup> Etleva Smaci, “Roli Emancipues i Gruas si Pjese e Forcave te Armatosura,” *Gjurmime Albanologjike - Seria e shkencave historike* 1, no. 45 (2015): 217, accessed 29 January 2019, <https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=355796>.

service ultimately served the cause of communist propaganda, not the Albanian people. The primary purpose of the system with assigning women to serve in the military was not to change the patriarchal system and offer gender equality but rather, a necessity to make people follow its revolutionary ideas and political propaganda to prepare the population to fight and sacrifice for the defense of the country.<sup>110</sup> The author Mady Wechsler Segal noted that when “cultural values favor limited military roles for women, but the national security situation presents a need for military labor, the threat to security would override the cultural values.”<sup>111</sup> From this research, it is unsurprising that the changes could not be sustained, and Albania paid a high price by slipping back into its traditional ways.

Although the communist regime involved women in the military organization with the purpose to drive cultural change, the research has uncovered that political and military leadership also did not support the whole integration that would bring deep changes in the mentality and society and would build the pillars for the future. Lt. Col. (retired) Grazhdani highlighted the positive attitude of the political and military leadership toward her and her female colleagues during military school and later in military service. However, she also mentioned that there was a lack of appreciation for women’s accomplishments in the military. One of the communist policies was to acknowledge high performing civilian and military personnel by awarding performance awards. But the political and military leadership rarely awarded military women with medals for their

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<sup>110</sup> Smaci, “Roli Emancipues i Gruas si Pjese e Forcave te Armatosura,” 221.

<sup>111</sup> Mady Wechsler Segal, “Women’s Military Roles Cross-Nationally: Past, Present, and Future,” *Gender and Society* 9, no. 6 (December 1995): 774, accessed 25 March 2019, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/089124395009006008#articleCitationDownloadContainer>.

performance as they did for men.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, the women suffered a lack of recognition affecting career progression.

The difficult political and economic transition of Albania in 1991, resulted in a rapid change for gender equality across the society. Authors of the article “Gender Equality and Democracy”, argued that the support for gender equality was not just a consequence of democratization, but a part of a broad cultural change that transformed many aspects of industrialized societies and supported the spread of democratic institutions. It has been argued that “the role of cultural change in values towards gender equality in public life, the process of modernization and economic development, cultural legacies represented by religious values, and democratic political institutions” are key elements that lead toward both the rise of women in public life and the development of democracy.<sup>113</sup> What Albanian society reflected after 1991 was far from being recognized as modernized country with democratic political institutions and economic development.

The isolation for more than 50 years from the rest of the world made it difficult for the society to adapt easily to all the political, economic, and cultural changes that the systems shift brought. The infant democratic institutions, deficiencies in law enforcement and the weak economy, generated uncertainties in the country. All these problems pushed Albanians toward a massive exodus after the 1990. Almost one-fifth of the population, mostly men, migrated from Albania between 1990 to 2000.<sup>114</sup> The massive migration of

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<sup>112</sup> Grazhdani, *Pesha dhe bukuria e uniformes*, 135.

<sup>113</sup> Inglehart, Norris, and Welzel, “Gender Equality and Democracy,” 23.

<sup>114</sup> King and Vullnetari, “A Population Suddenly on the Move,” 3.

working age men produced different social changes that would primarily affect the gender relations in society. Those changes led to deep gender discrimination and amplified the traditional gender role and inequalities within the household. Many of the migrants were the family heads and so it became the wives' responsibility to take care of the home and family.

