The Few; The Proud; The Gender Integrated

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The Call

Historical Background: Before 2013

- Department of Defense (DOD) policies prevented women from being assigned to units below brigade level where the unit’s primary mission was to engage directly in ground combat.
- This policy barred women from serving in infantry, artillery, armor, combat engineers, and special operations units of battalion size or smaller.
- Yet, these are the job categories associated with advancement.

Historical Background: 2013

- Defense Department announced in January 2013 that it would open all combat jobs following a lengthy research period.
- Research period would allow evidence to support an exemption
- The USMC wants an exemption.
The Debate: Women and The Corps

How big is opposition to women in combat units among Marines? This report explains.

Women’s integration in the Marine Corps will only succeed if top leaders fully commit.

Marines' controversial path to integrating combat women

The Marine Corps has decided to keep men and women separate during boot camp. The Marines say it's common sense. Advocates for women say it's part of a deeper recalcitrance toward integration.
Putting a Face on the Issue

- https://www.cbsnews.com/video/preview-a-few-good-women/
The Questions: Big and Small

- Should the USMC open up all job categories to women?
- What impact does gender diversity have on team performance?
- What impact does gender diversity have on tactical decision-making accuracy?
- What factors accentuate or thwart the potential benefits of gender diversity?
Advantages of group membership homogeneity
- Swift trust and cohesiveness
- Improved communication
- Enhanced implicit coordination
- Efficiency and speed in execution

Disadvantages of group membership homogeneity
- Group polarization (risk and confidence)
- Premature consensus
- Leadership over-emergence
- Lack of creativity and problem solving ability
Groups of All Men: What We Know Already

- Gender Role Theory: Characteristics Ascribed to Men
  - Dominant
  - Aggressive
  - Active
  - Independent

- Meta-Analytic reviews of empirical studies
  - Risk-seeking (150 studies, difference = .20)
  - Impulsivity (277 studies, difference = .35)
  - Self-esteem (184 studies, difference = .21)
  - Leadership emergence (45 studies, difference = .33)
  - Leadership effectiveness (76 studies, difference = -.02)
“Decision-making accuracy was generally high and invariant for teams that were (a) composed of all women, (b) composed of a female majority, or (c) balanced in gender composition. However, teams where men constituted the majority performed poorly and teams composed of all men performed worse than any other configuration” (p. 466).

Why We Need a Specific USMC Study

• Support evidence-based decision-making with respect to gender integration within the USMC
• Test the generalizability of diversity effects
  – Effects for diversity small and variable
  – Task characteristics play a major role
    • Physical tasks
    • Tactical problem-solving tasks
• Why gender diversification effects may not emerge
  – Physical nature of tasks
  – Tactical problem solving
    • Women may not speak up (or only under certain conditions)
    • Women may speak up but their ideas might be ignored
Effects of Gender Diversity in Tactical Decision-Making Teams

HPT&E Technical Review
Decision Making and Expertise Development

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Overarching Model

- Leader’s Gender Beliefs
- Task Complexity
- Gender Integrated Composition
- Female Voice Enactment
- Team Performance
Each of the four tasks was performed first, second, third or fourth an equal number of times, and led by a woman an equal number of times.
The Tasks: Casualty Rescue

• Low Physicality / Low Complexity
The Tasks: Casualty Rescue

- Low Physicality / Low Complexity
The Tasks: Casualty Rescue

• Low Physicality / Low Complexity
The Tasks: Church Resupply

- High Physicality / Low Complexity
The Tasks: Church Resupply

• High Physicality / Low Complexity
The Tasks: Medicine Delivery

- Low Physicality / High Complexity
The Tasks: Medicine Delivery

- Low Physicality / High Complexity
The Tasks: Medicine Delivery

• Low Physicality / High Complexity
The Tasks: Chemical Walls

• High Physicality / High Complexity
The Tasks: Chemical Walls

• High Physicality / High Complexity
The Tasks: Chemical Walls

• High Phys / High Complexity
Performance was operationalized as speed of mission completion and degree of completion.

“S” indicate suggestions initiated by individual members and whether they were enacted, shot down, or ignored.
The Findings

• Lone female teams show performance advantages over all male teams when task complexity is high or physicality is low, but perform worse than all male teams when task complexity is low or physicality is high.

• The advantages for decision-making were only achieved when the lone female’s voice was enacted (leader’s role).

• Why? According to Gender Role Theory, characteristics ascribed to men – dominant, aggressive, independent -- result in:
  • “Action-First” strategies with little processing of alternatives in the beginning of the tasks
  • Failure to engage in “After-Action Reviews” at the end of the tasks
All combat jobs now open to qualified female Marines

By: Jeff Schogol  January 13, 2016

Hundreds of female Marines who successfully completed training for ground combat arms will officially be able to move into those jobs, the Marine Corps announced on Wednesday.
The New Attitude

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yotXRoLxFdY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yotXRoLxFdY)
Thus, our work shows that the debate regarding the liabilities of females in this context when it comes to physically demanding tasks should, at the very least, be complemented by a conversation of the liabilities of all-male teams on complex tasks.
Questions or Comments?