

# Military conscription The Norwegian experience

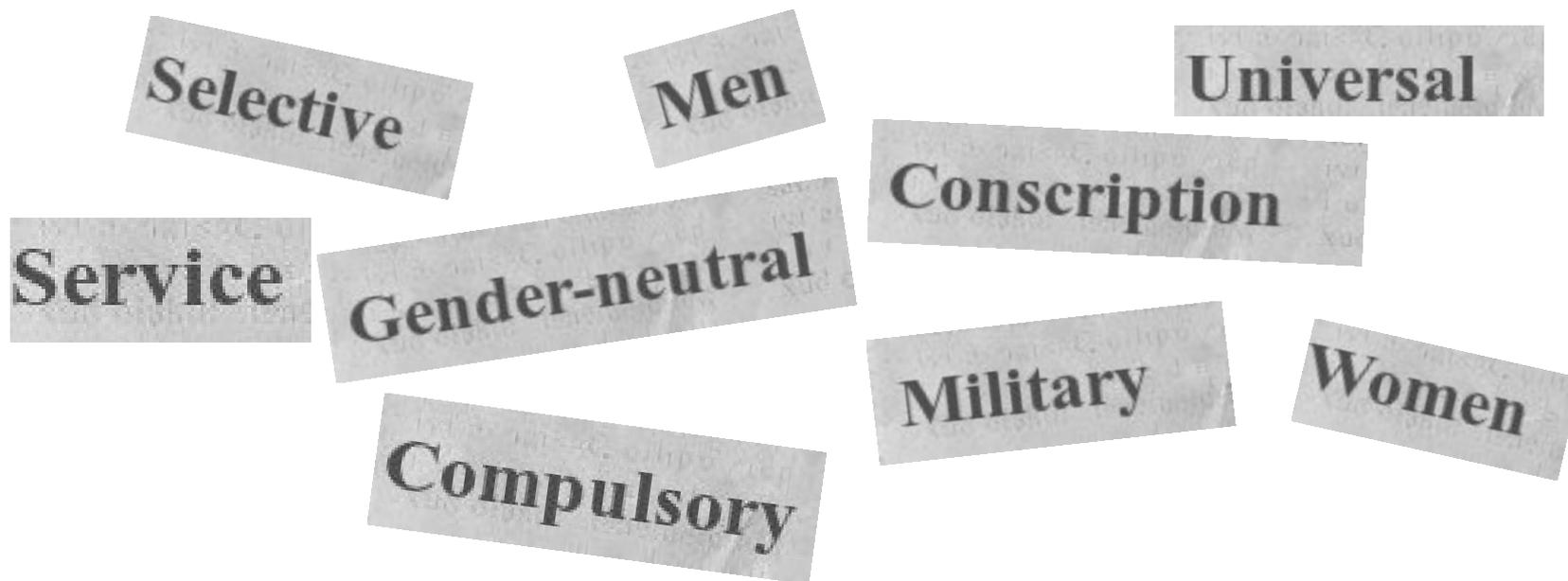
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Principal Scientist

Helsinki, March 8<sup>th</sup> 2018

# Agenda

- Conscription taxonomy (in Norway)
  - Phrasing, understanding and reasoning
- The big lines
  - Recent development (past 10-15 years)
  - The selection process
- Gender based research (during the first 12 months of conscription)
  - Mixed-rooms
  - 50/50 experiment in ground-to-air battalion
  - All female SR platoon (in SOF)
- Different (negative) views on Selective Gender-Neutral Conscription
- Reserve forces and reservists – a natural part of conscription?

