

Increasing the Number of Senior Women in the Australian Army

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Increasing the number of women involved in the peace and security process is fundamental to ensuring successful outcomes, a conclusion that has been captured in multiple national and international frameworks. This includes women at all ranks of the military, but particularly at the more senior leadership and decision-making levels. The career progression of Officers in the Australian Army is heavily reliant on the merit system. Unfortunately, systemic issues with this process result in a subjectivity that undermines efforts to increase the number of women in Army senior leadership. The introduction of bias interrupters throughout the employment pipeline will remove some of the barriers to the progression of women into senior positions, resulting in a more effective force that is better able to achieve military objectives.

The Australian Army's recent operational experience "has coincided with a growing awareness and understanding of women's ... valuable contribution to peace and security efforts ... and the benefits associated with increasing the number of deployed women".¹ This sentiment has been formalised in multiple international and national frameworks, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCRs) 1325 (2000), UNSCR 2122 (2013), UNSCR 2242 (2015), the 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' (1995), and the supporting country-specific National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security (NAP WPS).² These frameworks provide recommendations and governance for increasing female participation in decision-making and leadership levels in peace and security organisations and processes, many of which have been implemented by the Australian Defence Force. Despite this, the number of females in the Australian Army has hovered around 12 per cent for the past sixteen years, with very few women at the senior decision-making levels.³

¹ H. Studdert and S. Shtier (eds), 'Women, Peace and Security: Reflections from Australian Male Leaders', *Civil-Military Occasional Papers*, 4/2015 (Canberra: Australian Civil-Military Centre, 2015), p. 4.

² Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Report of the Australian Government Delegation to the 59th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women*, 2015, <www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/publications/CSW59_government_report.pdf> [Accessed 18 September 2017].

³ Department of Defence, *Annual Reports*, 1999-2000, 2005-2006, 2009-10, 2016-17; Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15*; Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2013-14*; Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2015-16*, <www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/> [Accessed 20 February 2017]. The data does not provide a consistent break-down by gender, nor are the available statistics consistently presented. Additionally, women were unable to serve in combat roles until 2013: while this did not prevent females from being promoted, it is certainly a factor which must be considered when

This commentary will provide an overview of the importance of women in military leadership. It will then discuss certain issues inherent in the Australian Army Officer career stream, specifically the merit system, and how these undermine efforts to achieve the gender equality goals captured in the frameworks.⁴ Finally, it will offer some options, in the form of bias interrupters, for improving the merit system in order to mitigate cultural barriers to women in leadership.

The Importance of Women in Military Leadership

The 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action' calls for an increase in the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels, and the full involvement of women in all efforts to prevent and resolve conflict.⁵ The Australian Defence Force (ADF) strategy for implementing the Australian Government's NAP WPS lists "increasing opportunities for women" and "increasing the gender advisor and female engagement capability as key to enhancing military effectiveness".⁶ Across the

looking at the promotion of women prior to 2013. As at June 2014, at the Senior Executive level, there was 1 female Major General (up from zero the year before) out of the 17 available positions, and 6 female Brigadiers, out of the 58 available positions (a fall of 0.6%). At the lower Officer ranks, the number of females was 18 out of 171 for Colonels (a 1.4% increase), 78 out of 625 Lieutenant Colonels (a 1.5% increase), 267 out of 1781 Majors (a 0.5% increase), and 281 out of 1874 Captains (0% change).

In FY 2014-15 at the Senior Executive level, zero of the three promotions to Major General were female (a 25% decrease in the number of women promoted to the rank of Major General from the previous year), and 1 of the 8 promotions to Brigadier was female (a 5.7% decrease). At the lower Officer ranks, 2 of the 32 promotions to Colonel were female (an 8% decrease), 12 of the 69 promotions to Lieutenant Colonel were female (a 4.3% decrease), and 28 out of the 192 promotions to Major were female (a 1.9% decrease). Data for Captains and below are not available.

