
EFFECTS OF GENDER INTEGRATION ON READINESS

This chapter explores the effects of gender integration on individual and unit readiness. It begins by adopting a working definition of personnel readiness, which includes five attributes: availability, qualifications, experience, stability, and motivation. Next, the results of the survey questions that addressed individual and overall unit readiness are discussed. Finally, this chapter discusses the effects of gender integration on each of the five attributes of personnel readiness.

DEFINING READINESS

The concept of readiness was purposely undefined in the written survey, as we resolved to determine what factors the study participants would highlight as affecting readiness. The diversity of factors mentioned in the written comments illustrates broad variation in the definition of readiness and substantiates the need to break this item down into its components to facilitate further analysis.

Numerous research efforts have examined force readiness. An aggregated examination of this work indicates that there is considerable variation in the definition of “readiness.” The term refers to multiple issues, but many attempts to define readiness address the capability of a military force or unit to accomplish specific goals and missions. Previous research, however, does indicate that there is a hierarchy of readiness, whereby the readiness of individual units is one element that determines the readiness of a service, and the readiness of a service contributes to the overall joint force readiness. Unit readiness is the typical level of focus.

However, even unit readiness contains several ratings of readiness. Personnel, materiel, and unit training all contribute to an overall unit rating of readiness. Clearly, the degree to which women are well-trained in their occupations and possess sufficient military experience will affect personnel and unit readiness. Thus, this discussion will concentrate on the effects of gender integration upon the personnel readiness of the units studied, as assessed by the units' commanders and personnel. We will examine the degree to which the presence of women in newly opened occupations or units affects the five attributes of personnel readiness: whether personnel are available, qualified, experienced, stable to the unit, and motivated.¹ *Availability* represents the personnel assigned to the unit and available to deploy. *Qualified* personnel are those trained in their duty skills and capable of performing the job to which they are assigned. *Experienced* refers to the number of people in the unit with senior grades. *Stability* represents the degree to which turbulence or personnel turnover in the unit is minimized. *Motivation* is a subjective measure, which will be evident only from the perceptions and attitudes reflected in interviews, focus groups, and surveys. The effects of gender integration on the motivation of personnel will be addressed in Chapters Five and Six, which discuss the effects on unit cohesion and morale. When examining these factors, we recognized that gender may or may not have an effect upon any or all of them. In addition, we also recognized that, if the data do indicate a correlation between gender integration and lower measures of these attributes, the order of causality of these measures is uncertain. If such a correlation were indicated, one would need to ask whether the assignment of women lowering the readiness of these units, or are women being assigned to less ready units.

OVERALL ISSUES THAT AFFECT INDIVIDUAL AND UNIT READINESS

The combination of interview, survey, and discussion findings indicates that neither gender issues nor the presence of women in the units studied is perceived to have a significant impact on readiness.

¹See Schank, Harrell, Thie, et al. (1997) for the development of these attributes.

Individual Readiness Survey Results

When queried about the state of their individual readiness to deploy on a combat mission, roughly half of the officers and senior enlisted personnel believed their readiness to deploy for a combat mission was very high, and very few people rated their readiness as low. These survey results are shown in Table 3.1. Except for junior enlisted women, women respondents tended to rate their own readiness the same or higher than men of the same grade. Half of junior enlisted women surveyed evaluated their readiness as medium, and less than a third rated it as high. This category of personnel was most likely to rate readiness as low.

Unit Readiness Survey Results

Table 3.2 indicates the responses when queried about the state of unit readiness. Women in leadership roles also tended to evaluate their unit's readiness to deploy higher than men did. The difference is most dramatic between men and women of the senior enlisted grades.

Open-Ended Readiness Survey Results

One of the most important findings gathered from written responses to open-ended questionnaire items was that people believed gender integration was not one of the key factors people attributed to readiness.

