

Strategy Research Project

Gender Diversity at the U.S. Army War College

by

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Abstract

To best support, defend, and protect the vital interests of the nation, it is imperative that the composition of the senior leadership of United States military represents the interests of American society – in all her glorious diversity. This leadership is drawn largely from the pool of graduates from the military’s Senior Service Colleges. These academic institutions imbue a broad, strategic education to develop and mature the nation’s future flag officers – the generals, admirals, and senior executive service members who will lead the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard. To ensure the diverse populace of the United States is well served, the senior leadership of the armed forces must reflect the subcultures and ethnicities of the American public. Yet historically, the composition of the resident student populations and the faculties of these institutions reflect sub-optimal levels of diversity. Specifically, this paper examines gender diversity at the United States Army War College, and validates the importance of gender diversity for the institution, the military, and the nation.

Gender Diversity at the U.S. Army War College

Historically, the composition of Senior Service College faculty and resident student populations are less than optimally diverse.¹ Different ethnicities, religious ideologies, and the 'other gender' (females) are not altogether absent from these institutions, but they are present in such small numbers that their voices and influence are marginalized. Student populations and faculty of these institutions largely reflect the present demographics of U.S. military leadership – mostly Caucasian, mostly Christian, and mostly male. This paper explores imbalanced gender representation in the resident program at one of these institutions: The United States Army War College (USAWC). The small number of female professionals both on the faculty and in the resident student population of the USAWC solicits the following questions:

- Does gender diversity matter to the USAWC, and if so – how and why?
- What are the implications of low gender diversity for females at the USAWC?

To provide context for answering these questions, this paper will:

- Provide a description of the resident program at the USAWC and the unique education model the USAWC employs to develop the next generation of senior military leaders;
- Provide demographic data of typical resident student populations, and the value the institution places on diversity in general;
- Examine relevant legislation and policy regarding diversity and the implications for national security;
- Substantiate how and why gender diversity matters to organizations, the USAWC, the military, and the nation;

- Investigate the current impact of sub-optimal gender diversity at the USAWC, and the implications for the future of women at the war college, the military, and the nation;
- Offer a design framework for further analysis and the development of a strategic plan to guide and implement change.

The USAWC

The USAWC is one of the ten Senior Service Colleges for advanced Professional Military Education (PME).² Designed to prepare senior officers for transition to higher levels of leadership and responsibility, these institutions are a necessary stepping stone for our nation's most senior military officers. Graduation from one of these graduate level programs is an important discriminator for selection to the "flag officer" ranks – to general officer in the Army, Air Force, and Marines – or to admiral in the Navy or Coast Guard. Selection to one of the senior service college programs is competitive, and attendance is considered prestigious.

The USAWC administers both a 10-month Resident Education Program and a two-year Distance Education Program. These curricula each confer a Master of Science in Strategic Studies upon graduation. Selection to attend is determined through a formal board process, similar to the promotion boards conducted for advancement in rank within the military services. While both programs are competitive for selection, selection to the resident program is particularly rigorous: Only the officers deemed to have the highest potential are afforded this opportunity each year.³

Located on a tiny (but charming) garrison post in south central Pennsylvania, the Army's War College welcomes between 335 and 385 resident students every year.⁴ The

composition of these populations is carefully fashioned to preserve a diverse cross-section of military and government service cultures. Typically, recent resident cohorts include:

- Not more than 60% Army officers comprising the total class population,⁵ from a broad spectrum of military occupational specialties⁶ and representing all 3 components: Active, Army National Guard, and Army Reserve
- Service members from other military branches (Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard – including their Reserve Components)
- Approximately 70-80 International Fellows⁷
- Government Service Civilians of commensurate grade⁸ (Department of Defense and other Federal Government Departments)⁹

This blend of different organizational cultures has significant influence on the educational process at the USAWC, which is uniquely distinct from graduate programs in the civilian sector. Each year the faculty and administrative staff design Seminar groupings for the incoming cohort. The current resident class, designated as the Class of AY18 (Academic Year 2018), is divided between 25 “Seminars,” comprised of 14-16 students with 3-4 Faculty Instructors (FIs) dedicated to each. The 378 members of the AY18 class are divided into these smaller groups, which negotiate the core curriculum for the first 6 months of the 10-month academic year and travel for a few short educational trips throughout the program term.¹⁰ The Seminars for the AY18 cohort were constituted with some deliberation prior to the arrival of the students in late summer, 2017.

The Seminar is the seminal experience of the USAWC resident school education model. Seminar-mates spend many hours together. Seminars meet daily during the school week in their designated classroom, where assigned seating is arranged around an oblong table. They attend academic and social events together, and (with varying degrees of athletic prowess) form softball teams to compete against the other Seminars.

Diversity as a Core Value of the USAWC

The composition of the Resident USAWC Seminars is not random, but carefully considered. The two primary considerations for Seminar structure are to achieve representation from as diverse a population as possible for each Seminar, and to ensure relative parity between Seminars. For example, for the class of 2018, the composition of Seminar 13 is as follows:¹¹

- 7 Active Duty Army Officers
- 1 Army National Guard Officer
- 1 Army Reserve Officer¹²
- 1 Active Duty Navy Officer
- 1 Air Force Reserve Officer
- 1 Department of the Army Civilian
- 1 Department of Defense Civilian
- 3 International Fellows (Representing Israel, South Korea, and Sweden)

The composition of Seminar 13 is fairly typical, and is the result of a concerted effort on the part of the USAWC Faculty and administration to ensure multiple organizations are represented to enhance learning. The USAWC faculty and administration are very cognizant of the importance diversity brings to the learning

environment of the Seminar. Seminar 13 is a bit unusual in one regard: There are two female students in this Seminar.¹³ As there are 25 Seminars and only 31 Female students in residence for the class of AY18, most Seminars harbor only a single female.¹⁴