# Have I got news for you?



# Have I got news for you?

Selective

Men

Universal

Service

Gender-neutral

Military

Women

Compulsory

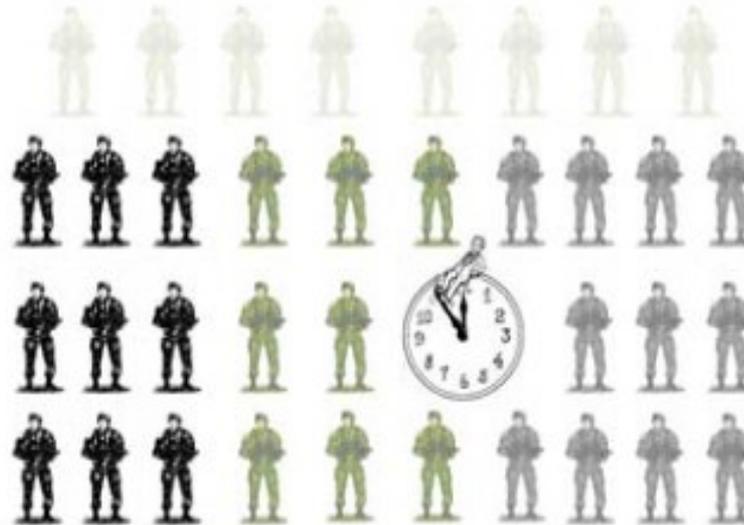
Conscription

# The big lines

- In principle there are three ways of producing soldiers
  - Compulsory service
  - Differentiated service
  - Professional defence



Compulsory



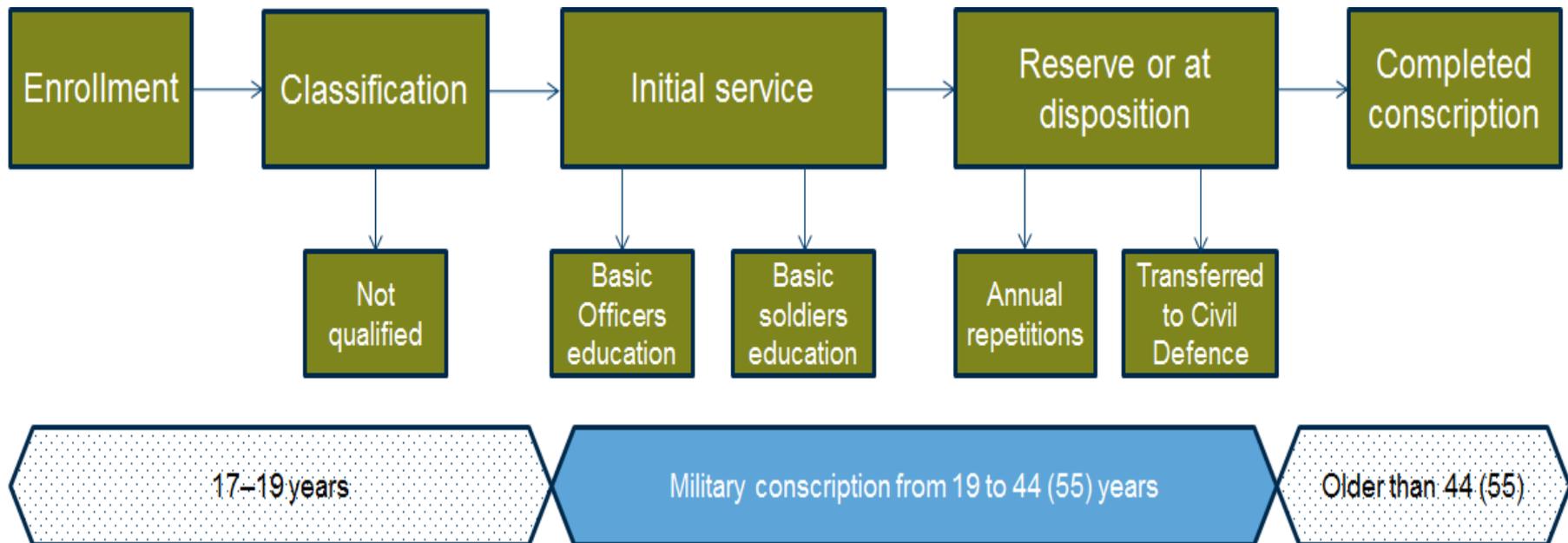
Differentiated  
(selective gender-neutral conscription)