When introducing our study at the research sites, we always explained that our mission was to examine the effect that gender integration had upon readiness, cohesion, and morale. In addition, the cover pages of the surveys were titled "Survey to Support the Study of 'Integrating Women Into Previously Closed Military Occupations.'" Thus, if anything, survey respondents were prompted to mention gender as a factor in readiness, cohesion, and morale above all others. Instead, in answer to the question about the perceived reasons for personal readiness and unit readiness, we received very few written comments that identified gender issues or conflicts as salient. Instead, training, leadership, and individual workloads were identified as having the primary effects upon readi-

Table 3.1

Responses to the Question: “How Would You Rate Your Readiness for a Combat Mission?” (by grade and gender, in percent)

	Officers		E7-E9		E5-E6		E1-E4	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
High	59	66	61	63	49	51	50	29
Medium	36	28	35	37	44	40	44	53
Low	5	7	5	—	7	9	7	18
Total	100							

NOTES: p is the probability that the null hypothesis (that the variables used to classify the population are independent) is true.

For gender, $p < 0.05$; for grade, $p < 0.001$. Unit was also significant ($p < 0.001$): Personal readiness tended to be rated higher in units that had recently deployed and lower in units that had been in the shipyard or had not recently deployed. Service and race were not significant.

Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

ness. These written comments are presented in Table 3.3. The first two columns organize responses into like categories; the right column indicates the number of comments that mentioned each item as a factor of readiness. The comments have not been coded by negative or positive effect. For example, 275 individuals mentioned training as the reason for their level of readiness. This category rep-

Table 3.2

Responses to the Question: “How Would You Rate Your Unit’s Readiness for a Combat Mission?” (by grade and gender, in percent)

	Officers		E7-E9		E5-E6		E1-E4	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
High	50	54	42	68	31	46	47	42
Medium	43	29	43	32	54	40	41	44
Low	7	18	15	—	16	15	12	14
Total	100							

NOTES: For grade, $p < 0.01$. Gender alone was not significant, but as the table demonstrates, its interaction with grade was ($p < 0.05$). Unit was also significant ($p < 0.001$): Unit readiness tended to be rated higher in units that had recently deployed, lower in units that had been in the shipyard or had not recently deployed. Service and race were not significant. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 3.3
**Written Comments in Response to “Why Do You Think Your
 Readiness and Your Unit’s Readiness Is the Way It Is?”**

Categories	Written Responses	Number of Mentions
Training	Training	275
Workload	Operations Tempo	77
	Personnel Tempo	25
	Workload/Schedule	23
	Personnel Shortages	21
	How Hard People Work	12
Leadership	Leadership/Chain of Command	66
	Clarity of Unit Organization and Unit Mission	14
	Unit Management	10
	Discipline	6
	Level or Consistency of Unit Standards	5
Materiel	Materiel/Maintenance	65
	Shortage of Funds	11
Attitudes/Morale	Morale/Attitude	62
	Priorities Other Than Combat Mission	10
Quality of People and Unit	Quality of People	40
	Relevant/Combat Experience	16
	Successful Unit	15
	Unit Pride	14
	Mission of Unit	11
Cohesion	Time with Unit	6
	Teamwork/Cohesion	40
	Communication	4
	Gender	2

resents both such comments as, “We train constantly and automatically people know what to do for certain situations,” and “Need more training, practicing. . . . Yes I am learning my MOS, but when it comes to combat training we haven’t done anything besides what I did in Basic Training. I don’t think that is enough training.” People commented not only on the amount of training, but also on whether the type of training seemed relevant or necessary. Regardless of the

positive or negative nature of the comment, training was perceived as having the greatest effect upon their individual and unit readiness.

Likewise, the emphasis the chain of command placed on readiness or the quality and experience of the chain of command was also an important factor. Some participants mentioned the “[t]one set by current and prior CO and supported by entire chain of command,” and some linked leadership to training: “[t]he amount of training offered is tremendous. The CO really pushes combat readiness.” In contrast, negative reports included “the chain of command is afraid to let others (lower chain of command) take action and make decisions.”

Given the stated focus of our research, it is surprising that out of 934 surveys, only 2 respondents indicated that gender issues had an effect upon readiness, indicating a general perception that gender integration plays a minor role in unit or individual readiness.

THE EFFECTS OF GENDER ON PERSONNEL READINESS ATTRIBUTES

Again, gender was perceived to be a minor factor in the readiness of a unit, but the following discusses the issues that gender integration does raise for specific readiness attributes: availability, qualification, experience, and stability.