USAWC Resident Female Student Population in AY18

Of the 31 females in the current Resident cohort, 20 female students are uniformed service members. Of those, 18 represent one of the three Army components (Active, National Guard, and Reserve). 7 female students hail from the Active Duty Army, 3 from the National Guard, and 8 from the Army Reserve. The current population of only 18 female Army officers in residence at the United States Army's own Senior Service College seems to be an under representation, comprising just under 5 percent of the total student body for AY18.¹⁵ As a result of these demographics, some seminars do not have representation by a female uniformed service member. Even fewer seminars have representation by a female Army officer. The inclusion of 2 female officers from other services (one Navy, one Air Force) and 11 federal government civilian female students raises the total percentage of female Resident USAWC attendees for AY18 to 8 percent. This representation lags behind the proportion of female representation nationally for both military and civilian national security professionals. *The National Security Diversity and Inclusion Act of 2017* cites the following statistics for women employed in the National Security Workforce.¹⁶ According to this Senate bill, women represent:

- 24 percent of senior civilian positions in the Department of Defense Civilians
- 8 percent of the officers of the senior grades of the Armed Forces

- 33.7 percent of the overall Federal Workforce

U.S. Law and Policy Regarding Diversity

The Army has an excellent track record when it comes to implementing diversity, and has been a weathervane for the nation – often providing a leading force for integrating minority populations into the workforce and recognizing the value those populations convey. President Truman led the integration of African Americans into the U.S. military force in 1948, long before the civil rights movement got a strong foothold,¹⁷ at some degree of political risk and censure. It was the right thing to do.

The formal integration of women into the force occurred around the same time. This integration transpired after a series of incremental changes in the ways women served through prior generations. The history of American women in service roles dates to the American Revolution, where women served alongside encamped soldiers preparing meals, providing laundry and nursing services, and were occasionally leveraged to gather intelligence. A small number of females are known to have disguised themselves as men in order to serve in the infantry during the Revolutionary, Mexican, Civil, and Spanish-American Wars.¹⁸ Early in the 20th century, more avenues to service opened to women.¹⁹

The Army and Navy Nurse Corps were established in 1901 and 1908 respectively. Females served in non-combat roles in both World Wars, and were officially integrated into the peacetime military with the Women’s Armed Services Integration Act in 1948. Since that time, women have served the nation as official military service members in peace and in war.²⁰

Gender diversity in the U.S. military continues to evolve and include additional forms of gender identity and sexuality identification. The “Don’t Ask, Don’t tell” policy,

which was in effect from 1994-2011, was officially retired on September 20, 2011.²¹ On June 8, 2015, at a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month ceremony at the Pentagon, Secretary of Defense Ash Carter committed to policy revisions which allow transgender service members to serve openly, stating: “We have to focus relentlessly on the mission, which means the thing that matters most about a person is what they contribute to it.”²² There has been equivocation on gender policy within the current administration, but the tide towards inclusivity has been gaining momentum in recent decades, and will be hard to turn back.

This trend is not exclusive to the United States, or even to the West. In October 2000, the United Nations (UN) adopted the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325.²³ UNSCR 1325:

- Reaffirms the importance of engaging women in peace-building and conflict resolution
- Recognizes “...the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations...”²⁴
- “*Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict”²⁵

Additionally, UNSCR 1325 urges the UN Secretary-General to implement a strategic plan to:

- Increase the participation of women;
- Call on Member States to provide female candidates to serve as U.N. representatives and envoys to “pursue good offices on his behalf;

and

- “...expand the role and contribution of women of women in U.N. field-based operations...especially among military observers, civilian police, [and] human rights and humanitarian personnel.”²⁶

The U.N. underscores the commitment by concluding the resolution: The Security Council: “...Decides to remain actively seized of the matter.”²⁷

More recently, legislation in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act mandated the DoD to implement plans to:

Achieve a dynamic, sustainable level of members of the armed forces (including the Reserve Components) that, among both commissioned officers and senior enlisted personnel, will reflect the diverse population of the United States eligible to serve in the armed forces, **including gender specific**, racial, and ethnic populations.²⁸ (emphasis added).

The National Security Diversity and Inclusion Workforce Act of 2017 Statement of Policy emphasizes:

In order to protect the homeland and advance the interests of the United States abroad, national security agencies of the Federal Government must have a workforce that reflects the rich composition and talent of its citizenry...promoting diversity and inclusion...must be a joint effort and requires engagement by senior leadership, managers, and the entire workforce... as the United States becomes more diverse and the challenges it faces become more complex, the United States must continue to invest in policies to recruit, retain, and develop the best and brightest from all segments of the population...²⁹

The strategic guidance at the national level is clear. To ensure the preparedness of the nation in an increasingly globally complex environment; the imperative for the integration of minority perspectives and the representation of diverse groups within the highest level of leadership ranks is essential to national security. The 2017 National Security Strategy underscores this imperative: “...governments that fail to treat women equally do not allow their societies to reach their potential.”³⁰

Why Diversity Matters

Diversity and Organizations

There is a great deal of support for the importance of diversity in social science and business literature. Diversity can cause friction within organizations, but also widens the aperture of perspective. Homogenous groups are likely to be less fractious, as individuals with similar backgrounds, ethnicities, traits and experiences are more likely to find themselves in alignment as a result of those very similarities.³¹ Contrary to popular wisdom, familiarity is more likely to breed accord than contempt – and excessive accord can be dangerous to an organization’s decision process and the quality of its conclusions. Groups of like-minded individuals are more prone to adopt heuristic thinking, which can be antithetical to holistic problem solving.