Professional

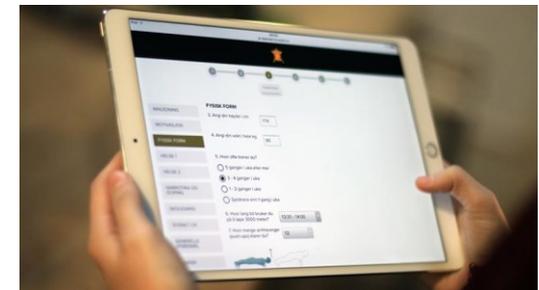
# The big lines

- The main principles of selective gender-neutral conscription
  - No more than 19 months of service between 19 and 44 (55)
  - The enrollment and classification is a joint venture
  - The branches can differentiate between 6 and 18 months of initial service (the rest is used as reservist)



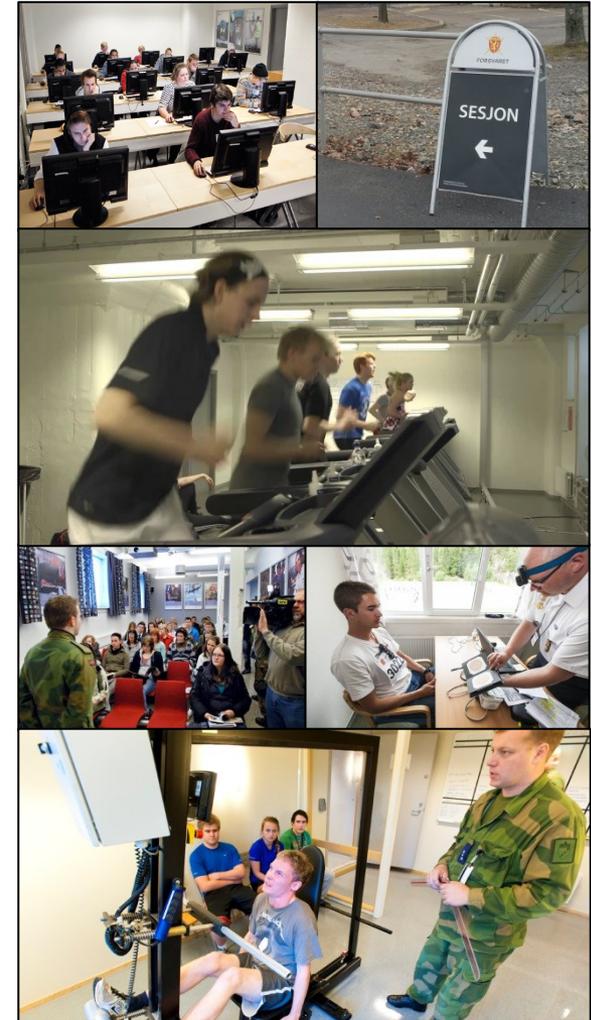
# Selective gender-neutral conscription

- Self assessment
  - All 17 year olds must fill in a electronic survey regarding their health, social profile, motivation for service, performance at school, physical fitness, etc.
    - Annually around 60 000 respondents ( $\approx 99\%$ )
    - One try only
    - 50-55 questions (varies a little per year)
    - $\approx 50$  percent women
  - The “right” combination of motivation, eligibility, performance and demographics qualifies for personal test and final assessment for service
    - Convene/summons annually 20–25000 for testing
    - $\approx 40$  percent women