In FY 2015-16 at the Senior Executive level, zero of the 2 promotions to Major General were female (no change from previous year) and 3 of the 13 promotions to Brigadier was female (an increase of 10.6%). At the lower Officer ranks, 6 of the 31 promotions to Colonel were female (a 13.1% increase), 19 of the 71 promotions to Lieutenant Colonel were female (a 9.1% increase), and 46 out of the 200 promotions to Major were female (a 3.9% increase). Data for Captains and below are not available.

As at June 2017, 12 of the 80 Senior Executive positions in Army were occupied by women.

⁴ The arguments contained within this commentary are equally applicable to any career model based on the ideal of merit.

⁵ 'Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action', The Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 15 September 1995, paras 131-41.

⁶ Department of Defence, 'Women, Peace and Security: Implementing the National Action Plan', *Annual Report 2014-15*, <www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/14-15/features/feature_oscdf-women-in-defence-engaging-women-in-peace-and-security.asp> [Accessed 28 September 2017]; United Nations Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace: A Global Study on the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 2015), <wps.unwomen.org/> [Accessed 12 August 2017]; United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2242 (2015), S/RES/2242 (13 October 2015), <www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2242.pdf> [Accessed 18 September 2017]; United Nations Security

international frameworks more broadly, UNSCRs 1325, 2122 and 2242 all emphasise the importance of women in leadership roles during conflict resolution.

Within the ADF, several notable commanders have emphasised the importance of women in military leadership. These include former chief of the Defence Force, General D. J. Hurley, AC, DSC (Ret'd),⁷ former chief of Army Lieutenant General D. Morrison, AO (Ret'd),⁸ Chief of Army and Male Champion of Change Lieutenant General A. J. Campbell, AO, DSC,⁹ and Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal M. Binskin, AC.¹⁰ The words of these men are supported by actions. A 2015 review of the implementation of UNSCR 1325 recognises the significant progress the ADF has taken towards a more female-inclusive military, highlighting the importance of measures including targets, Flexible Work Arrangements, the use of gender advisors, male champions of change and diversification of promotion boards.¹¹ However, the UNSCR 1325 review contains one noteworthy criticism: “much of [the progress] has been through incremental and sometimes ad-hoc measures that have yet to transform military structures and mindsets”.¹²

The debate around gender in the Army is controversial and ongoing. Notable publications include the Broderick Review (2011-14), *Pathway to Change* (2012), *Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture 2017–22* (2017) and *Teaming: Optimising Military Capability for the Coming Era of Equality: 2020 to 2050* (2017). All are confronting, insightful and contain recommendations on gender issues within Army and the broader ADF community.¹³ Despite the amount of work conducted thus far, gender bias remains an issue in the Army.

Council Resolution 2122 (2013), S/RES/2122 (18 October 2013), <<http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/2122>> [Accessed 28 August 2017].

⁷ Australian National Committee for UN Women, *Women, Peace and Security: An Introductory Manual* (Canberra: UN Women Australia, 2014), p. 2.

⁸ Australian of the Year Awards, 'Honour Roll: 2016', <www.australianoftheyear.org.au/honour-roll/?view=fullView&recipientID=1348> [accessed 28 September 2017].

⁹ Report on Institute of Public Administration Australia, International Women's Day Breakfast, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. 3 March 2017, <www.pmc.gov.au/news-centre/office-women/ipaa-international-womens-day-breakfast—championing-change> [Accessed 18 September 2017].

¹⁰ Department of Defence, 'Women, Peace and Security'.

¹¹ United Nations Women, *Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace*, p. 138.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 135-37.