A block of instruction of the USAWC core curriculum highlights some risks that heuristic thinking can present. David Houghton’s book, *The Decision Point*, is required reading for the USAWC’s National Security, Policy, and Strategy course. Houghton describes various decision-making models that can form within groups, and influence, often sub-consciously, how organizational dynamics can deleteriously impact the construction of solutions to problems. One such model dubbed “Homo Sociologicus” describes how like-minded individuals can develop harmony of thought to a fault – describing what is colloquially termed as “groupthink”.³²

Highly cohesive groups are particularly susceptible to this phenomenon since group members aligned with a consonant world-view can quickly develop a high degree of cohesion. It is important to note that a high level of cohesiveness does not necessarily adversely impact social groups, but the injection of diversity into the group dynamic is protective against the rapid development of an unhealthy form of cohesion.

Houghton lists insulation and homogeneity as “structural faults” of a group, positing that this can lead to consensus seeking, or groupthink behaviors. Symptoms of this phenomenon include close-mindedness, pressure towards uniformity, and the tendency to stereotype “outgroups.” These mindsets and behaviors accentuate the “otherness” of those outside or dissimilar to the “in-group.”³³

The injection of diversity into a group combats this paradigm by disrupting excessive cohesion too early in the socialization process.³⁴ At the USAWC, intra-seminar social dynamics vary broadly. Some Seminars do become very cohesive – but ideally, diversity within the seminar slows that bonding process, and allows it to develop in the context of the appreciation of differences as well as appreciation of similarities. Diverse viewpoints make room for the consideration of a broader base of perspectives. This encourages healthy discourse and challenges assumptions. It decreases the likelihood of forming a mutual, but ultimately hollow, admiration society of unipolar thinking.

In a *Harvard Business Review* article, David Rock and Heidi Grant propose that diverse groups engage problems more analytically, and are more likely to “focus more on facts” and “process those facts more carefully.” They assert that cultural diversity promotes innovative thinking and problem solving, and cite a study which found that companies with more women were more likely to produce “radical new innovations” in the marketplace.³⁵ In an article for *Task and Purpose* entitled “Why the Military needs diversity,” Carl Forsling adds: “All else being equal, a team with more than one represented demographic will tend to perform better, especially when it comes to

producing innovation, which becomes more important to the military with each passing day.”³⁶

Simply put, diverse teams think better – bringing a variety of experiences and perspectives to bear to assess and analyze problems.³⁷ This breeds a more contemplative and deliberative thought process which results in deeper understanding of complex issues. Diverse group members filter information and challenge assumptions to develop understanding in unique ways, informed by variable backgrounds, talents, and experiences. Each individual sees the problem set from a unique vantage point. This is a reality the faculty of the USAWC knows well, and leverages consistently to good effect.

The Cornerstone of the USAWC Education Model: Dialogue and Diversity

USAWC faculty members expend much energy facilitating learning through the interaction that occurs between Seminar-mates. This facilitation is more powerful than the provision of formal didactic instruction. Seminar students are expected (and in fact, do) learn as much from one another as they do from their instructors. This is a core precept of the USAWC education model. From the first day of the Seminar experience, the value of this interaction is stressed.

The concept of holding “dialogue” with one another is the very cornerstone of Seminar learning. Students are taught that “dialogue” differs fundamentally from “discussion,” in that dialogue develops a new understanding of complex problems and issues through the integration of individual perspectives. It is through that integration that the real learning occurs, as assumptions and views are held up to those of one’s peers. Reevaluation of beliefs is key to critical thinking. As Emerson’s famed quote

from “Self-Reliance” reminds: "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines."³⁸

Each Seminar session is preceded by a selection of assigned readings, which center on the core lesson for that day. These reading assignments apply theory, case study, and thought-leader perspectives to the subject at hand. Subsequently, the Seminar members spend most of the three-hour classroom session in dialogue, unpacking ideas and concepts from the reading and sharing individual insights and impressions. The diversity of perspective drives learning, and powers the USAWC education model. It is very effective; and this efficacy is owed to the keen appreciation the USAWC administration and faculty hold for the value of diversity. For this reason, USAWC staff take great strides to ensure the composition of each Seminar is as diverse as possible. A particularly effective means to ensure diversity is to seed each Seminar with cultural diversity from the international community.

The International Fellows Program at the USAWC provides an important means to ensure diverse perspectives are woven into the dynamic of Seminar dialogue. The International Fellows are rationed out to the Seminars in carefully considered constellations, and bring invaluable “otherness” to each group. As the international operational environment becomes increasingly complex, networked, and interdependent, the inclusion of foreign allies and partners in the USAWC Seminars is invaluable. The contributions of this diverse population of international peers are constrained, however, in one regard: There are currently no females among the 79 International Fellows attending the USAWC in AY18.³⁹

Modeling Gender Egalitarianism to our International Partners

If attaining a seat at the Resident Army War College is competitive for U.S. service members, it is even more so for the International Fellows, who are nearly always the sole representative from their nation during a given academic year. There have been female International Fellows in the past, but this occurrence has, to date, been exceedingly rare.⁴⁰ In fact, since the program was first established in 1977,⁴¹ only 3 of the International Fellows have been women.⁴²

There may be several explanations for this. Many allied and partner nations may not embrace gender egalitarianism within their militaries. After all, the United States has significantly evolved with regard to gender related issues in just the past decade or so. Legislation allowing Soldiers to serve openly regardless of sexual or gender orientation has evolved within the past decade. The admission of women to combat schools and duty assignments occurred only recently. The first females to graduate the Army Ranger school did so in 2015.⁴³ These changes in policy and law were, and remain, controversial – even as American values hold the U.S. as an exemplar of egalitarianism.

Additionally, nations invited to send a representative to the USAWC are likely to send a top performer. Similar to the U.S., most nations have a far greater ratio of male to female service members in aggregate, and, like the U.S., the uppermost ranks likely have a markedly lower percentage of females. This results in a greater proportionate number of males within the pool of candidates to send abroad to the USAWC.