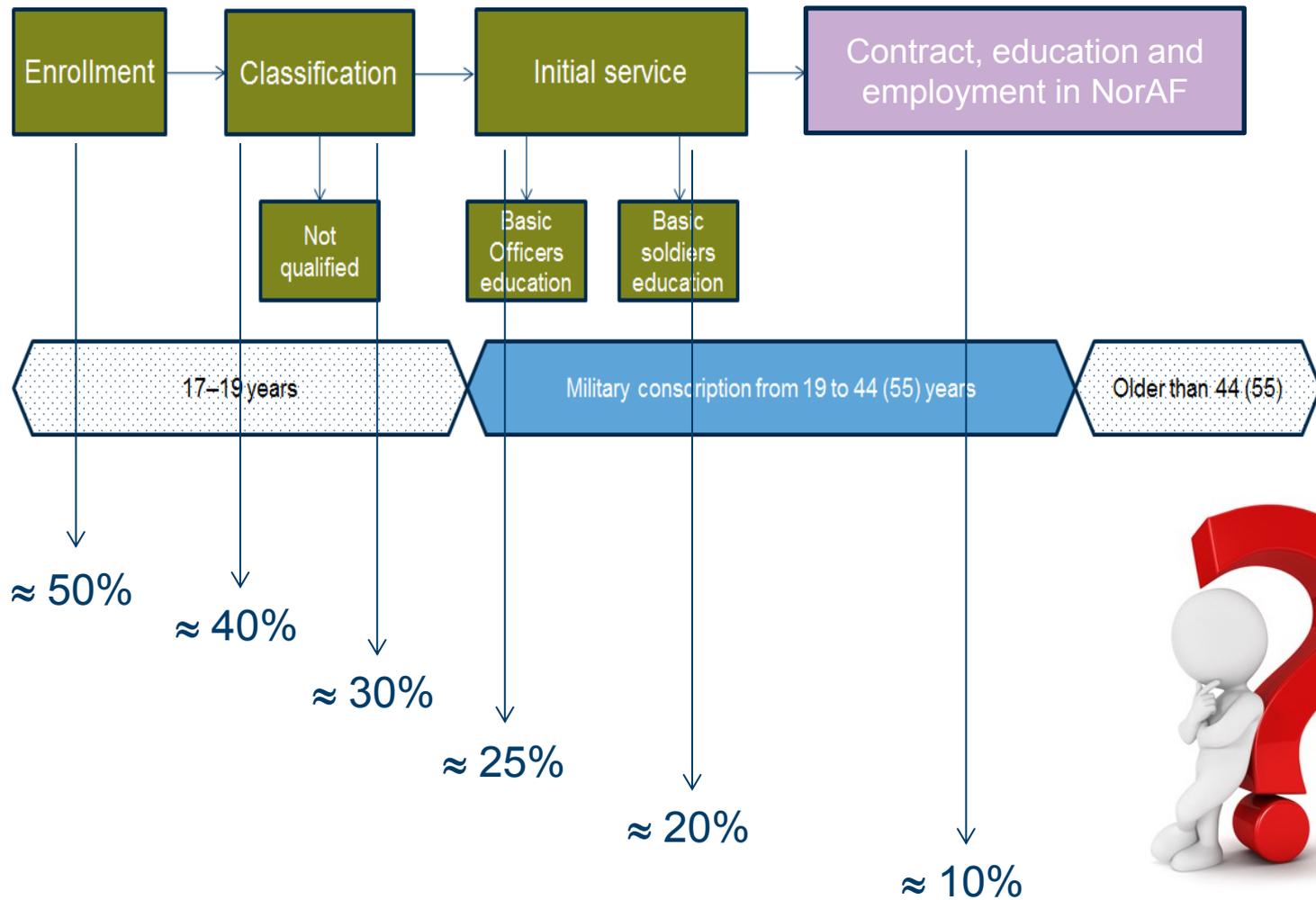


# Selective gender-neutral conscription

- Personal testing and objective/ subjective assessment
- Based on the answers on the self assessment one are qualified for
  - Physical testing
  - Cognitive testing
  - Medical examination
  - Interview with officer
- Given the results one are given a date for starting the first part of conscription
  - 6–18 months of initial service
  - ≈ 25 percent women



# The reduced share of women



# Gender based research in the initial service

## Mixed-room policy

- Does mixed rooms make a difference in soldiers perception, motivation, values, attitude, performance etc.?
- Should it be enforced under strict guidelines from strategic level, using local guidelines or just being voluntarily choice among the soldiers?