¹³ Australian Human Rights Commission, 'Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force [Broderick Review]', <defencereview.humanrights.gov.au/report-review-treatment-women-australian-defence-force>; Department of Defence, 'Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture, 2017–2022', <www.defence.gov.au/PathwayToChange/>; Elizabeth G. Bolton, *Teaming: Optimising Military Capability for the Coming Era of Equality: 2020 to 2050*

The recruitment and retention of women are a function of women seeing the Army as a viable career option, one that includes opportunities for progression. This commentary will focus on merit within the Army, simply because progression through the ranks is determined primarily by merit. Without first challenging the assumption that the career progression model, ostensibly a merit system, results in the objective selection and promotion of the best candidate, the Army is unlikely to achieve meaningful and sustainable increases in female recruitment, retention and representation at senior leadership levels.

The Problem with Merit

A meritocracy or merit system is defined as a social system in which merit or talent is the basis for sorting people into positions and distributing rewards. Advocates of the system believe that in a meritocracy everyone has an equal chance to advance and obtain rewards based on their individual merit and efforts, regardless of class, ethnicity, gender, race, age, or other non-merit factors.¹⁴

There is clear evidence, however, that measures of merit include subjective elements and that they are influenced by stereotypes and subconscious bias. The result is a meritocracy that reflects the values and biases of the decision-makers, and an organisation that is increasingly homogenous as positions become more senior.¹⁵

Prominent studies have looked at the impact of biases and stereotypes using the concepts of aesthetic capital or ugliness penalty;¹⁶ height premium;¹⁷ ethnicity penalty or Anglo advantage;¹⁸ and variations on the Heidi vs

(Canberra: Australian Army Research Centre, 2017), <www.army.gov.au/our-future/publications/research-papers/army-research-papers/teaming-an-introduction-to-gender>.

¹⁴ E. J. Castilla and S. Benard, 'The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organisations', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol. 55, no. 4 (2010), p. 1.

¹⁵ Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 'In the Eye of the Beholder: Avoiding the Merit Trap', 2016, <malechampionsofchange.com/take-practical-action/avoiding-the-merit-trap/> [Accessed 14 May 2016]; UN Women National Committee Australia, 'Re-thinking Merit: Why Meritocracy Is Failing Australian Business', <unwomen.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Re-thinking-Merit-Whitepaper.pdf> [Accessed 14 May 2016].

¹⁶ T. L. Anderson, C. Grunert, A. Katz and S. Lovascio, 'Aesthetic Capital: A Research Review on Beauty Perks and Penalties', *Sociology Compass*, vol. 4, no. 8 (2010), pp. 564-75; Hays and Insync Surveys, Gender Diversity: Why Aren't We Getting It Right?, October 2014, <www.insyncsurveys.com.au/resources/research/2014/10/gender-diversity-research/> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

¹⁷ P. Lundborg, P. Nystedt and D.-O. Rooth, 'The Height Premium in Earnings: The Role of Physical Capacity and Cognitive and Non-Cognitive Skills', *IZA Discussion Paper*, no. 4266 (Bonn: Institute of Labour Economics, June 2009), <www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/35678/1/607729732.pdf> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

¹⁸ A. Booth, 'Job Hunt Success Is All in a Name', Crawford School of Public Policy, ANU, 4 March 2013, <crawford.anu.edu.au/news-events/news/104/job-hunt-success-all-name> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

Howard study.¹⁹ Broadly, these studies have found that, first, tall and good-looking candidates are more likely to get a job (and get paid more). Second, candidates with Anglo-sounding names are viewed most favourably. Third, when the only difference on a resume is gender, the male candidate will be considered to be more qualified and more likeable than the female candidate. Additionally, humans have a strong 'in-group' bias that sees them favour members of their own group, typically those who look and think like them, and discriminate against those who do not.²⁰ In the Army context, this 'in-group' are the white males who are the majority of the (Regular) force.²¹

The United Nations Women's National Committee Australia states that "countless academic, social and business studies have proved that our conception of meritocracy is a myth".²² Castilla and Benard refer to a 'paradox of meritocracy' to describe their finding that when an organisation sees and promotes itself as a meritocracy, a bias exists which sees men favoured over equally performing women.²³

Despite all the research, societies and organisations continue to use merit as the measure for allocating rewards. The reasons for this are understandable. At a social level, organisations and individuals have a stake in the merit principle. Questioning the idea that true merit exists is to undermine the status quo and current power structures.²⁴ On an individual level, confirmation bias leads to the rejection of any evidence that suggests merit is flawed.²⁵ This offers some insight into why, despite acknowledging the importance of female leaders to the peace and security process, the Australian Army has thus far failed to address a significant obstacle to achieving this: the merit system.