While all these factors contribute to the extremely rare incidence of female International Fellows at the USAWC, there is another reasonable explanation so few women from other nations are afforded the opportunity to attend: With such low numbers of female U.S. officers in Seminar, the USAWC cannot intrinsically model a

high degree of gender diversity – which may contribute to an assumption that the college sees little value in it. There are less than half as many American female students than International Fellows in the AY18 Class. As there are only a total of 20 U.S. female service members enrolled, at least 5 of the 25 Seminars do not include any uniformed female students. As a result, some AY18 International Fellows will not share their USAWC Seminar experience with even a single uniformed Seminar sister-in-arms⁴⁴. Neither, of course, will the U.S. military or civilian students in those seminars experience daily contact with uniformed female peers.

Homogeneity of USAWC Faculty

If there is a lack of feminine voice amongst the student peerage, that voice is not amplified on the faculty, as the scarcity of women at the Senior Service Colleges is not limited to the student matriculation. Faculty and staff at the Army, Navy, and Air Force senior service schools are predominantly male.⁴⁵ Although the current USAWC Garrison Commander is female; currently no women on the USAWC faculty-proper hold leadership positions. Only 12 of 96 faculty positions at the USAWC are held by females. 2 female USAWC Faculty Instructors (FIs) currently serve in uniform, including one Active Component Army officer. The other is an Army Reserve Component Army officer, who will retire before the end of the current school year. Most Seminars are taught by a team of 3 to 4 FIs, and many Seminar FI teams do not have female representation. Currently, one department (the Department of Military Strategy, Policy, and Operations) has no female faculty members. This department administrates the Theater Strategy Course. This foundational course carries the heaviest credit-hour load of all courses within the USAWC Core Curriculum.

Professor Joan Johnson-Freese (of the Navy War College) offers some thoughts on the importance of the presence of diversity within PME institutions. In a 2013 editorial piece written as a guest columnist for *Best Defense*, she opined:

A non-diverse body of people, many if not most with similar career backgrounds, teaching the same constituencies as themselves does little to broaden personal perspectives. In fact, in some cases it simply reinforces what can be already very narrow perspectives and the undermining of ideas becomes the norm.⁴⁶

Johnson-Freese further argues that diversity is imperative to effectively meet challenges in an “increasingly dynamic, cross-cultural, cross-functional, joint military environment,” and that the constellation of PME faculty guides the evolution of PME curricula to evolve to meet the challenges created by this changing environment.⁴⁷

The realities of a diverse, multi-cultural operational environment are consistently reinforced and threaded throughout the students’ USAWC experience – in the assigned reading, in Seminar dialogue, and during guest lectures. USAWC core concepts and learning objectives ensure the complexity and diversity of this environment is indelibly imprinted in the forefront of the minds of future senior leaders: Acronyms such as CAS (Complex Adaptive System) and VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, and Ambiguous) abound, and are hammered into the collective consciousness in the classrooms. A multitude of contextual devices are presented to shape thinking towards an appreciation for connectedness and interdependencies within this diverse environment: The Strategic Formulation Framework, decision making models, methodologies for operational design, the Strategic Appraisal Tool – all of these are designed to develop an urgency towards the development of cultural awareness and the wide range of diversity senior leaders can expect to encounter.⁴⁸

This increasing complexity of the global environment is reflected in the structural and functional composition of the modern force. The U.S. military operates and fights within complex configurations: Unified action, Joint and Combined Commands, Multi-Domain Battle. To layer that context within a context: national security in the 21st century is a 'Whole of Government' endeavor, and demands integration of all instruments of national power – Diplomatic, Information, Military, and Economic (DIME). The environment requires, then, close coordination, cooperation, and integration with other governmental organizations (known collectively as “the interagency”), as well as with inter-governmental non-governmental organizations (IGOs and NGOs).⁴⁹ These organizations each have unique and broadly diverse cultures. Effective senior military leaders need to actively engage their counterparts in all of those entities.

Cultural cognizance and the ability to accommodate diverse perspectives are therefore core competencies for senior leaders, and the military's institutions of higher learning are obliged to develop those competencies. In order to do so with legitimacy, the Senior Service Colleges must model that diversity on the faculty rosters. Merely acknowledging diversity exists in the larger system they serve does not suffice.

Minorities, including the minority gender, must see evidence that the value they bring to military service is, indeed, valued. Suitable female representation on the faculty rosters provides some evidence. This representation benefits both USAWC administration, faculty, and students, but is especially critical to the small populations of women in each of these environments.

Gender Diversity Challenges: Otherness, Critical Mass, and Inclusion

When Nobody Looks Like You: Psychosocial Dimensions of “Otherness”

As anyone who has ever been situated socially or professionally in the minuscule minority well knows; it can be an isolating event.⁵⁰ Attendance at the Resident USAWC for a female student is a bit akin to the experience of an International Fellow- one is not entirely fluent in the language or the culture. A female USAWC student may grow to admire, respect, and develop close friendships with her Seminar brothers. Yet, there is an ever-present patina of “otherness” which can alternately prove challenging, daunting, and at times, intimidating – but also inspiring, and occasionally transformational.

The Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness (GLOBE) Study, a cross-cultural research program conducted over a 10-year timeframe, recognizes the essentiality of the human dimension of gender.

From a psychological perspective, sex ranks alongside age as a ‘universal dimension for differentiating people’. Psychological differentiation of the sexes occurs by assigning distinct and non-overlapping personality traits to females and males. The duality of male assertiveness and female nurturance is a common stereotypic portrait. Studies have found that women are considered more communal and expressive than men, whereas men are deemed more competent, agentic, and instrumental than women.⁵¹ (emphasis added)

The authors acknowledge that these statements are broad stereotypes, but maintain that these stereotypes are persistent and consistent cross-culturally – citing studies that support these findings across eastern, western, and African nations:

Children as young as 5 years of age, in both western countries such as France, Norway, and the United States as well as non- Western countries such as Malaysia, Nigeria, and Peru hold distinct stereotypes of women versus men...Evidence suggests that these stereotypes only strengthen with age...⁵²

While it is not particularly useful for individuals or organizations to apply or transport stereotypes to social transactions, ignoring the research entirely is perilous, if not obtuse. Even if the gender-specific stereotypes described above are rejected, they are not surprising. This fact alone suggests that at least on some level, these early imprinted clichés affect social expectations – if only in initial social encounters, before relationships form and additional data changes first impressions.

