

THE IMPACT OF
COMPULSORY MILITARY
SERVICE AND ARMED
CONFLICTS ON ARMENIAN
MEN'S PERCEPTION OF
MASCULINITY AND LIFE
VALUES

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INTRODUCTION



Mandatory military service and armed conflicts have long been pivotal forces shaping personal identities and societal values. In the Armenian context, generations of men have grappled with the complexities of duty, compassion, and evolving masculinity amidst geopolitical turmoil.

My capstone paper delves into the profound impacts of military service on Armenian men's perspectives regarding life values and masculinity, exploring themes such as strength, bravery, nationalism, and patriotism. Through a blend of quantitative survey and qualitative oral history interviews, this study aims to comprehensively examine how military service reshapes ideals and perceptions, offering insights into the intricate interplay between individual experiences and societal dynamics within the Armenian community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

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Grønnerød et al. (2008) advocate for examining civil-military interactions and the construction of masculinities, stressing the importance of considering gender dynamics in security and military politics.

Compulsory military service in Armenia mirrors the Finnish context, linking national identity to the armed forces and presenting military service as a transformative experience for young men.

Theidon's (2009) research on DDR processes in Colombia explores the complexities of militarized masculinity, emphasizing the importance of addressing issues of spousal abuse and family dynamics during reintegration.

Theidon suggests incorporating sentimental and physical re-education into the reintegration process to offer alternatives to militarized masculinities.

LITERATURE REVIEW



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Jamieson's (1996) historical account examines the intersection of military operations and personal relationships during wartime, challenging oversimplified notions of military masculinity.

Jamieson questions feminist portrayals of the military as inherently patriarchal, emphasizing the complexity of gender norms and emotional experiences among servicemen.

Theweleit's (1985) exploration of the Freikorps reveals the intricate relationship between masculinity, aggression, and sexuality, highlighting the addictive allure of combat and sacrifice.

Theweleit's analysis delves into the socio-political context of Germany post-World War I, demonstrating how violent experiences shaped ideas of national identity and manhood.

The literature review identifies limitations in existing research, such as a narrow focus on specific contexts and a lack of explicit links between military service, masculinity, and life values, motivating the comprehensive approach adopted in the capstone research.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS



- How does compulsory military service in Armenia influence the development of masculine identity among men, particularly regarding perceptions of strength, bravery, and duty?
- How do Armenian men conceptualize notions of patriotism, nationalism, and citizenship in the context of their military service experiences?
- How do Armenian men perceive their roles and responsibilities within the family and society before, during, and after military service?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How do the experiences of Armenian men who have undergone compulsory military service but have not participated in armed conflicts differ from those who have experienced both military service and active engagement in armed conflicts in terms of their perceptions of masculinity and life values?
- What are the psychological and emotional impacts on Armenian men who have served in the military during peacetime compared to those directly involved in armed conflicts, and how do these differences manifest in their post-service lives?



METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Method - Oral History Interviews:

Purpose: Explore individual experiences, perceptions, and reflections on compulsory military service and armed conflicts among Armenian men.

Approach: Conduct semi-structured oral history interviews to delve into personal narratives and perspectives.

Sampling: Utilize purposeful sampling to select diverse interviewees representing various backgrounds and military experiences.

Data Analysis: Employ thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes within interview transcripts.

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative Method - Survey:

Purpose: Gather structured data to gain quantitative insights into attitudes and experiences related to military service among Armenian men.

Approach: Design and distribute a survey questionnaire to collect standardized responses from a broader sample.

Sampling: Use purposeful sampling to select participants with diverse backgrounds and military experiences.

Sample Selection: Include three interviewees: one who served in the army but didn't engage in war, one who participated in the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War (2020), and one who participated in both the First and Second Nagorno-Karabakh Wars (1988–1994).

Data Analysis: Utilize statistical techniques such as descriptive and inferential statistics, along with correlation analysis, to analyze survey data and complement qualitative findings.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The oral history interviews provide illuminating insights into the profound impact of military service on individual perceptions, social values, and national identity among Armenian men. Through these narratives, it becomes evident that military service acts as a transformative experience, reshaping personal ideals and challenging societal norms. The interviews reveal how education, upbringing, and societal influences shape attitudes towards military service from a young age, with historical narratives and societal expectations often glorifying the role of soldiers as exemplary citizens. However, disillusionment sets in when the reality of military service fails to align with romanticized portrayals, prompting individuals to reassess their values and communication styles both during and after their service.

INTERVIEW #1 WITH SARGIS BAGHDASARYAN



- Military service in Armenia is highly valued and praised, being considered an essential aspect of being an exemplary citizen.
- Compulsory military service drastically shifts a soldier's value system, reevaluating priorities and emphasizing the defense of family over personal interests.
- Communication standards differ significantly between military life and civilian life, leading to challenges in reintegrating into society post-service.
- The discrepancy between societal expectations of soldiers and the reality of military life can lead to disillusionment and disappointment among servicemen.
- Participation in war situations can diminish social hierarchies within the military, fostering a sense of shared responsibility and perspective among soldiers.