Another element that influenced the loss of gender equality, was the severe economic crises. The labor market decreased the employment opportunities, especially for women and the labor force participation reached 70.5 percent for men and 46.7 percent for women by 2003.<sup>115</sup> In less than 12 years of transition, from 1991 to 2003, the percentage of women employed outside the home decreased with 30 percent compared with 80 percent of working-age women employed outside the home in 1989.<sup>116</sup> The high rate of unemployment not only decreased the percentage of women as a labor force but also their role in political decision making. Women's participation in politics decreased making up around 30 percent representatives of the People's Assembly in 1989 to making up only 5.7 percent of the representatives in 2003.<sup>117</sup>

The researcher presented in this paper that the forced emancipation of women during Communism period, the lack of strong state structures, the high number of unemployment and massive migration as major factors that weakened the contribution of

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<sup>115</sup> Stecklov et al, "Gender and Migration from Albania," 780.

<sup>116</sup> Vullnetari, "Women and Migration in Albania," 171.

<sup>117</sup> Open Data, "Pjesëmarrja e Femrave në Politikë 1990-2010," 2011, accessed 15 April 2019, <http://open.data.al/sq/lajme/lajm/lang/en/id/223/Pjesemarrja-e-femrave-ne-politike-1990-2010>.

Albanian women in public, political, and economic spheres considerably. Moreover, all these elements influenced the return of strong patriarchal principles regarding the traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity that deepen gender inequality.

Since the military is a microcosm of the society, changes applied to this organization reflect the cultural changes and trends of the society. This consideration of a male-dominated society has directly influenced the Albanian Armed Forces masculine culture. It is not surprising from this research to understand how the political and economic situations, the rapid gender changes in the society and the transformation of the AAF, resulted in a lack of support for gender integration by military leaders. Additionally, dramatic reforms and radical reorganization of the AAF in order to conform to NATO requirements, might have inadvertently negatively impacted females from continuing to serve in the military.

Major General Nazmi Cahani, in his strategic research project “Transforming the Albanian Armed Forces, Overcoming the Challenges” analyzes the deep reforms taken by the democratic government in order to transform the Armed Forces to a small interoperable force ready to join NATO. During the first transformation in 1992-94, the Armed Forces active duty personnel reduced from 120,000 down to 40,000 personnel. Even though the author has not analyzed the downsizing affect from the gender perspective, it greatly affected women’s opportunities for further career development. Lt. Col. (retired) Grazhdani offers some additional insights about the effects on women caused by the military reforms of the early 1990’s. Grazhdani notes that approximately 35 of 59 female officers of the class of 1969 were forced to leave the military at that period. Limited access to records precluded this author from obtaining an accurate count

of the number of women that left the military organization during that period outside of Grazhdani's reference to the class of 1969.

Another element that reflects the influence of the cultural changes in the military organization during the first years of the political transition in Albania, is the new rank system applied in AAF in 1991. During the communist regime, since 1 May 1967, military hierarchy was not built based on ranks but based on their functions in the organization.<sup>118</sup> The implementation of the "Law 7499, date 06.07.1991, For reapplying military ranks in the Albanian Armed Forces" had a high impact in the future advancement on the military career of many women.<sup>119</sup> From the 59 female officers of the class of 1969 with more than 23 years of active duty service, only two were promoted to Lieutenant Colonels, 6 to majors and 51 to captains. Women who remained in the military mostly were assigned in non-commanding or non-leadership positions such as secretaries, logistics, offices administrators or managers of maintenance compartments.

Even though the political and economic situation in Albania is currently stable, the security sector of society does not provide equal opportunities for career development between men and women. Despite the seemingly-low percentage of women in the Albanian military organization, 14.0 percent, is considerable compared with most of the other NATO members, however, the low representation of female officer/NCO in commanding and leadership position presents a clearer view of the whole picture.

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<sup>118</sup> Grazhdani, *Pesha dhe Bukuria e Uniformes*, 137.

<sup>119</sup> Ikub, "Per Gradat ne Forcat e Armatosura te Republikes se Shqiperise," accessed 30 March 2019, [http://www.ikub.al/LIGJE/309130002/Article\\_Per-gradat-ne-Forcat-e-Armatosura-te-Republikes-se-Shqiperise-.aspx](http://www.ikub.al/LIGJE/309130002/Article_Per-gradat-ne-Forcat-e-Armatosura-te-Republikes-se-Shqiperise-.aspx).



