Leadership competency can be developed. One of the tools for development is training. Military leadership training develops general leadership competency in the Finnish society. Research in the field of Military leadership is gender biased.

This study contributes to prior research by making a female point of view visible. Education study is relevant since it serves the economical recovery of the society, affecting educational policy decision-making and enables international comparison in the field of leadership competency. Studying publicly funded military leadership training is important because it can be used to influence leadership competency in the future labor force.

The framework of this study is based on social constructionism, leadership competency and gender. Social Constructivism is based on an understanding of a human as a linguistic, social and cultural being, who builds its perception of the world in social interaction with other beings. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966)

This study understands leadership competency as an individual, proficiency and contextual concept. It changes throughout time and develops including knowledge and skills, which are needed to successfully perform leadership tasks.

There have been several studies of the Finnish Defence Forces and military service from the gender aspect (Jokinen 1996; Laisi 1998; Määttä 1999; Tallberg 2000; Korhonen 2001). According to Määttä (1997, 1999) military service has great impact in their lives and career plans. Making the gender point of view visible, this study increases understanding of the military leadership training.

The framework is based on qualitative study, which is approached from a narrative theory angle. Narrative leadership has established in business studies and achieved a firm status in social and human sciences (Auvinen 2013, 20-21.) To procedurally study and understand a comprehensive phenomenon, it required a methodological approach, which was open to individual storytelling and interpretation. (Farday and Plummer, 2005.) The narrative framework offers a suitable methodological means for qualitative leadership research for two main reasons. First, storytelling makes it possible to overcome the limitations of time and place in research. Narratives enable people to transfer their experiences and ideas from one time and place to another, and this is just as true in research settings (Lämsä and Sintonen, 2006).

The data was collected from one class by interviewing all women from two platoons, who had been selected to undergo leadership training (N=15).The data consists of biographical narrative interviews. The study method preserved the complexity of the situation, in which leadership had been executed and the emotional and motivational meaning, which was tied to the function. (Polkinghorn 1995.)

The study uses the Greimas actant model (1980) to understand how the military service leadership training signifies the women trained and how the leadership training affects their leadership competency.

The preliminary findings show, that leadership competency is a multidimensional phenomenon, which in addition to leadership training also shows as a constructed, biographical phenomenon in
part of situations, places and communities. In stories different angles merged to each other, molded new material for interpretation, which form meanings that connect to leadership training. Preliminary findings pointed, that change in leadership competency is a biographical process where individuals parse the change they experienced as a part of their life line and identity through the stories they told. As a result of the study, four different leadership training story types were created.

Storytelling is a fundamental human ability that can also convey and construct experiences in organizations. Unlike a questionnaire or structured interview, storytelling gives the interviewee space and freedom to construct incidents that are meaningful for her/him. This is how a narrative may open valuable windows into the leadership of military organizations.

References upon request:

Key words: Leadership Competency, Gender, Volunteer military service, Story,