See "The Gender Mission" (≈ 25 minutes) at <https://goo.gl/djteGd> (case sensitive)

# Gender based research in the initial service

## Field experiment on mixed-rooms

- The importance of randomness
  - Random sleeping arrangements
  - Random assignment of experimental factors\*
- Short case assignment given to the soldiers
  - *The unit is choosing new squad leaders. The squad leader is the link between officers and soldiers. For some, this position can be very physically and mentally demanding. The position requires high skills. As squad leader, one is responsible not just for oneself, but also for the team.*
    - A potential candidate Ida (or Martin)\*



# Gender based research in the initial service

## 50/50 experiment in ground to air battalion

- A temporary experiment, by the HR-staff and the military unit in question
  - What happens if there is 50 percent women in the unit?
- Qualitative and anthropological study of changes in culture
  - Combining the “Jo-Jo”-method and participant observation
- Main findings
  - Difference in gender did not matter
  - Sharing tasks and missions based on competency, not gender. Good cooperation among the soldiers
  - High tolerance for each other, low sexual tension



# Gender based research in the initial service

From the 50/50 experiment research; The toilet paper



In a military unit with low share of women



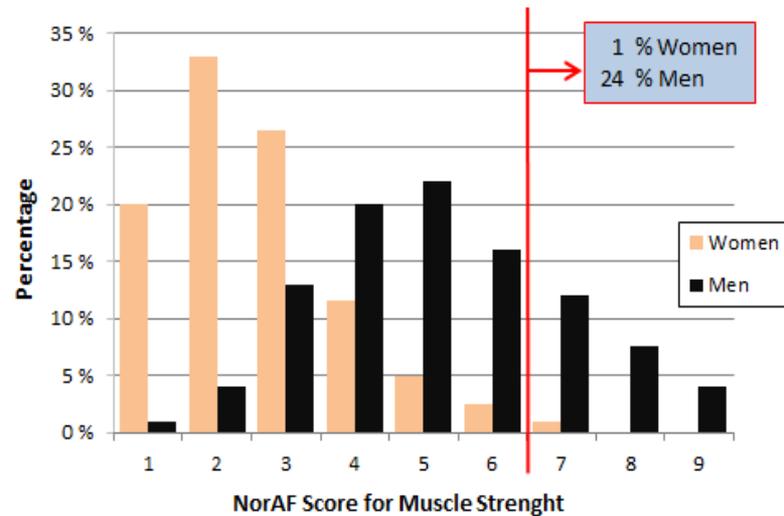
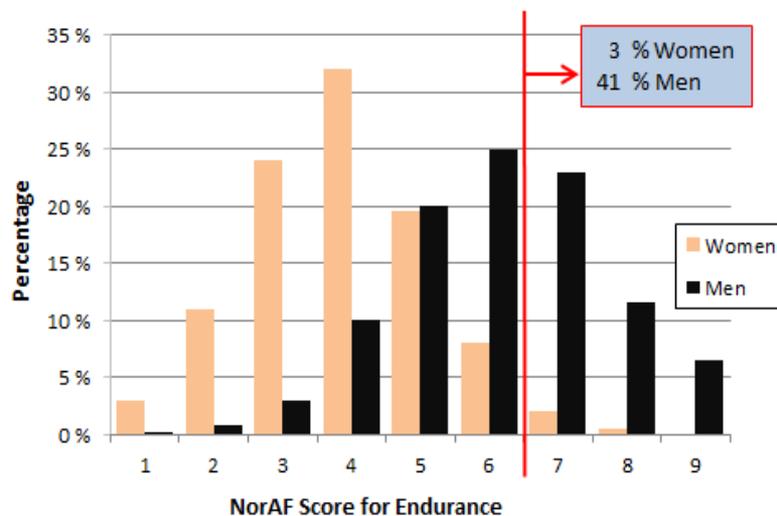
In the military unit with high share of women