Merit in the Army

At key career milestones, Personnel Advisory Committees (PAC) select individuals with 'merit' for further career progression. On average, Army

¹⁹ UN Women National Committee Australia, 'Re-thinking Merit'.

²⁰ D. G. Rand, T. Pfeiffer, A. Dreber, R. W. Sheketoff, N. C. Wernerfelt and Y. Benkler, 'Dynamic Remodelling of In-Group Bias During the 2008 Presidential Election', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America*, vol. 106, no. 15 (2009), pp. 6187-91, <www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2664153/> [Accessed 3 June 2016].

²¹ Department of Defence, *Annual Reports*, from 1999 to 2017, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15*, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2015-16*.

²² UN Women National Committee Australia, 'Re-thinking Merit'.

²³ Castilla and Benard, 'The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organisations', p. 1.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ G. Dvorsky, 'The 12 Cognitive Biases That Prevent You from Being Rational', Gizmodo, 30 June 2016, <io9.gizmodo.com/5974468/the-most-common-cognitive-biases-that-prevent-you-from-being-rational> [Accessed 12 September 2016]; B. B. Cooper, '8 Subconscious Mistakes Our Brains Make Every Day—And How to Avoid Them', *Fast Company*, 15 October 2013, <www.fastcompany.com/3019903/work-smart/8-subconscious-mistakes-our-brains-make-every-day-and-how-to-avoid-them> [Accessed 12 September 2016].

Officers will first present to a PAC eight years after entering the Officer Career stream. Due to the numbers involved, not all Officers will be considered by a PAC. The annual reporting tool, known as a Performance Appraisal Report (PAR), is the primary mechanism used to determine which Officers have the 'merit' to be presented to the PAC. PARs are also the primary tool used by the PAC to identify Officers with 'merit' for promotion.²⁶

Multiple studies indicate subconscious bias and stereotypes manifest in these PARs, at the expense of individual merit. PARs rely on the statistically unlikely event that the Assessing Officer (AO) will provide an honest performance review, and they are subject to the personal biases of the AO.²⁷ These studies further suggest that for those not part of the 'in-group' these biases lead to negative reviews and subsequent promotional biases. Conversely, the merit of those who are part of the 'in-group' is overstated.²⁸

Additionally, research shows large discrepancies between gender when analysing performance reviews. Studies from Stanford University demonstrate 59% of male performance reviews contain critical feedback, of which 2% is attributed to personality. For women, these numbers jump to 89% and 75% respectively.²⁹ Other studies show leadership skills, communication skills and personality attributes—such as confidence, directness and a willingness to speak out—are seen as positive traits in men and negative traits in women.³⁰ 'Masculine' leadership styles are perceived to be more effective in those organisations that are traditionally more masculine, and females displaying 'masculine' leadership styles are seen as unnatural or fake. Finally, males tend to evaluate female leaders more harshly than other males, female leaders are consistently held to a higher standard than male leaders, and female leaders are unlikely to be perceived as both competent and likeable.³¹

²⁶ Department of Defence, *Military Personnel Policy Manual*, <www.defence.gov.au/PayAndConditions/ADF/Resources/MILPERSMAN.pdf> [Accessed 20 September 2017], Part 5.

²⁷ B. I. J. M. van der Heijden and A. H. J. Nijhof, 'The Value of Subjectivity: Problems and Prospects of 360-Degree Appraisal Systems', *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, vol. 15, no. 3 (2004), pp. 493-511.