Women may feel that they need to demonstrate their capacities and prove themselves to take the respect and trust of their male colleagues and their instructors, whereas their male colleagues take that trust automatically, starting early in the military education system. In 2014, a New Jersey Army National Guard article titled “Albanian Women Lead from Front at NJNG Officer Candidate School Story” cited one Albanian female officer candidate that trained together with 23 other Albanian candidates for 12 weeks in New Jersey National Guard, “I want more than a gold lieutenant bar that comes if I graduate. I want the respect of my peers. I am in a tougher position because it is more than the instructors watching me. The men in the class are looking at me because they think I am not good enough.”<sup>120</sup>

The analysis of the societal influence on the role and the position of women in the military organization reflects the huge impact of the Albanian masculine society in the internal culture in the AAF. It remains a challenge for the Albanian Armed Forces to enforce a reducing effect of the masculine culture and change mentalities in the military in order to create and maintain a climate more conducive to gender equality within the armed forces without impairing the cohesiveness and operational effectiveness. It requires the support of the individual, family, society, political and military leadership to make sustaining changes.

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<sup>120</sup> Landis Andrews, “Albanian Women Lead from Front at NjNG Officer candidate school,” *Highlights*, 29 May 2014, accessed 16 December 2018, <https://www.state.nj.us/military/admin/highlightspdf/2014/may2914.pdf>.

### How do other armies integrate women in combat units?

Through analysis of Canadian, Israeli, and Norwegian societies and their status in integrating women in their Armed Forces and combat units, the researcher offers a better picture of how other armies wisely manage this process.

Canada has a diverse society in terms of gender, ethnicity, race, and religion, therefore, Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) face challenges to ensure that the military organization reflects the values and composition of the society. CAF continues to strive to better reflect the values of the Canadian society in the military ranks. In order to reflect the society, the revised CAF Employment Equity Plan (November 2010) established the long-term employment equity goal for recruiting women, aboriginals and visible minorities. The CAF Employment Equity Plan set as a goal the representation of women to the ratio of 25 per cent by 2026, however, as of 2017, the percentage was still below 16 percent.<sup>121</sup>

The CAF has opened all the combat roles to women since 1989; being one of the first NATO countries that lifted the ban and opened all occupations to women. Women's representation in the combat arms (armor, artillery, infantry, combat engineer) was less than one percent in 1989-90, when the combat arms were first opened to women. One of the most significant barriers in integrating women in the combat units was the existing masculine dominance in the military culture. To support and monitor the progress of

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<sup>121</sup> Canadian Armed Forces, (CAF), *Canadian Forces Employment Equity Report 2011– 2012*, Canadian Armed Forces for Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer, 2012, 4, accessed 28 February 2019, [http://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2014/mdn-dnd/D3-31-2012-eng.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee-archived.html?url=http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2014/mdn-dnd/D3-31-2012-eng.pdf).

gender integration in the CAF and specifically to combat units, the Minister of the National Defense created an Advisory Board on women in 1990. In 2001, women accounted for only 3.9 percent officers and 1.4 percent of noncommissioned members in combat units in 2001.<sup>122</sup> Walter Dorn, a professor of defense studies at the Royal Military College of Canada, agrees that the military is doing much work to improve the numbers – but still needs to do more to change the “culture.”<sup>123</sup>

In order to achieve the goals, the CAF is focused in different initiatives that will reduce discriminatory practices and attitudes. The initiatives such as recruiting and retention campaign to attract more women to a career in the CAF, particularly in the combat arms. To promote diversity and inclusiveness, the CAF establishes representation goals for women and monitors progress towards achieving those goals. The Defense Advisory Group provides advice and insight to the leadership on issues related with the implementation of employment equity by discussing the employment of equity policies, encourage new strategies regarding recruitment and retention, and support facilitation of positive work environments.<sup>124</sup>

The Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity (DHRD) is responsible for ensuring that CAF policies and programs are implemented in accordance with the

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<sup>122</sup> Febbraro, “Women, Leadership and Gender Integration in the Canadian Combat Arms,” 1.