# Gender based research in the initial service



## All female SR platoon at NORSOC

- When selecting men and women together, the difference in physical capabilities are creating an unfair competition
  - Nor standardized physical tests or basic requirements should prevented women to compete → gender based competition given the same requirements



# Gender based research in the initial service

- One article that shortly summarizes
  - Mixed rooms
  - Use of Field experiments
  - 50/50 experiment
  - All female SOF platoon
- Published in Res Militaris

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## 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?

By Nina Rones

Gender-mixed dormitory rooms have been introduced to ease the integration of female soldiers into the Norwegian Armed Forces. This has gained tremendous international attention,<sup>1</sup> while research has assigned several positive effects to such unisex rooms. In essence, researchers have argued that sharp distinctions and less understanding between men and women will ensue "if female soldiers live in their own barracks or serve in their own platoons" (Hellum, 2016, p.30); on the contrary, unisex rooms provide them with intense exposure to the opposite gender, thus promoting a gender-positive secondary socialization that will deemphasize gender differences as well as reduce sexual harassment and unwanted masculine behaviour.<sup>2</sup> Intense exposure will allegedly change gender stereotypical prejudices and combat discriminatory attitudes towards female leaders.<sup>2</sup> Also, findings such as less gossiping among girls and increased team cohesion, respect, tolerance and non-sexual camaraderie across genders are ascribed to the close contact that occurs between men and women in these rooms.<sup>4</sup>

Although these researchers seem to agree that gender-mixed rooms enhance gender equality in male-dominated military organizations, there is disagreement about the various methods used, the interpretation of shared findings, and the conclusions that can be drawn from them.<sup>5</sup> In particular, Ellingsen and colleagues (2016) urge caution in elevating the apparent success of mixed rooms to a "grand theory" where the coming together of women and men will almost magically result in gender equality and de-sexualized relationships. They ask for more research that takes into consideration the contextual situation within which the mixed rooms are introduced.