In most social settings, the distribution of gender is more or less balanced. Absorbing and deflecting stereotypic first impressions, and their inevitable replacement as more information becomes available, is not terribly taxing. Finding oneself outnumbered by more than 10 to 1 is an entirely different experience. The experience is not intrinsically negative, but it is a stressor. It is an experience of being “other”.

This can lead to the “Impostor Phenomenon.” In brief, this psychological framework exaggerates feelings of “otherness” and elicits overt gender stigma consciousness. According to Cokely:

Gender stigma consciousness (GSC) refers to the extent to which an individual is chronically aware of her/his gender’s stigmatized status. Individuals high in gender stigma consciousness believe that they will be judged based on their gender rather than their performance alone.⁵³

Overt GCS can trigger the Impostor Phenomenon, which is defined as:

...the experience of intellectual fraudulence or phoniness among high achievers... Impostors have feelings of personal phoniness and they believe that others (e.g., a professor, supervisor, or peer) mistakenly see them as competent, intelligent, and deserving of success. Moreover, impostors believe they must continuously perform well to prevent others from discovering their phoniness and incompetence. They live in a fear of being found undeserving of their success.⁵⁴

Perhaps paradoxically, “impostors” tend to achieve heightened academic success, but may “...suffer from a high degree of generalized anxiety and lack of self-

confidence.”⁵⁵ It may stand that a gender stigma need not actually exist as a pre-condition for an individual to self-perceive as an impostor. The phenomenon is found to be more prevalent in females than males.⁵⁶ At the USAWC, female students are a “low density” commodity, and are intentionally scatter-shot across the seminars with the noble intention to integrate gender diversity as equally throughout the Seminars as is feasibly possible. Though rational from the standpoint of distributing a low-density resource, this approach effectively isolates the few females present from one another’s society. It is common occurrence for a female on Carlisle Barracks to move through an entire day without ever having more than a dozen words with another female.

Additionally, with few female faculty instructors on staff, there is little opportunity for female-to-female mentorship. While mentors need not be of the same gender as the mentored, it is important to have a few successful role models who are. In AY 2000, the women at the USAWC instituted a social organization called “The Women of the War College,” which provides a much-needed venue for both female students and faculty to commune with one another. The female faculty members organized this group out of their shared concern for the isolation of the small, dispersed female student contingent on the garrison. Diversity is important, but can provide some challenges for the diverse.

The challenge is not without value. Females enter the military professions aware that they will be in the minority – and negotiating the crucible of intra-gender communication and social interaction is an implicit task. Learning to do it well, though difficult, is both an achievement and an important aspect of personal and professional growth.

Critical Mass: Gender Diversity Math

It seems a sufficient case is made in literature, law, and policy to substantiate the importance of diversity and the vital contributions a diverse population brings to organizations – including the United States Military and the advanced schools of PME, which have a mandate to educate and prepare the senior leadership for the armed forces. In order for a diverse minority to have appreciable impact, however, minority populations must meet a “critical mass.” According to Johnson-Freese: “...the tipping point for the spread of ideas is at least 10 percent. Below that number of committed opinion holders, there is no discernible progress in the spread of ideas.”⁵⁷ Other authoritative sources place the percentage of this index higher, nearer to 20 or 30 percent.⁵⁸

There are some practical constraints to the level of gender diversity military PME institutions can realistically achieve, given the relatively low percentage of females in military service – particularly at senior levels. A 2013 Department of Defense report from the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity (ODMEO), for the Active Duty Military Officer Corps found that:

The data shows that the representation of minority groups and females decreases as the pay grades increase. The highest minority and female representation is in pay grades O1-O3 with minorities comprising a total of 22.63 percent and women comprising 19.19 percent. Thus, despite some progress over time, within the military officer corps, leadership ranks are still predominantly occupied by White males.

In the same report, these percentages of representation of female military officers dropped to 13.76 for pay grades O4-O6, and dropped further to 7.72 percent for grades O7-O10. In comparison, women have higher representation in the DoD civilian workforce. Percentages in the senior ranks for civilian females in the General Schedule

(GS) Civilian Workforce were 27.2 percent of all workers in pay grades GS14-15, and 23.7 percent within the Senior Executive Service (Flag Officer equivalent) ranks.⁵⁹

While interesting, this data is of limited value, as it does not inform the causality of promotion rates within these populations. The data does not tell us why promotion rates are significantly lower for female military officers than for women in civil service of commensurate grades. The fact that the percentage of female officers reaching flag officer ranks drops so precipitously warrants further study. It is likely, at least in part, attributed to the higher promotion rates among male dominated military occupational specialties, such as the Army's combat Arms branches, which have only recently been opened to women.⁶⁰ The data does support that there is a sufficient "bench" of female talent among national security professionals from which to attract more females to the senior service college faculty and student populations.