INTERVIEW #2 WITH DAVIT GEVORGYAN

Davit Gevorgyan's upbringing in Sisian, Syunik province, involved early exposure to hunting and fishing, providing him with familiarity with weapons before entering the military.

- Despite initial concerns about jeopardizing his future career as a physician, Gevorgyan embraced military service as a patriotic duty and found camaraderie and discipline beneficial.
- His military experience emphasized the importance of balancing physical and mental abilities, recognizing the need for both literacy and physical fitness among soldiers.
- Gevorgyan's concept of patriotism evolved from initially protecting his family to encompassing a commitment to the nation, enhanced through participation in Army Day celebrations.
- Improved discipline and communication skills acquired during military service positively impacted Gevorgyan's relationships with family and friends, fostering mutual appreciation and understanding.



INTERVIEW #3 WITH VIGEN KHACHATRYAN



- Vigen Khachatryan's involvement in the Artsakh movement from a young age instilled in him a sense of responsibility and readiness for military action, driven by national pride and solidarity.
- A comparison between his experiences in the First Nagorno-Karabakh War and the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War highlights significant changes in military tactics and technology over the past three decades, emphasizing the dominance of contemporary weaponry in the 2020 conflict.
- Khachatryan's observations on the 2020 Artsakh war underscore the geopolitical vulnerability of Armenia and the disappointing realization of Azerbaijan's advancements in building a modern and competitive army.
- The realities of war led to a reassessment of priorities for Khachatryan, with a newfound appreciation for peace, familial relationships, and the value of historical and political education in understanding the complexity of modern warfare.

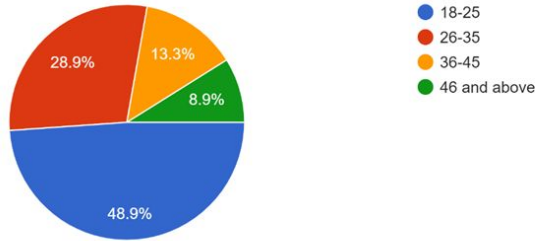
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The survey analysis further enriches our understanding by providing quantitative insights into the perceptions and experiences of respondents regarding military service and patriotism. It highlights the generational shifts in attitudes towards military service and the complex interplay between upbringing, cultural influences, and military experiences in shaping individuals' definitions of patriotism. While military service fosters a strong sense of duty and loyalty to one's country, it also raises questions about the broader implications of a militarized definition of patriotism, potentially overshadowing other forms of civic engagement and peaceful patriotism. This underscores the need for further research into the intersection of military service, masculinity, and patriotism, as well as the challenges veterans face in transitioning to civilian life and fostering national unity.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

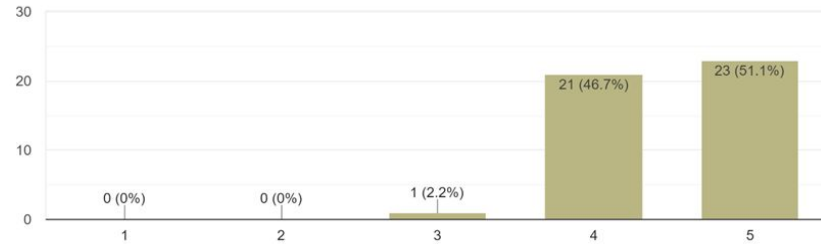
Age

45 responses



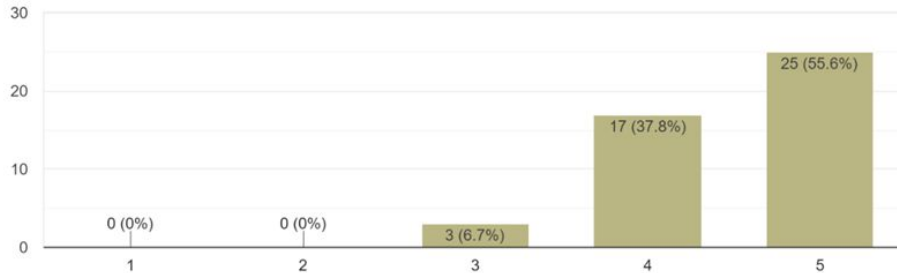
My military service has instilled in me a greater sense of discipline.

45 responses



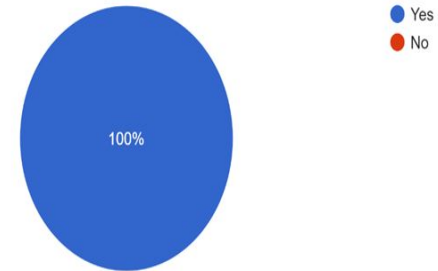
I perceive a sense of duty towards my country due to my military service.

45 responses



Do you believe your military service experience has influenced your understanding of patriotism?

45 responses



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THANK YOU