<sup>123</sup> Kathleen Harris, “Military Missing Employment Equity Recruiting Targets,” *CBC News*, 2 August 2012, accessed 30 March 2019, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-missing-employment-equity-recruiting-targets-1.1255186>.

<sup>124</sup> National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, “Women in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 7 March 2019, accessed 20 March 2019, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=women-in-the-canadian-armed-forces%2Fizkjzueu>.

Employment Equity Act to achieve the Canadian Armed Forces' representation goals for women, and to provide a better work environment for all of their members. There is a gender advisor (GENAD) at the strategic level and two GENADs at the operational levels who provide advice and guidance to the Commanders on incorporating gender perspectives in policies, plans and operations. Despite these positive advances, the CAF faces a high level of sexual misconduct among the personnel. In 2015, the CAF launched Operation HONOUR, a mission to eliminate sexual misconduct and to ensure a professional work environment free from harassment and discrimination, in which all members are treated with respect and dignity, supported by the 2016 CAF Diversity Strategy and 2017 Action Plan.<sup>125</sup>

Israel society is made up of several groups that present a cultural diversity. Because of the complicated history of Israel, through the Defense Service Law in 1949, the government mandated military service for both men and women. The first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, recognized the role and values of women when he authorized the drafting of women in the IDF:

Women have been equal partners with regard to all rights and duties in the Zionist movement and in the State of Israel, in all of the State's projects, whether in construction or in defense, whether in the founding of the State or in the establishment of the Israel Defense Forces, and they have done their share in our War of Independence.<sup>126</sup>

Even though the IDF is considered as one of the most gender-neutral militaries in the world, for several decades' after 1949, military women were excluded from combat

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<sup>125</sup> National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, "Women in the Canadian Armed Forces."

<sup>126</sup> Rimalt, "Women in the Sphere of Masculinity, 1100.

positions. The real changes started to happen after 1990, when the feminist movement asked for more participation of women in the military. The Alice Miller case in 1994, became the motivation for the integration of women in the IDF. In 2000, the Supreme Court through an amendment to the Military Service Law, determined that women have an equal right to serve in any military role, including the combat positions such as Artillery Corps, Combat Engineering Corps, Light Infantry, Military Police, and Border Police.

Meanwhile, in 2001, the IDF established the Advisor to the Chief of Staff on Women's Affairs (currently changed to the Advisor on Gender Affairs) to address the needs of women, to promote equal opportunities for women in the IDF and the successful integration of female soldiers into the defense forces. In 2009, the Chief of Staff of IDF Gabi Ashkenazi, mentioned the importance of implementing gender equality in the IDF and listed three major motives for integrating women into the IDF:

1. Women must serve in the army because the IDF is a people's army;
2. As a people's army, the IDF is committed to the principle of the integration of women;
3. Women are integrated into the IDF as part of operational requirements that are vital for keeping the army strong and professional.

According to Professor Yagil Levy, a leading scholar on the relationship among army, society and politics in Israel, the increasing number of women in the IDF is important because:

From the army's perspective women became an asset not because of feminism, but because the IDF realizes that when there is economic pressure to shorten the obligatory service and the toll of the missions is not alleviated ... one mechanism

the army can use in order to slow down the shift towards a professional army is creating attractions to women, and opening new options.<sup>127</sup>

As a result of policy changes, over two decades, the number of women in military service in IDF increased considerably. The female combat soldiers in the IDF infantry units increased from 547 in 2012 to 2700 in 2017.<sup>128</sup> Table 3 illustrates that the number of female officers between the ranks of OF-4 to OF-6 increased from 2013 to 2018.