Culture and Inclusion

USAWC Faculty

The presence of minorities in numbers alone does not ensure that diversity will have a positive impact – a healthy culture is critical to reaping the potential benefits of a diverse organization. Writing for the *Harvard Business Review*, Sherbin and Rashid noted that "diversity" and "inclusion" are often conflated – and that the presence of the former does not always guarantee the latter.⁶¹ Unlike diversity, which can be empirically quantified, inclusion is harder to measure. Dimensions of organizational culture are by nature difficult to define, and harder still to observe, influence, and change. Verna Myers, an author and speaker on issues of diversity and influence, captures it well, "Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance."⁶² The fact that no women have yet held leadership positions at the USAWC may prove to be an artifact

suggesting there is more work to be done towards reaching a state of inclusion at the institution.⁶³

For minority members of an organization to feel valued, they need to be included in the organizational structure and DNA – the conversations, decisions, plans and strategies. In other words, they must *be* valued and *perceive* that they are valued. Their efforts must be recognized as integral contributions to the mission and evolution of the organization they support, else disillusionment and true marginalization become inevitable. To recruit and retain quality staff and attract the best competitors amongst eligible candidates for the student body, the military's PME institutions should aspire to a climate and culture where all have an equal opportunity to succeed, thrive, and attain professional growth. For the faculty of senior service colleges, this translates to parity for consideration for coveted positions and leadership roles.

To preserve the ideals of meritocracy, these opportunities should not be achieved through "stacking the deck" with preferential treatment based solely on ethnicity, gender, or any categorization of minority (or for that matter, majority) status. The application of an "affirmative action" solution is the wrong tactic. The first challenge, then, is to correctly discover and define the skills, attributes, and competencies which support the higher purpose for the existence of these institutions – to build the best slate of professional military officers and government service civilians to lead the future force for the nation. The challenge is to identify and select with impunity those individuals which best reflect those skills, attributes, and competencies.

USAWC Female Student Representation

The lack of gender diversity in the USAWC student body is a complex issue, with many potential causes, as well as competing priorities. The number of qualified women serving in eligible grades to attend the USAWC has grown in recent years, but is still relatively small.⁶⁴ The USAWC must compete with the other senior service PME opportunities for that small population. A small shift in the distribution of this population across the service colleges, fellowships, and other senior military education programs can significantly affect gender diversity at the USAWC from one academic year to the next. Additionally, slating boards consider many criteria which affect senior service college quotas, to include selectee preferences, qualifications, and position on the order of merit list.⁶⁵ Some educational opportunities have highly specialized requirements which are gender neutral, such as foreign language proficiency. All of these nuances complicate the implementation of any change process, and introduce additional risk. It is conceivable to inadvertently worsen one problem in an attempt to solve another. A deliberate and researched approach can reduce these risks.

Additional risk is incurred with the challenge of distributing a minority population of female students throughout the Seminar construct. Aggregating larger numbers of females in some Seminars would strengthen the minority voice within those seminars – but other Seminars would necessarily have no gender diversity representation. Women situated in Seminars with female peers and female instructors may benefit from this model. Men situated in Seminars with no feminine perspective may lose the value gender diversity brings altogether. This is a difficult choice, and one that cannot be made casually.⁶⁶

Design Framework to Increase Gender Diversity at the USAWC

To change the status quo of the current state of gender diversity at the USAWC, we must conduct more in-depth analysis of the problem, understand the issues, identify and understand the interests of the stakeholders, and develop a strategic plan for change. The broad steps of Operational Design from the USAWC core curriculum provide a useful framework:⁶⁷ The following outline offers a starting point to develop a strategic assessment from which to develop a strategy to align USAWC gender diversity goals towards the delivery of the best value to the nation, the military, the institution, and the women of the USAWC.

Clarify the Strategic Guidance

In order to manage change, the USAWC should develop a strategy to align with national, organizational (military), and institutional (USAWC) goals and objectives. This will assist the leadership of the USAWC to begin to define the desired end states toward which to drive actions and initiatives. Guidance can be drawn from a variety of relevant sources, including:

- National Strategy and Policy
- Military Doctrine and Policy
- USAWC Leadership Objectives

Conduct a Scan of the Environment

To identify core issues and move from the current state towards the leadership-defined end state, it is necessary to identify key issues and impediments to change. A few of these considerations may include research and examination of the following questions:

- What are the issues?
- How many women are/were eligible for selection consideration for resident AWC?

- How many women applied/opted for selection?
- Are there discriminatory practices in selection criteria?
- Are there discriminatory practices in the evaluation/rating processes?
- What efforts are being made to recruit competitive female candidates for faculty positions?
- Are women disadvantaged for considerations for leadership positions at the USAWC? If so, how, and are these discriminators legitimate?
- Who are the Stakeholders?
- What are the risks in maintaining the status quo?
- What are the risks in changing the status quo?

Define the problem

To assist USAWC leadership to further define guidance and direction, the problem set must be prioritized and dimensioned. It is essential to direct efforts towards the core origins of the problem. This will empower change by identifying root causes for the current state, and prevent change agents from ineffective actions aimed towards symptoms of the problem. Some initial questions to ask as the problem is defined include:

- What constitutes optimal gender diversity for the USAWC?
- What are the root causes for low gender diversity on faculty and in the student body?
- What is the value proposition for the nation, the military, and the institution of the USAWC?
- What is the value proposition for the women of the USAWC?

Develop an Approach

Refined strategic guidance based on a well-defined problem set, can be implemented to enable change. As these initiatives are developed and executed, change agents must establish:

- A process to implement change
- Who should lead change?
- A coalition for change (who must be represented?)
- External/internal support needed to effect change
- The milestones to achieve change
- An implementation timeline

And additionally:

Assess the results

As the USAWC moves forward towards optimizing gender diversity, continuous assessment of progress must occur:

- What are the metrics to evaluate the effects and impacts of change?
- How do we cement the change into the USAWC Culture?
- How do we need to adapt and improve the plan?
- What do we need to do next?

In Conclusion

To best support, defend, and protect the vital interests of the nation, it is imperative that the composition of the senior leadership of United States military represents the interests of American society – in all her glorious diversity. This leadership is drawn largely from the pool of graduates from the military’s Senior Service Colleges. These academic institutions imbue a broad, strategic education to develop and mature the nation’s future flag officers – the generals, admirals, and senior executive service members who will lead the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and Coast Guard.