²⁸ Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 'In the Eye of the Beholder'.

²⁹ Center for the Advancement of Women's Leadership, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, 'Assessing Performance and Potential: *See Bias; Block Bias*', Stanford University, 2015, <gender.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/See_Bias_Eval_2015.pdf> [Accessed 12 January 2017].

³⁰ G Toegel and J Barsoux, 'Women Leaders: The Gender Trap', IMD, February 2013, <www.imd.org/research/challenges/women-leaders-the-gender-trap-ginka-toegel-jean-louis-barsoux.cfm> [Accessed 12 January 2017]; Kieran Snyder, 'The Abrasiveness Trap: High-Achieving Men and Women Are Described Differently in Reviews', *Fortune*, 26 August 2014, <fortune.com/2014/08/26/performance-review-gender-bias/> [Accessed 12 January 2017].

³¹ van der Heijden and Nijhof, 'The Value of Subjectivity'; R Silverman, 'Gender Bias at Work Turns Up in Feedback', *Wall Street Journal*, 30 September 2015 [Accessed 2 October 2016]; 'See Bias Block Bias', Center for the Advancement of Women's Leadership, Clayman Institute for Gender Research, 2015; H. Ibarra, R. J. Ely, D. M. Kolb, 'Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers', *Harvard Business Review*, September 2013, <<https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>> [Accessed 2 October 2016]; M. Heilman, 'Sex Bias in Work Settings',

Significantly, these biases impact an Army Officer's career throughout the employment pipeline, potentially preventing them from reaching their first PAC. In the Army, a traditionally masculine organisation, this research suggests that PARs for male candidates will reflect better performance and potential than their female counterparts, irrespective of individual merit. It is beyond the scope of this commentary to consider the potential reinforcing effect of (relative) negative feedback on individual performance over time; however, it is certainly something to consider should Army decide to address flaws in the merit system.

Historically, the biggest drop in female representation in the Army Officer stream occurs at the relatively junior Captain to Major level, a fall which is attributed to women leaving Army to become mothers.³² While parental responsibilities are certainly a factor,³³ it is not the only reason for this drop. Importantly, this assumption fails to consider the fact that it is at the Captain to Major level, the point at which select individuals first go to PAC, that any lack of career progression options becomes clear. The challenge for Army is to ensure the lack of options is not due to bias resulting in a perceived lack of merit. This can be done by taking steps to interrupt bias throughout the employment pipeline.

Alternate Methods for Increasing the Number of Women in Leadership in Army

A 2016 paper by Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change uses the Army introduction of a balanced PAC to highlight the advances

<<https://psych.nyu.edu/heilman/>> [Accessed 2 October 2016]; Catalyst, 'The Double-Bind Dilemma for Women in Leadership: Damned if You Do, Doomed if You Don't', 15 July 2007, <<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/double-bind>> [Accessed 2 October 2016]; Catalyst, 'Women "Take Care," Men "Take Charge:" Stereotyping of U.S. Business Leaders Exposed', 19 October 2005, <<http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-take-care-men-take-charge-stereotyping-us-business-leaders-exposed>> [Accessed 2 October 2016].

³² Australian Army, Chief of Army Directive 16/12 Enhancing Capability Through Gender Diversity, Army Headquarters, Canberra, 2012; Department of Defence, *Annual Reports* from 1999 to 2017, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15*, Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2015-16*, <www.defence.gov.au/AnnualReports/> [Accessed 20 February 2017, 8 March 2018]. Whilst outside the scope of this commentary, it should be noted that the Australian Army does not offer males the same paid parental leave options as females: the onus remains on women to play the role of primary caregiver. In an organisation dominated by men it is not feasible to offer all males the same paid parental leave options as females; however, a change in policy to allow either parent to take the maximum paid parental leave where both members are serving would be cost neutral and allow Army to continue progression towards removing all gender discrimination from policy.