Year	Lieutenant Colonel	Colonel	Brigadier General
2013	291	24	3
2018	326	39	7

*Source:* Created by the author.

Throughout the years, the religious Zionist rabbis have contested the integration of women in the IDF. The religious leaders claim that increasing number of women in the IDF and their integration in combat units violates religious soldiers' right to practice their faith with the assumption that male soldiers who serve alongside women will be prevented from observing the Modesty laws.<sup>129</sup> For this reason, in 2002, IDF officials

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<sup>127</sup> Shulamit Almog, "Israeli Defence Force Struggles to Promote Women's Equality in the Face of Religious Opposition," *The Conversation*, 14 December 2016, 21 April 2019, <https://theconversation.com/israeli-defence-force-struggles-to-promote-womens-equality-in-the-face-of-religious-opposition-69326>.

<sup>128</sup> Old News, "IDF Chief Nixes Female Combat Tank Soldiers, despite Successful Trial," 14 April 2019, accessed 23 April 2019, <http://stiriinternationale.ro/idf-chief-nixes-female-combat-tank-soldiers-despite-successful-trial/>.

<sup>129</sup> Sasson-Levy, "Research on Gender and the Military in Israel," 90.

developed several regulations called the Proper Integration Ordinance, that set the rules for separate living quarters and modesty restrictions, while also stipulating the rights of the religious soldiers, such as refraining from certain activities requiring being with women in close quarters.<sup>130</sup> The final version of the Proper Integration Ordinance was issued in December 2017 as the Joint Service Ordinance.

Norway is known globally as the second gender neutral country (after Sweden) where values such freedom, social progress and tolerance play an important role in the society. Gender equality throughout Norwegian society is expected to be reflected within Norwegian Armed Forces. Although Norway is ahead of many other countries when it comes to the presentation of women in Norway military leadership (five women have served as Norway's Minister of Defense since 1999), and allowing women to serve in all combat functions since 1985, still the NAF is facing challenges in increasing the number of women in military. The Parliament White Paper presented in 2007 set as a goal the representation of women to the ratio of 20 percent by 2020, as of 2016, even though Norway (up from 9.5 percent in 2015 to 10.7 percent in 2016) had the largest increase (1.2 percent) with regard to the percentage of women in the armed forces between 2015 and 2016 among the NATO countries, the percentage was still below 11 percent, which is relatively low considering the gender neutrality of the society.<sup>131</sup> Norwegian women show a lack of interest in joining the military because of the high standard of living, and

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<sup>130</sup> Sasson-Levy, "Research on Gender and the Military in Israel," 89.

<sup>131</sup> Ada Elisabeth Fuglset, "Peer Effects on Female Soldiers' Aspirations in the Norwegian Army," (Master's Thesis, Department of Economics, University of Oslo, Oslo, Norway, January 2015), 1, accessed 14 April 2019, file:///C:/Users/IMSD/Desktop/Case%20Studies/Norway/FemaleAspirationsInArmy\_Nor.pdf.

the low level of unemployment, they seek other opportunities rather than being part of the NAF.

However, the NAF leadership has taken on the recruiting of women in their organization as an important issue. Norway drafted the universal conscription for both genders in 2014.<sup>132</sup> All Norwegians aged 17 (man and women) that meet the requirements undergo mandatory selection procedures for the armed forces. In 2016, Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg in one of the speeches addressed to women declared that:

It's really quite logical, and it emphasizes that the defense is not just about physical challenges and testosterone. Defense is as much about wisdom and good solutions.<sup>133</sup>