To ensure the diverse populace of the United States is well served, the senior leadership of the armed forces must reflect the subcultures and ethnicities of the American public. Yet historically, the composition of the resident student populations and the faculties of these institutions reflect sub-optimal levels of diversity – including gender diversity. The U.S. Army War College has already demonstrated a high regard for diversity, and should now take measures to ensure those ideals are extended in practice to actively foster it. A strategic approach will empower USAWC leadership to

establish and realize gender diversity goals to better serve the institution, the military, and the American people.

Endnotes

¹ Joan Johnson-Freese, Ellen Haring, and Marybeth Ulrich, "The Counterproductive 'Sea of Sameness' in PME," *Joint Force Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (3rd Quarter, 2014): 58-64, http://ndupress.ndu.edu/Portals/68/Documents/jfq/jfq-74/jfq-74_58-64_Johnson-Freese-et-al.pdf (accessed January 16, 2018).

² The other colleges are: United States Air Force Air War College; United States Marine Corps War College; United States Navy College of Naval Warfare; Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security & Resource Strategy (formerly the Industrial College of the Armed Forces); National War College; The Joint Advanced Warfighting School; Advanced Strategic Leadership Studies Program (ASLSP); College of International Security Affairs (CISA); and the College of Information and Cyberspace (CIC). Additionally, there are numerous fellowships (approximately 76) and International Schools (approximately 50 nations) which offer comparable advanced PME opportunities. Senior Service College/Fellowship/Foreign School Catalogue AY 2018-2019, Philip M. Evans, Director, Fellows Program, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018.

³ Eligible officers are in the grades of O5 and O6 (Lieutenant Colonel or Colonel).

⁴ This represents the range from AY09 to present. (Dr. Christopher Fowler, Registrar, United States Army War College, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018).

⁵ A contributing reason for this limitation is to meet the requirements for accreditation for Joint Professional Military Education, (to ensure adequate representation from other services and other government entities): *10 U.S. Code § 2155 - Joint professional military education Phase II program of instruction*, Cornell Law School, Legal Information Institute, <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/10/2155> (accessed March 24, 2018).

⁶ Including but not limited to: Amor, Infantry, Special Operations Forces, Logistics, Military Intelligence, etc. (Philip M. Evans, Director, Fellows Program, United States Army War College, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018).

⁷ This number has increased from 40-50 in the last 5 years due to the participation of African Nations with the standing up of Africa Command (AFRICOM). (Philip M. Evans, Director, Fellows Program, United States Army War College, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018).

⁸ This equates to Government Schedule grades 14 and 15, or equivalent.

⁹ Other Federal Agencies include: Defense Intelligence Agency, United States Agency for International Development, National Security Agency, Defense Intelligence Agency and others. (Dr. Christopher Fowler, Registrar, United States Army War College, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018).

¹⁰ Dr. Christopher Fowler, Registrar, United States Army War College, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018

¹¹ The author is a current member of Seminar 13.

¹² The author is the Seminar 13 Army Reserve officer.

¹³ The Army Reserve officer and the Department of the Army civilian are both females.

¹⁴ There are initially 24 Seminars, but a few months into the school year, an additional Seminar is formed for the Advanced Strategic Arts Program (ASAP). This experience is available for students who wish to compete for inclusion in this specialized program, which is formed from selected U.S. candidates from the student body. This year, 3 female students were selected to participate in the ASAP. In one respect, it is very positive that the ASAP will benefit from representation of females and the gender diversity this will bring to that program. Unfortunately, each year when the ASAP is formed, some Seminars risk losing female representation altogether.

¹⁵ 31 females within a total population of 382 accounts for <10 percent of the current resident class. 19 female Army officers is < 5 percent of the current resident class.

¹⁶ *National Security Diversity and Inclusion Act of 2017*, S. 924, 115th Cong., 1st sess. (Apr. 24, 2017), S.924, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/924/text> (accessed February 22, 2018).

¹⁷ Michael Hosie and Kaytlynn Griswold, "The Meritocracy Myth: Challenges to Army Officer Corps Diversity," July 28, 2017, *War Room*, <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/author/michael-hosie/> (accessed December 12, 2018).

¹⁸ Task & Purpose, "Timeline: A history of Women in the US Military," March 8, 2017, <https://taskandpurpose.com/timeline-history-women-us-military/> (accessed March 22, 2018). Note: The true number of women serving covertly is unknowable, as documentation only exists for those whose gender was in one way or another revealed.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ *The Don't ask, Don't Tell Repeal of 2010*, Public Law 111-321, 111th Cong., 2nd sess. (December 22, 2010), 124th STAT. 3515, <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-111publ321/pdf/PLAW-111publ321.pdf> (accessed March 24, 2018).

²² Cheryl Pellerin, "Department of Defense, DoD Updates Equal Opportunity Policy to Include Sexual Orientation," *Department of Defense News, Defense Media*, June 9, 2015, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/604797/> (accessed January 12, 2018).

²³ *United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*, October 31, 2000, 1. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed March 12, 2018).

²⁴ *United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*, October 31, 2000, 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *United Nations, Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000)*, October 31, 2000, 4.

²⁸ *National Security Diversity and Inclusion Act of 2017*, S. 924, 115th Cong., 1st sess. (Apr. 24, 2017), S.924, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/924/text> (accessed February 22, 2018).

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Donald J. Trump, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 18, 2017), 41, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NSS-Final-12-18-2017-0905.pdf> (accessed December 22, 2018).

³¹ David Rock, Heidi Grant, and Jacqui Grey, "Diverse Teams Feel Less Comfortable – and That's Why They Perform Better," *Harvard Business Review*, September 22, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/09/diverse-teams-feel-less-comfortable-and-thats-why-they-perform-better> (accessed Mar 2, 2018).