Availability

There are two reasons personnel may not be available: (1) no individuals have been assigned to some positions, or (2) the individuals who have been assigned are not available for work or are on restricted duty. Duty restrictions can include nondeployability by itself or other restrictions on the tasks and locations at which an individual can perform.²

In discussions at service headquarters and units, we heard few gender-related problems in filling positions. In the Navy and Marine

²These availability effects also have implications for morale, which are discussed in Chapter Five.

Corps, gender could restrict assignment flexibility because the specific number of bunks available for women on ships prescribes the number of female billets.

For the Marines, this issue is especially problematic because they have integrated units that currently deploy on ships with no female accommodations. Thus, some Marine women are currently not allowed to deploy with their units. The problem will decrease as more combatant ships are modified. Units that deploy on ships are the only ones with official female quotas.

We heard more about gender-related causes of unplanned personnel losses, absences, and duty restrictions.³ Three causes were most often mentioned: pregnancy, single motherhood, and sickness or injury.

Pregnancy. The deployability of pregnant women is restricted by policy. Under some conditions, pregnant women can participate in field exercises, but they cannot deploy overseas or out to sea.⁴ Pregnant women are also excluded from military activities that are considered potentially dangerous to the baby, such as using chemicals or firing weapons.⁵

Many commanders we spoke with indicated that they had data showing a higher rate of nonavailability among women than among

³There is considerable debate in the research community regarding whether women miss more time from work than men do. The majority of the research concentrates upon the civilian workplace. The findings that do suggest women are absent more frequently cite life events, such as motherhood, as the primary factor explaining these differences (see, for example, Leigh, 1991; Vistnes, 1997; VandenHeuvel and Wooden, 1995). The studies that find women do not necessarily miss more time from work argue that other studies did not control for the different levels of seniority between men and women, the different types of jobs men and women tend to have, or other demographic or job differences (see, for example, Haccoun, 1988; Scott and McClellan, 1990). One recent study, however, did find that military women pilots were medically grounded more frequently than were their male colleagues (Voge, 1996).

⁴The Navy and Marine Corps policies state that pregnant women cannot be more than six hours from a hospital. The six-hour policy was established not to permit pregnant servicemembers to deploy to sea, but to allow some flexibility for short under way periods, such as transits to and from local shipyards or changing a ship's berth.

⁵Further research might compare these military policies regarding pregnancy to those from civilian organizations that employ women in environments that would be considered hazardous to pregnant women (e.g., factories with high noise levels or chemical exposure).

men. However, they differed in their assessments of the effect of pregnancy on their units' overall ability to deploy. For commanders of undermanned units, unplanned losses of any type are difficult to manage. In the Navy, where women are removed from the ship when they are 20 weeks into a pregnancy, the effect of this "unplanned loss" depends on how long it takes to get a replacement.⁶ In the other services, pregnant personnel are less likely to be detached from the unit, but they typically take convalescence leave following the birth. These losses must be compensated for because replacements are rarely available. Obviously, the management challenge of pregnancies also varies with the number of women who become pregnant at the same time or in close succession.

Pregnant women who remain in the unit may not be able to perform all their usual duties. This depends on the job, the woman's medical circumstances, and decisions made by the woman, her physician, and her commander or supervisor. Most unit personnel we spoke with drew contrasts between women who participated in unit physical-training runs to the very ends of their pregnancies and women who were on limited duty or sick leave during a considerable portion of their pregnancies. Performance during pregnancies is thought to vary across women. If the commanding officer and other unit personnel are familiar with and exhibit a knowledge of the regulations and restrictions accompanying pregnancy, managing a unit with one or more pregnant women is easier, and attitudes toward the pregnant woman appear to be more positive.

We heard many times that *who* was pregnant and *when* she was pregnant made a tremendous difference to unit readiness. There was a general perception that women officers and senior enlisted personnel try to time their pregnancies to have the least effect upon the unit—e.g., not before a scheduled deployment. This was due, in part, to their pride in and concern regarding their units and also

⁶We were told on our visits to ships that a replacement cannot be requested before the pregnant woman departs. This practice would ensure a considerable gap between departure and the arrival of a replacement and increases the resentment toward the pregnant woman. The actual Navy assignment policy, however, is that ships can begin the process to request a replacement as soon as they are aware of pregnancies. Assignment priority will depend upon multiple factors, though, such as the deployment schedules of the ships; thus, the ships may not receive replacements as soon as the pregnant women leave, even if they apply well in advance.

because, we were told, these women had invested a lot of time in their careers and would not want to damage them. These opinions stood in marked contrast to those concerning junior female personnel, especially single mothers. Single, pregnant, junior enlisted personnel were considered the most problematic because the pregnancies were less likely to be planned and more likely to create other problems, such as financial and child-care problems, that impacted the unit.