³³ It is possible the emphasis placed on motherhood as a trigger for resignation from the Army is overstated. The Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2014-15* indicates over 95% of female Army Officers who undertook paid parental leave in the 18 months prior to 30 June 2015 were retained. The Women in ADF Supplement to *Annual Report 2013-14* indicates over 96% of female Army Officers who undertook paid parental leave in the 18 months prior to 30 June 2014 were retained.

made by Army in confronting subjective merit. Without question this is a significant step that should be celebrated and retained. However, as the first active step towards confronting merit it is almost a decade too late for those not part of the 'in-group'. Bias should be addressed earlier to ensure that everyone is given the same opportunity to reach a PAC, and should be managed throughout the employment cycle.³⁴

Bias interrupters are useful instruments for changing mindsets and structures because they are based on objective metrics and can be iterative, building change over time without meeting the resistance that broad cultural change measures can meet.³⁵ There are numerous bias interrupters that Army can implement throughout employment cycles, some more gentle than others. Given the importance of increasing female leadership reflected in national and international frameworks, and failure of previous efforts to recruit and retain women to increase representation above approximately 12 per cent for the past sixteen years, it is worth considering controversial options in order to meet obligations and stated goals.

Quotas are an active and conscious method of overcoming subconscious bias. While targets are a less divisive method of increasing the heterogeneity of individuals in leadership positions, multiple studies indicate they are inefficient and thus far proving ineffective beyond the short term as organisations adopt a 'set and forget' attitude, due a lack of accountability where targets are not met, or because of organisational resistance resulting from arguments being incorrectly framed.³⁶

There are arguments against quotas. Much of the concern over quotas is built on the refutable assumption that hiring practices based on quotas for

³⁴ Chief Executive Women and Male Champions of Change, 'In the Eye of the Beholder',

³⁵ Joan C. Williams, 'Hacking Tech's Diversity Problem', *Harvard Business Review*, October 2014, <hbr.org/2014/10/hacking-techs-diversity-problem> [Accessed 10 October 2016].

³⁶ Hays and Insync Surveys, Gender Diversity: Why Aren't We Getting It Right?; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Women in Leadership Strategy: Promoting Equality and Dismantling Barriers', November 2015, <dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/Pages/women-in-leadership-strategy.aspx> [Accessed 12 June 2017]; M. Edwards, B. Burmester, M. Evans, M. Halupka and D. May, *Not Yet 50/50: Barriers to the Progress of Senior Women in the Australian Public Service*, (Canberra: ANZSOG Institute for Governance, University of Canberra, 2010), <www.governanceinstitute.edu.au/events/celebrating-the-contribution-of-women-to-public-sector-excellence/not-yet-5050-barriers-to-the-progress-of-senior-women-in-the-australian-public-service-report> [Accessed 10 May 2017]; Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee, Australian Government Boards (Gender Balanced Representation) Bill 2015, The Senate, November 2015, <www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Finance_and_Public_Administration/Gender_Balanced_Represent> [Accessed 12 October 2016]; A. Wittenberg-Cox, 'The Trouble with Gender Targets', Harvard Business Review, <hbr.org/2013/10/the-trouble-with-gender-targets> [Accessed 27 October 2017]; Chief Review Services, 'Evaluation: Gender Integration in the CF', June 1998 (Revised November 1998), <www.forces.gc.ca/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/about-reports-pubs-audit-eval/p0037.pdf> [Accessed 7 March 2017].

women will result in a less competent workforce.³⁷ Quotas and merit are not mutually exclusive: qualified women exist, and the use of quotas simply forces an organisation to become more actively involved in the search for talent. Professor Madeline Heilman highlights that quotas can be a cause of tension because of the perception of tokenism in the appointment.³⁸ In 1998 the Canadian Forces (CF) conducted a review into gender integration in the military.³⁹ The review noted that even the perception of the existence of quotas, which arose from the use of targets, was enough to generate friction. This sentiment was echoed by RAND in 2015, during their research into the implications of integrating women into the United States Marine Corps.⁴⁰ Any use of quotas will need to be part of a broader plan that includes mechanisms to respond to these perceptions. However, it is worth noting that change inevitably results in friction, and that in the Army, as in life, there will always be a group of individuals who will seek to undermine the success of others or attribute their success to something other than merit. Quotas will simply become one more mechanism to do this. While the excuses change, the underlying themes do not, and will not until women in the Army are normalised and accepted as equal.