³² David Patrick Houghton, *The Decision Point: Six Cases in U.S. Foreign Policy Decision Making*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 13.

³³ *Ibid.*, 51.

³⁴ Although intra-seminar social dynamics seem to vary broadly; some Seminars do become cohesive – but diversity in the seminar slows that process, and allows it to develop in the context of appreciating differences as well as similarities

³⁵ David Rock and Heidi Grant, "Why Diverse Teams Are Smarter," *Harvard Business Review*, November 4, 2016, <https://hbr.org/2016/11/why-diverse-teams-are-smarter> (accessed Mar 2, 2018).

³⁶ Carl Forsling, "Why the Military Needs Diversity," *Task and Purpose*, April 28, 2015, <https://taskandpurpose.com/why-the-military-needs-diversity/> (accessed Mar 2, 2018).

³⁷ Rock, Heidi Grant, and Grey, "Diverse Teams Feel Less Comfortable."

³⁸ Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Self Reliance*, 1841, *Bartleby.com*, <http://www.bartleby.com/100/420.47.html> (accessed Mar 12, 2018).

³⁹ Fowler, interviewed by author.

⁴⁰ The last resident female student attended in 2017, representing Australia. Fowler, interviewed by author. Additionally, there have been 2 IFs from Norway, in 2006 and 2013.

⁴¹ Mr. Kevin D. Bremer, Chief, International Student Management Office, United States Army War College, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018

⁴² Fowler, interviewed by author.

⁴³ Scott Neuman, "First Female Soldiers Graduate From Army Ranger School," *National Public Radio Online*, August 21, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2015/08/21/433482186/first-female-soldiers-graduate-from-army-ranger-school> (accessed March 22, 2018).

⁴⁴ As each Seminar has 3-4 International Fellows, this number is likely very close to a dozen. While this may not seem a significant number, it means that approximately a dozen foreign nations will send and receive back a highly successful officer who has just spent a year in the U.S. and returned without any firsthand exposure to a female-gendered perspective of the U.S. military.

⁴⁵ Johnson-Freese, Haring, and Ulrich, "The Counterproductive "Sea of Sameness," 58-64.

⁴⁶ Joan Johnson-Freese, "Some Thoughts on the Need for Greater Diversity in Professional Military Education," November 4, 2014, *Workforce Diversity Network*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Some of these concepts and models are more or less generic and shared between institutions and sciences (military, business, and social science). Others (such as the Strategy Formulation Tool and the Strategic Assessment Tool are "homegrown" USAWC products, developed within the institution to assist with teaching students "how to think". In the words of George Box (oft-quoted within the hallowed halls of the USAWC): "All models are Wrong, some are useful." *Goodreads.com, Quotable Quotes, George E.P. Box*, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/680161-essentially-all-models-are-wrong-but-some-are-useful> (accessed March 25, 2018).

⁴⁹ The "interagency" is a term used throughout U.S. government workers to describe all governmental entities other than the one they currently work within. IGOs are organizations comprised of sovereign states by treaty, charter, or agreement. Some examples include: The United Nations, the European Union, The World Bank. NGOs are non-governmental, but important (and ubiquitous) to the operational environment. Some examples include: The Red Cross, Habitat for Humanity, Doctors Without Borders.

⁵⁰ For purposes of context, the author defines a "miniscule minority" as equal or less than 7.89 percent, her aggregate experience in her USAWC classes to date (Seminar 13 and East Asia Regional Studies).

⁵¹ Robert J. House, et al., *Culture, Leadership, and Organizations: The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*, (Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA., 2004), 348.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Kevin Cokley et al., "The Roles of Gender Stigma Consciousness, Impostor Phenomenon and Academic Self-Concept in the Academic Outcomes of Women and Men", *Sex Roles* 73, no. 9: 414-426, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-015-0516-7> (accessed Mar 12, 2018).

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Johnson-Freese, "Some Thoughts on the Need for Greater Diversity."

⁵⁸ Charlotte Laurent-Ottomane, "Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards: The Thirty Percent Coalition and the Critical Mass Effect," *Sustainable Brands*, September 24, 2012, http://www.sustainablebrands.com/news_and_views/new-metrics/corporate-boards-more-women-enhance-governance (accessed March 24 2018); "Why Diversity Matters," July 2013, Catalyst Information Center, http://www.catalyst.org/system/files/why_diversity_matters_catalyst_0.pdf (accessed March 24, 2018).

⁵⁹ Department of Defense, *DoD Diversity and Inclusion 2013 Summary Report*, (Washington, DC: Office of Diversity Management and Equal Opportunity, 2013), B-3, <http://diversity.defense.gov/Portals/51/Documents/ODMEO%20Diversity%20and%20Inclusion%20Summary%20Report%20FINAL.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2018).

⁶⁰ Hosie and Griswold, "The Meritocracy Myth: Challenges to Army Officer Corps Diversity."

⁶¹ Laura Sherbin and Ripa Rashid, "Diversity Doesn't Stick Without Inclusion," *Harvard Business Review*, February 1, 2017, <https://hbr.org/2017/02/diversity-doesnt-stick-without-inclusion> (accessed 22 March, 2018).

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ That is to say while the lack of leadership positions at the USAWC is of concern, further study is warranted to determine the reasons for this.

⁶⁴ "ACC Female Officer Percentage by Year Group", briefing slide, U.S. Army Human Resources Command, Fort Knox, KY, February 20, 2018.

⁶⁵ Philip M. Evans, Director, Fellows Program, interviewed by author, Carlisle, PA, March 27, 2018.

⁶⁶ The author would err on the side of the current construct – maintain females as low density, high value Seminar assets unless there is compelling evidence of the value to do otherwise.

⁶⁷ United States Army War College, *Campaign Planning Handbook: Academic Year 2018*, (Carlisle, PA: Department of Military Strategy, Planning, and Operations, 2018) 50.