Single Mothers. Single parents of either gender were perceived to place a burden on the unit. We should note that, numerically, single fathers are more common in the military than single mothers, but the latter seem to be more visible to others, perhaps because a much higher percentage of women than men are single parents.⁷ We heard about many specific problems, particularly in the junior enlisted ranks. Young single parents often cannot afford adequate housing, child care, or transportation. They may amass considerable debt and then need assistance in managing financial crises. Further, young single parents frequently cannot attend early morning or late evening unit activities because of the restrictions of daycare, etc. Of the many issues that arise in these situations, few of the issues are unresolvable, but many consume the time of supervisory personnel, including the unit commander and/or executive officer, or senior noncommissioned and petty officers.

Sickness or Injury. Whether the number of women in a unit affects personnel availability also depends on whether the women are more or less likely than the men to be absent for all reasons, including sickness and injury in addition to pregnancy. The research team was

⁷Using data from DoD's 1992 Survey of Officer and Enlisted Personnel, we were able to estimate the fraction of all military personnel who are single parents. Two percent of men and 14 percent of women were single parents at that time. The biggest difference was for mid-grade enlisted personnel (E5–E6); in this group, 4 percent of men and 20 percent of women were single parents. Among single parents, just over half were men. The survey also provides some evidence to support the perception that women are less available than men. One question asked whether the individual "found it difficult to respond very quickly to a recall/alert or to a change in work schedule . . . in the past 12 months." Among those who had faced this situation, 38 percent of men and 51 percent of women found it difficult. Actually, there were few differences between men and women at the same grade; the overall difference mostly reflects that women are more likely to be in the junior enlisted grades, where servicemembers were more likely to report these difficulties.

told that women were more frequently on sick call, light duty, or profile (i.e., limited physical duties for health reasons) than the men. There are no automated records of the frequency of and reasons for absence, however, so we could not confirm these reports.

There were several explanations given for this perceived pattern. One explanation, as told to us by Marines, was that women are “broke more often,” or experience a disproportionate number of injuries. We were also told that men are more likely to be ordered to “suck it up” and perform despite pain or illness, whereas male commanders would usually not push women to that degree.

Additionally, many individuals thought that junior enlisted women used “female problems” to get out of unattractive work duties and that male supervisors would not challenge these complaints. In contrast, the perception was that senior women did not permit junior women to use menstruation as an excuse to get out of work and that they did not use this themselves.

In conclusion, most units we studied did not report that gender integration has had a significant negative effect upon the number of personnel available to the unit. When units were fully staffed and the proportion of women was representative, pregnancy seemed to be of little concern to commanders and coworkers. When the units visited were undermanned or had a disproportionate number of women, pregnancy or injuries among the women tended to be noted as a problem regardless of whether men were also becoming injured or regardless of whether the overall percentage of personnel on convalescence leave due to pregnancy was small.

In Chapter Two, we described policies that continue to restrict duty assignments that women can fill, particularly in some occupations. These policies disproportionately concentrate women in units with unrestricted positions and emphasize concerns about the effects of gender integration on personnel availability. These concerns, in turn, may also serve to justify the policy (i.e., if we have all those problems with women, it is a good thing women are not in the “important” units).

Qualification

Given that a unit has the necessary personnel available, the next personnel readiness criterion is “qualification,” which reflects whether the people are trained and capable of performing their jobs within the unit. All the commanders with whom we spoke asserted that their units were 100 percent trained in their duty skills. Gender clearly had no effect on the degree to which the units were filled with individuals qualified and trained in the correct skills. However, we also took a broader look at whether it was generally perceived that women could perform their jobs as well as the men.