A final argument against quotas is that they are seen as discriminatory. Given the empirical data on bias presented in this commentary, a solid argument can be mounted that they are an equaliser. Where subconscious bias gives the advantage to those individuals that fit the homogenous mould and ensures they are selected over others, quotas ensure the more heterogeneous candidates receive equal access to these advantages.

Multiple studies have shown that quotas can work and can assist Army in breaking the homogenous mould in the near-term, which will in turn play a direct role in increasingly the number of females in leadership and decision-making positions.⁴¹ However, the use of quotas must be accompanied by

³⁷ ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 'The ACE Encyclopaedia: Parties and Candidates', 2013, <aceproject.org/ace-en/pdf/pc/view> [Accessed 3 April 2018]; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 'Targets and Quotas: Perspective Paper', 2013, <www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/20131119_PP_targetsquotas.pdf>; K. Morley, 'You Only Got Here Because of a Quota—Really, How Likely Is That', 4 November 2015, <www.karenmorley.com.au/you-only-got-there-because-of-a-quota-really-how-likely-is-that/> [Accessed 12 October 2016]; J. Whelan and R. Wood, 'Exploring the Use of Quotas for Women in Leadership Roles' 10 May 2012, <theconversation.com/exploring-the-use-of-quotas-for-women-in-leadership-roles-6864> [Accessed 12 October 2016].

³⁸ ACE Electoral Knowledge Network, 'The ACE Encyclopaedia: Parties and Candidates'; Heilman, 'Sex Bias in Work Settings'; Workplace Gender Equality Agency, 'Targets and Quotas: Perspective Paper'.

³⁹ Chief Review Services, 'Evaluation Gender Integration in the CF'.

⁴⁰ A. Schaefer Gereben, J. W. Wenger, J. Kavanagh, J. P. Wong, G. S. Oak, T. E. Trial and T. Nichols, *Implications of Integrating Women into the Marine Corps Infantry* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 2015), <www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1103.html> [Accessed 6 March 2018].

⁴¹ 'Why Quotas Work for Gender Equality', OECD Forum 2015, <www.oecd.org/social/quotas-gender-equality.htm> [Accessed 27 August 2017]; Whelan and Wood, 'Exploring the Use of

leadership commitment and a communication strategy that clearly articulates the business case and improvement to capability that will result from breaking the homogenous mould.

If quotas are considered too direct, there are other bias interrupters Army can consider. The current Army PAC process allows decision-makers to know the name and gender of individuals, as well as what they look like, prior to determining their relative merit. As noted earlier, these seemingly benign details can influence outcomes: blind PACs, the use of gender-neutral terminology in annual reporting, and the removal of the requirement to submit a photograph are easily implemented ways of mitigating some of the cultural biases that inevitably manifest in the current PAC process.⁴²

Ensuring all Army Officers have the same opportunity to reach a PAC requires a different, but complementary, strategy. In 2014, Dow Australia and New Zealand, part of the global agricultural research and development company Dow AgroSciences, made subconscious bias testing a mandatory requirement for all 'people leaders'. This proved to be a pivot point for the company in how they overcame the inherent subjectivity of merit.⁴³ For Army, the introduction of mandatory subconscious bias testing for all Officers will address some of the flaws intrinsic in the current PAR process, and move Army closer to objective merit. The timing of the training will be important: a study in the United States showed that where decision-makers were given a presentation on overcoming the influence of subconscious bias during interview processes, an increased number of individuals not part of the 'in-group' were offered positions.⁴⁴ Correspondingly, Assessing Officers should be provided an understanding of their individual subconscious bias prior to writing annual reports, easily achievable through mechanisms such as the Harvard Implicit Association Test.