The NAF leadership has implemented different strategies with the main focus to affect gender equality and increase diversity within the NAF such as all-female training programs, introducing unisex lodging, and employing women in the highest levels of Norwegian military leadership. NAF, for the first time in 2014 introduced an all-female training program to an all-female special forces unit called Jegertroppen (Hunter Troops) part of Norway's Armed Forces' Special Command, with the main reason to use the capacities of women in special operations in places like Afghanistan where the culture prohibits male troops' communication with the half of the population, to include Afghan women that can share very beneficial information. Introducing unisex lodging on

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<sup>132</sup> The Straits Times, "Norway Introduces Compulsory Military Service for Women, Bunking them in Mixed Dorms with Men," 25 August 2016, accessed 23 April 2019, <https://www.straitstimes.com/world/europe/norway-introduces-compulsory-military-service-for-women-bunking-them-in-mixed-dorms>.

<sup>133</sup> Ovind, "Women in the Armed Forces is about more than Gender Equality."



volunteer bases in NAF has resulted positively in reducing the percentage of sexual harassment cases and building stronger relationships and cohesion among the personnel despite the gender. Nina Hellum, a researcher at the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment, analyzed the impact of unisex rooms in the Norwegian Armed Forces. She said:

When women and men share the same room they regard each other more as human beings and less in terms of gender. The separation of women and men creates myths and a distance, whereas frequent exposure increases the tolerance and understanding of each other.<sup>134</sup>

The analysis of the three case studies such as Canada, Israel, and Norway identified that the military reflects the diversity of the population in ethnicity and religion. These countries and their military organizations share the same understanding that the need for integrating women in the Armed Forces merges with the need of representing half of the population in the military organization. The process of recruiting and achieving gender equality in the Armed Forces, an organization organized by men and for men, faces multiple challenges and continues to be a global issue. Even though, attracting more women in all military duties and offering them more chances to progress in the military career have been the focus of the Armed Forces of the three cases studies analyzed still, the percentage of women in combat units, senior ranks, and leadership positions in respective Armed Forces remains low compared to men. The research showed that a successful process requires a broader engagement of all elements of the

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<sup>134</sup> Beate Sletvold Øistad, “Is the Norwegian Military Ready for Female Soldiers?” *Science Nordic*, 23 July 2015, accessed 23 April 2019, <http://sciencenordic.com/norwegian-military-ready-female-soldiers>.

society with concerning changing the masculine culture, and creating a more conducive climate related to gender equality.

### Summary

The aim of Chapter 4 by using the methodology described in Chapter 3, was to analyze findings offered in Chapter 2 and to develop responses to research questions regarding the ways that Albanian leadership can use to overcome the most significant challenges to integrating women in Albanian Armed Forces, especially in combat units. Through the analysis of several articles about the role of Albanian women in the military throughout the history, the researcher could identify that Albanian women possessed a high level of physical, intellectual, and moral courage that helped the organization and the country during the dark times, and framed role models that can be used from the current military leadership. The masculinity mindset rooted in the Albanian society, has highly influenced the military culture and has made women's career path rigid by lacking fair access to senior ranks and promote women to more leadership positions. The three case studies analyzed in this research, Canada, Israel, and Norway, despite the different status of their societies, have been ahead of many other countries regarding enacting different proactive policies to reduce stereotypes and recruit women in combat roles, but still need to do more to increase the percentage of women in senior ranks, especially in combat units. However, these case studies are still seen as success stories and are of value to countries wishing to accomplish similar integration feats. Many of the mistakes in integration of women into the armed forces have already been made by these countries, providing valuable tried-and-true methods available for adoption by Albanian and other

countries (pending culture) who are looking to increase equity and the number of women in the Armed Forces.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

The issues affecting the process of gender integration in Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) are part of a deeper cultural change in the masculine society that is unique to Albania. The conclusions of this research are organized within the secondary research questions.

#### What is the historical role of women in the Albanian Armed Forces and how does it affect the integration of women in combat units today?