As Table 3.4 indicates, the majority of individuals in our survey of grade E5 and above believed that women performed similarly to men. Most supervisors asserted that they had women who performed throughout the performance spectrum; some women performed better than the men, some performed at the lower end of the scale. More junior enlisted respondents were inclined to respond that women did not perform as well as men. However, when discus-

Table 3.4

Answers to the Question: “How Would You Rank the (Other) Women in Your Unit?” (by grade, in percent)

	Officers (N=110)	E7-E9 (N=102)	E5-E6 (N=260)	E1-E4 (N=416)
They tend to perform better than the men.	6	6	7	2
They tend to perform in the same range as men do.	65	68	52	38
They tend to perform worse than the men.	21	12	23	32
I don't know. I don't really have much interaction with them.	9	15	18	27

NOTES: For grade, $p < 0.001$. Unit was significant ($p < 0.01$), but there was no evident pattern among them. Thus, we attribute the differences to commander influence. Service, gender, and race were not significant.

Men were asked to rank the women in the unit; women were asked to rank the other women in the unit.

Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

sions turned to women who were not performing well in the units, junior women were those most frequently mentioned as examples. Frequently, these junior women were dissatisfied with the service or with their jobs; women who had reenlisted were committed to the military as a career and tended to be seen as performing as well as men.

When individuals were asked to rate their own performance and estimate how they would be evaluated by their peers, they tended to believe that they performed very well, but that their peers would not evaluate them as highly. This pattern is evident for both men and women, across all the services, although the gap between self-evaluation and peer evaluation was greater for women. Table 3.5 indicates the results for the men, and Table 3.6 displays the results for the women. For each grade, the tables indicate the results of the respondents' self-evaluations and then how their peers would rank them.

For many of the women in newly opened units, the jobs they are performing are the same as the ones women have been performing for years in other units, such as military police, and many of these assignments are traditional for women, such as administration. Thus, this question is only interesting when applied to newly opened MOSs, and then the question becomes problematic because of the small numbers of women assigned to these MOSs. Given such small numbers, it is not yet apparent whether women perform differently than men within these occupations. For example, one commander told us that two out of two women he has in a newly opened occupation have job-related injuries. From this evidence, it is impossible to infer whether women who perform that job will be more prone to injury.

Another issue was whether the ability to perform in their occupation was more important than general military skills. This issue came up more during our Marine Corps visits. For example, "I don't feel women should be in the Marines. A Marine is a basic rifleman, an MOS women cannot be assigned to. Therefore, women shouldn't be Marines. Other services, yes, but not Marines." Because women cannot be infantrymen, this kind of logic asserts that whether or not women can perform within their occupations is irrelevant. The

Table 3.5

Responses of Men to the Questions: “How Do You Rank Your Overall Work Performance Compared to the Others that You Work With?” (by grade and service) and “How Do You Think Your Peers Would Rank Your Overall Work Performance?” (by grade and service, in percent)

	Officers		E7-E9		E5-E6		E1-E4	
	Self	Peers	Self	Peers	Self	Peers	Self	Peers
Army men								
Top 15%	62	48	68	53	59	50	35	25
Above average	28	36	26	38	29	31	35	38
Average	10	15	6	8	10	16	29	33
Below average	—	1	1	1	2	2	1	3
Bottom 15%	—	—	—	—	0.4	1	1	1
Navy men								
Top 15%	61	49	70	50	64	53	38	29
Above average	26	33	26	39	23	28	35	35
Average	14	19	4	9	12	17	27	33
Below average	—	—	—	2	1	2	—	3
Bottom 15%	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Marine men								
Top 15%	68	61	75	74	74	74	46	29
Above average	18	21	20	21	21	15	32	49
Average	14	18	14	5	6	12	20	20
Below average	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Bottom 15%	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1

NOTES: For grade, $p < 0.001$. For service, $p < 0.01$. Unit and race were not significant. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Table 3.6
Responses of Women to the Questions: “How Do You Rank Your Overall Work Performance Compared to the Others That You Work With?” (by grade and service) and “How Do You Think Your Peers Would Rank Your Overall Work Performance?” (by grade and service, in percent)