Despite differences between Army and the private sector, it is worth looking to external organisations for ideas on how to increase the number of females

Quotas for Women in Leadership Roles'; V. Sojo, R. Wood, S. Wood, and M. Wheeler, 'Reporting Requirements, Targets and Quotas for Women in Leadership', *The Leadership Quarterly*, vol. 27, no. 13 (June 2016), <www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1048984315001514> [Accessed 14 August 2017].

⁴² In the United States, the introduction of blind auditions for major symphony orchestras increased women's chances of advancing through preliminary rounds by 50%, and in one example (New York Philharmonic), the proportion of women hired went from 10% of new hires to 45%. The Australian Bureau of Statistics introduced blind recruiting (concealing names, age, genders and other identifying details of the hundreds of applicants) and found that of the nineteen successful applicants, fifteen of them were female.

⁴³ Tony Frenchman, Regional President Dow Australia and New Zealand, 'Women World Changers', The Growth Faculty, Sydney, 12 October 2016.

⁴⁴ Lydia Dishman, 'Can This Change Eliminate the STEM Gender Gap?', Fast Company, 21 October 2015, <www.fastcompany.com/3052518/can-this-change-eliminate-the-stem-gender-gap> [accessed 14 August 2017].

in leadership positions and around the negotiating table. Consulting firms McKinsey and Aurecon are two examples of multinational companies that have implemented workplace changes to overcome homogeneity in order to increase capability. Key initiatives include bias training, the use of gender-neutral terminology in all policy, and a robust review of their respective merit systems.⁴⁵ Of these, redefining merit and bias training proved to be the two most effective initiatives for increasing female representation in the workplace.⁴⁶ An additional initiative, which is becoming increasingly popular in the private sector,⁴⁷ is equal paid parental leave options for both parents. While the Army offers paid parental leave options for both parents, there is an expectation that mothers will be the primary caregiver. Offering parents the opportunity to choose who will take this role—which would be a cost-neutral decision where both members are serving—provides women with the option to remain on a steady career path, and would have the additional benefit of ensuring Army maintains pace with broader social and cultural change.⁴⁸

Conclusion

Increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership levels in peace and security processes is fundamental to successful outcomes. This includes the number of women in the militaries who play a key role in peace-building, peacekeeping and peacemaking. This knowledge has contributed to the implementation of a number of measures designed to increase the number of serving women, particularly at the higher levels of leadership.

Despite these efforts, there has been no meaningful increase in the number of women serving in the Australian Army over the past sixteen years, with very few women at senior decision-making levels. There are a number of measures, or bias interrupters, that Army can introduce in order to meet gender equality goals and better achieve military objectives. However, in order to transform structures and mindsets that hinder the career progression of women, Army must first challenge the idea that the merit system results in the objective selection of the best candidate.

⁴⁵ John Lyndon, Tony Frenchman, Giam Swiegers, 'Women World Changers', The Growth Faculty, Sydney, 12 October 2016.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Firms that offer both parents the choice to become primary caregivers immediately following the birth or adoption of a child include McKinsey, Aurecon, Ernst Young and Pricewaterhouse Coopers. John Lyndon, Tony Frenchman, Giam Swiegers, 'Women World Changers'; Pricewaterhouse Coopers <www.pwc.com.au/> [Accessed 8 March 2018]; Ernst Young <www.ey.com/au/en/home> [Accessed 8 March 2018].

⁴⁸ It is beyond the scope of this commentary to provide detail on the benefits for fathers, families and societies on fathers becoming more actively involved in the upbringing of their children. However, there is increasing research, nationally and internationally, which is readily available for any interested reader.

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