From a historical perspective, this research showed that the great contribution and performance of Albanian women in the military organization, especially during WWII, offer important lessons to the current Albanian Armed Forces. History teaches that all Albanian citizens can play important part in securing Albania from potential conflicts and future war. Albanian women in particular demonstrated physical and intellectual courage but also moral fortitude under torture during WWII. Their actions demonstrate that women have the mental and physical potentials that could help the military organization to be more prepared and efficient for the dark times that can be on the horizon. Even though the Albanian society was characterized by a deep masculine culture, it did not become a barrier to stop women from making the greatest contribution in the defense of their country. The participation of more than 6,000 women in war, with more than 47 of them integrated in combat units holding commanding positions without having the right education and training, was a significant success that offers important lessons to the current Albanian military organization.

What is the single greatest societal influence on military culture  
and the role of women in combat units in Albania?

Changing the mentality and the masculine culture of a society that holds true to the cultural roots for a long period of time is a complex and a long process. Social, political, and economic situations in Albania over the first decades of 20-th century, gave men conditions for the production of hegemonic masculinity and the subordination of women on a social scale. Even though the progress on gender equality under Communism in Albania improved the status of women in all spheres of public life, it still remained ambiguous and very questionable about the real female movement. The lack of strong state structures, the high number of unemployment and massive emigration after the collapse of the communist regime, influenced a return to the traditional conceptions of masculinity and femininity, while weakening the contribution of Albanian women in public, political, and economic spheres considerably.

This research paper provided evidence that the Albanian society is still considered a highly male-dominated society. Therefore, this consideration has directly influenced the Albanian Armed Forces culture. The lack of presence of women in combat units in commanding and leadership positions, the low number of women in senior ranks and in military decision making levels, are important elements that show that Albanian military women's participation in all spheres of the military structure is limited. Women do not have equal opportunities for advancement, compared to their male colleagues.

A commitment by leaders at all levels may assist in reducing masculine dominance in the organization and create a more inclusive culture. It is very difficult to import change in the military, and if the masculine culture inside the organization is too

rigid with no will of change, then it is the leaders' responsibility to create and communicate the new vision.

How do other armies integrate women in combat units?

The author conducted a global search of the history and the chronology of military events in Canada, Israel and Norway to understand the combat barriers and the ways these countries use to attract, and integrate women in combat units. Even though the percentage of women in the military varies from country to country, common to these countries is that the organizational culture within the military organizations is influenced by the masculine culture inherent in these societies. Even though the governments of these three countries have been very active in producing effective policies regarding gender equality, the implementation of these policies has faced several obstacles related with specifics of each society.

Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has worked hard to reflect the diversity of Canadian society in gender, ethnicity, race, and religion, and has no limit to career opportunities for women, but still the percentage of military women in the organization is below 16 percent, with only 2.1 percent in combat units.<sup>135</sup> Among the gender equality policies implemented from CAF, sexual harassment policies are extremely important. In addition, the CAF has experienced problems publicly with misconduct, which some point to as a result of the male dominance in CAF, resulting in an environmental breeding ground for sexual harassment.

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<sup>135</sup> CAF, *Canadian Forces Employment Equity Report 2011-2012*, 4.

Israel a nation with a complicated history, but has seen the role of women in the protection of the country as very crucial since the establishment of the nation in 1948. Israeli women have come a long way on the path to integration in the military, however, they started to be integrated in combat units, only after the 1990-s, supported by a feminist movement. The integration of women in Israeli Defense Forces has been contested throughout the years by the religious Zionists. The leaders of this religion see the increasing number of women in the IDF as an obstacle that violates religious soldiers' right to practice their faith.

Norway, considered a neutral gender society with a high standard of living, is ahead of many other countries when it comes to the lower tolerance for the masculine culture in the military. Different policies that reflect the neutrality of the society are successfully implemented in Norwegian Armed Forces (NAF), among them the implementation of the mandatory conscription for women since 2016. Even though NAF has been more inclusive toward women, still the percentage of women in the military organization is lower than many other NATO countries. Attracting women to the military organization is seen as a challenge because most Norwegian women show a lack of interest in joining the military. The case study of Norway shows that although society influences the military culture, not always does it directly affect the accession rate of women in the military.