	Officers		E7-E9		E5-E6		E1-E4	
	Self	Peers	Self	Peers	Self	Peers	Self	Peers
Army Women								
Top 15%	61	33	68	50	44	40	32	22
Above Average	33	56	18	41	41	38	32	36
Average	6	11	9	9	11	20	33	36
Below Average	—	—	5	—	2	—	—	4
Bottom 15%	—	—	—	—	2	2	2	2
Navy Women								
Top 15%	60	44	56	44	50	39	20	15
Above Average	36	44	39	50	41	41	40	39
Average	4	12	6	6	4	14	37	42
Below Average	—	—	—	—	5	4	2	5
Bottom 15%	—	—	—	—	—	2	2	—
Marine Women								
Top 15%	67	67	N/A	N/A	75	50	30	26
Above Average	—	—	N/A	N/A	13	38	39	35
Average	—	—	N/A	N/A	13	—	30	35
Below Average	—	33	N/A	N/A	—	—	—	4
Bottom 15%	—	—	N/A	N/A	—	13	—	—

NOTE: For rank, $p < 0.001$. For service, $p < 0.01$. Unit was not significant. Race was not significant for Army or Marine women. Race was significant ($p < .05$) for Navy women. Among Navy women, black E7-E9s tended to rate themselves higher than white women of the same ranks, and black E1-E6 tended to rate themselves lower than white women of the same ranks. Hispanic women and Others rated themselves lower than black or white women. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Marine Corps has a considerably lower percentage of technical skill requirements than the other services; instead, the service emphasis is on general military skills. In addition, the Marine Corps is considerably more junior in experience mix; over 60 percent of the Marine Corps has one to four years of service. Thus, the importance of technical skills is further minimized by the “apprentice” status of most of the service.⁸ In addition, because the Marine Corps is a more self-sustaining force in that it deploys with less internal service support, there is a minimized emphasis on the division of labor.

For many individuals, strength was the primary concern regarding whether women could perform their jobs. We were told that some jobs require considerable upper-body strength to move oil barrels, change large tires, or carry large sacks of flour. However, we also found supervisors who had resolved these problems. Supervisors who had resolved them asserted that the services have become more cautious about injuries in general, and that much heavy work now requires multiperson efforts. When women were part of a team working together to lift or haul equipment or supplies, supervisors found few problems. Other units were afraid that women could not handle the work, and thus did not even give women the opportunity to participate in the team-lifting or hauling. Savvy supervisors seemed to realize that some of their men could not lift heavy loads either and actively worked to manage the capabilities of the people they had, e.g., “If she’s carrying less per load, I make sure she carries the last load.” Once again, this emerges as an issue more where units were disproportionately female, and thus team efforts are disproportionately female.

Many participants expressed a desire for a physical test that could evaluate the ability of an individual to perform within a job. The current physical fitness standards do not test for the ability to perform in particular occupations. However, many troops believe that the physical fitness standards relate to the ability to perform in a combat environment; thus, the different physical standard for military women means to them that women will perform less well in a combat environment. As a result, the different physical fitness standards are less of a readiness issue than they are a morale issue, so this issue

⁸See Kirby and Thie (1996) for a profile of the different services.

is discussed in Chapter Five. However, individuals believed that, were physical tests devised to measure physical capabilities relevant to particular occupations, much of the controversy over individuals' abilities to perform in heavy-labor occupations would likely be resolved.⁹

Despite the concerns people held regarding physical strength requirements, the majority of men surveyed agreed that women should serve in their occupations. These results are shown in Tables 3.7 and 3.8. As shown in Table 3.9, women respondents generally believed their male coworkers were supportive of women serving in their occupations or career fields.

In addition to the skill aspect of an individual's job, many military personnel also have management or leadership responsibilities. We were repeatedly told of the high esteem in which senior male enlisted personnel hold their female peers. In addition, most junior people asserted that there was no difference between men and women supervisors. When a difference was noted between men and women supervisors, there was a general consensus that female leaders are stricter with junior enlisted females than are male leaders. The perceived unequal treatment is discussed in Chapter Four as an issue of morale.

Table 3.7

Men's Responses to the Question: "Do You Think Women Should Be Allowed to Serve in Your Occupation/Career Field?" (by unit type, in percent)

	Army Combat Arms	Army Non-Combat Arms	Navy	Marines
Yes	66	80	89	73
No	34	20	11	27

NOTES: For unit type, $p < 0.001$. Service and grade were not significant.