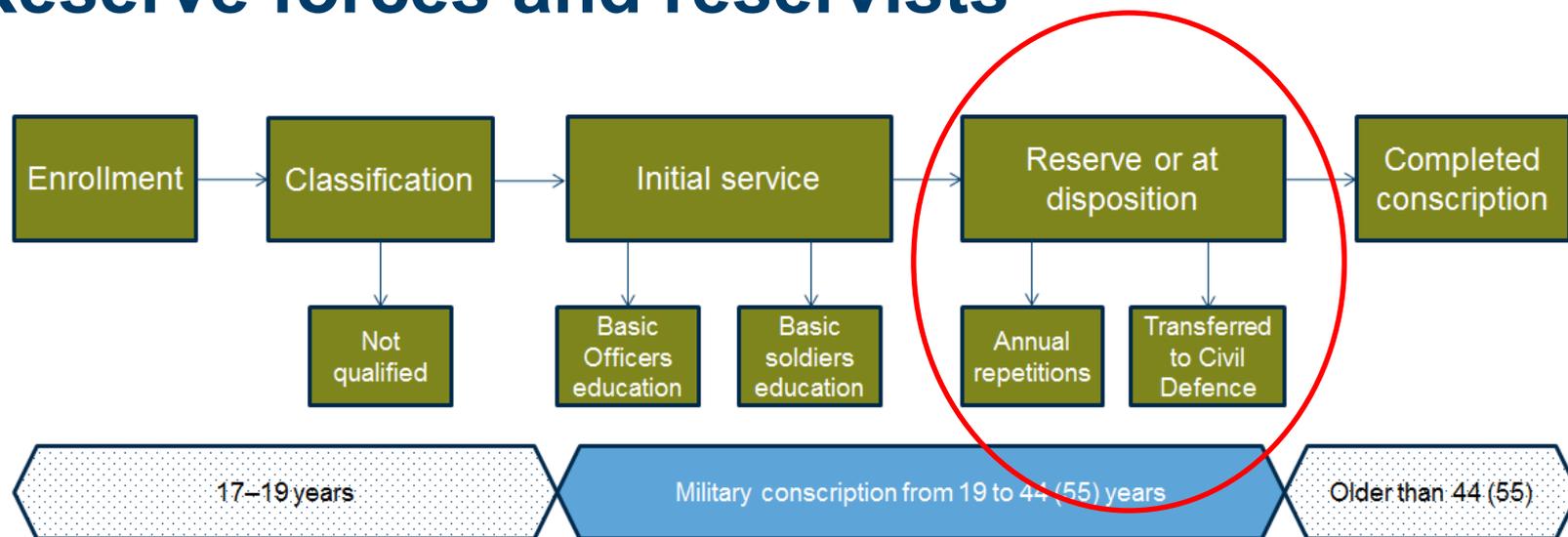
<sup>1</sup> News articles that express astonishment over gender-mixed rooms can be found in a number of countries : <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/03/25/world/social-issues-world/norway-army-garrison-study-finds-unisex-dorms-reduce-harassment/#WNa3uKf1-UK> ; <http://www.pressreader.com/thailand/bangkok-post/20140826/281659664462458> ; <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-05/norway-united-sets-army-5638770> ; <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/norway/2017-01-19/norway-radical-military-experiment> ; <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2014-mar-25/norwegian-army-sexual-harassment-claims-fall-after/> ; <sup>2</sup> Ellingsen, Lilleaas & Kimmel, 2016 ; Hellum, 2014, 2016 ; Lilleaas & Ellingsen, 2014. <sup>3</sup> Finseraas, Johnsen, Kotvadum & Torrvik, 2015a. <sup>4</sup> Ellingsen et al., 2016 ; Hellum 2014, 2016 ; Lilleaas & Ellingsen, 2014. <sup>5</sup> Ellingsen & Lilleaas, 2015 ; Ellingsen et al., 2016 ; Finseraas, Johnsen, Kotvadum & Torrvik, 2015b.

Published/publié in *Res Militaris* (<http://resmilitaris.net>), vol.7, n°2, Summer-Autumn/Été-Automne 2017

# Negative views on Conscription

- One thing in common
  - A misunderstanding of universal conscription and selective conscription
    - The new way of doing conscription is not fully understood
- Female critics
  - Conscription for both men and women is not equal treatment
    - Women are still regarded to be the weakest gender in the society
    - Women still take more responsibilities in childcare, household and care of elderly
  - More duties on women leads to less equality
- Male critics
  - (Too) high share of women reduces combat effectiveness
  - Extra (and unnecessary) costs in infrastructure

# Reserve forces and reservists



- In the following years after the initial service
  - 20-25 (35) years with the status as a reservist
- Main “consumer” of reservists are the Homeguard
  - A rapid mobilization force in the Norwegian military
    - Ready in less than 4 hours
    - Founded in 1946
  - About 45 000 soldiers/officers



# Other reservist and reserve forces

- What is the best use of the 19 months available of conscription?
  - Besides the use of reservists in the Homeguard there is little utilization of reservists in the Norwegian Armed Forces
- Public political/researcher committee regarding military conscription (Vernepliktsutvalget)
  - Keep selective and initial service around 12 months
  - Exploit their competency more frequently the following three years after “graduation”
    - In addition to extra capacity also a compensation for those soldiers still in the education period
- Public military/researcher committee regarding army and land based forces (Landmaktsutvalget)
  - Expand the selective and initial service to 16 months – use this personnel as reserve and/or on alertness as long as they are regarded “trained”

# Questions / Comments