### Recommendations

In the past, times were dire and the military only allowed women to serve out of desperation. However, the performance of these women is a clear indicator that prior to that time, the military had been excluding 50 percent of a usable workforce simply

because they weren't desperate enough to go through the "work" (policy/procedures) to be inclusive. Dark times may again be on the horizon and integrating now is the smart move, regardless of "societal constraints" or "traditional fears."

Despite the biological differences in gender, all the other differences among the military personnel such as work ethic, leadership and intellectual capabilities are developed through education, training and experience. Offering every military female, the same rights as a military male to work, train and get the experience of all positions in operational units will support women's advancement in military careers, and their future integration in the military organization. Even though the process of integrating women alongside men in combat roles gets resistance by the deeper masculine climate created in those units, it is time to make progress and offer gradual changes. The findings of this study suggest several recommendations for the Albanian Armed Forces civilian and military leadership:

1. The Ministry of Defense (MoD)/General Staff (GS) should develop better career opportunities, assign women in the first hand positions in order to provide stable and rewarding career path for them toward the senior ranks, just like is done for the males. Preparing good female role models will help the young generation, especially females, to understand the benefits of being part of the military organization. It is amplified that young generation will not be willing to join the Armed Forces if they see the AAF as a career limited opportunity. Other than policies on the paper that "talk the talk", they need role models that "walk the walk."



2. The current leadership seminars in the Albanian Military Academy should address complex leadership challenges and specifically prepare the officers how to lead the next generation of women in the military. Educational resources that increase awareness of the effects of culture, how to change successfully the climate in the units, and specifically education resources that help to build cohesiveness on male female-male units.
3. Creating an Advisory Board on Women at the General Staff level to monitor the progress of gender integration in the Albanian Armed Forces and provide women with equal opportunities, encourage new strategies regarding recruitment and retention. Include gender advisors in each unit not only as an important part of everyday work, but also as part of foreign operations conducted by AAF in cooperation with NATO or UN, at all stages of preparation and deployment.
4. Building and implementing a mentorship program that will provide a career guidance related to schooling, and will support career enhancing position in each branch, by offering the proper feedback in real time.
5. The MoD/GS should establish processes for better data collection to understand statistics for women.
6. Creating support groups in each component command where military women can share their experiences and challenges faced in their daily basis.

#### Future Research

This research attempted to paint an overall historical picture of the position and the role of women in Albanian society starting from WWII to present, and analyzed some

of the actors and social factors that shaped the military perception concerning the integration of women in the military organization, especially in leadership positions and combat units. The research analyzed the chronology of military events in Canadian, Israeli and Norwegian Armed Forces and provided some immersing points of view about the barriers and the ways used by these countries to attract, and integrate women in military.

It is highly recommended that further research should be focused in the processes regarding the policies applied for recruitment, especially considering the needs and interests of the younger generation. Who the AAF recruits today will be the future NCOs and Officers. It is from them that the new Generals and Command Sergeant Majors will be drawn in the future. The profession of arms, as complex as it is, cannot afford excluding 50 percent of the young generation and still have the luxury of recruiting the best that the nation has to offer. The recruitment should be oriented not so much for a better percentage of women in the AAF but rather for better quality and equal education and career for all members of Albanian society inspired to serve their country. Those career enhancing positions and promotions should be equally open for women and men establishing a better balance that promotes both cooperation and competition.

Another future research area of interest is the feedback that can be provided by the female deployed personnel and their relationship with their direct and superior commanders. This will help to portray their performance on the ground, strengthening their weaknesses and what is more important than increasing percentages, promoting equality and quality. Such studies will provide continuous insights to better understand

the military culture which should lead to continuous adaptation to the overall military organization.

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