⁹The design and implementation of occupation-specific physical requirements is a complex issue.

Table 3.8**Men's Responses to the Question: "Do You Think Women Should Be Allowed to Serve in Your Occupation/Career Field?" (by race, in percent)**

	White (N=424)	Black (N=112)	Hispanic (N=68)	Other (N=51)
Yes	79	96	87	86
No	22	5	13	14

NOTES: For race, $p < 0.001$. Service and grade were not significant. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

In conclusion, both men and women in our sample believe that women perform similarly to men. Where women are assigned to newly integrated units, they are frequently performing a job that has been integrated successfully for years in other units. Where women are assigned to newly integrated occupations, the small numbers make an objective assessment of these individual performances very difficult. To the degree that leadership is an important aspect of an individual's qualifications, women leaders are well-regarded by their peers and subordinates and may be better at resolving some of the leadership gender inconsistencies observed by both men and women in our sample.

Table 3.9**Women's Responses to the Question: "Do Your Male Coworkers Seem to Think that Women Should Be Allowed to Serve in Your Occupation/Career Field?" (by grade, in percent)**

	Officer	E7-E9	E5-E6	E1-E4
Most seem to think women should be allowed to serve in my occupation.	57	70	47	32
Some seem to think that women should be allowed, others do not.	25	20	26	32
Most seem to think women should not be allowed to serve in my occupation.	—	—	15	17
I can't really tell what they think.	18	10	12	18

NOTES: For grade, $p < 0.05$. Service, unit, and race were not significant. Percentages may not sum to 100 because of rounding.

Experience

Given the high regard for female leaders within the military, the availability of female senior enlisted personnel and female officers is generally considered to enrich the units. The Navy placed a high value on female senior leadership on ships and established a policy of assigning junior enlisted women to newly gender-integrated ships only after female chief petty officers and female officers were aboard. The senior women were assumed to act as role models for the younger women and as resources to male colleagues unfamiliar with supervising women. This policy was regarded positively by the majority of Navy personnel with whom we discussed it, and personnel from other services also saw the benefits of such a policy. As we described earlier, however, the policy has constrained the pace of integration on ships because it takes time to grow senior female personnel.

Because many opportunities in the Army and Marines are still closed to women, the career path to senior positions may be extremely difficult to travel for all but a very few women who receive the limited number of assignments open to women. Besides limiting the number of women who can advance, restricted occupations also limit the credibility of the women who do advance. Even the Navy assignment policy mentioned above did have a slight negative aspect in that the senior women who were assigned to the newly integrated ships did not have the same amount of experience on that type of ship as did many of their new subordinates. In some cases, this negatively affected the credibility of these women. In general, however, this disadvantage was minor compared to the perceived advantage of assigning experienced women to newly integrated ships first and is a transitional issue.

Stability

Rapid personnel turnover can negatively affect the personnel readiness of a unit because individuals arriving at a new unit need time to learn the unit's duties and to work with their new colleagues. This learning curve is generally gender blind. The only relationship we found between stability and gender was through unplanned losses, and thus a higher rate of new personnel, due to pregnancy. Only the

Navy regularly replaces pregnant women with new personnel, so pregnancy is not as much of a stability issue for the other services.

A different kind of personnel stability, gender stability, is worthy of mention here. When services assign only very small numbers of women to a unit and when those assignments occur at the same time, the stability of gender integration becomes an issue. For example, female Navy aviators are often assigned to squadrons in pairs because they can then berth together while aboard ship. However, because they are typically assigned to the unit at the same time, they often leave at the same time, creating instability in unit integration. The result is that units become accustomed to having officers of both genders, then the women leave, and the environment becomes all male again. By the time the next pair of women is assigned, the unit must once again experience the transition to a mixed-gender population. The effects of these transitions and the possibility of increasing the gender stability of units merit further investigation, but stability is generally a gender-blind aspect of personnel readiness.

CONCLUSION

In summary, when queried about individual and unit readiness, military personnel offered comments that did not identify gender integration as having a major effect on readiness. Further, both men and women surveyed asserted that women performed within the same range as men. Women, and such issues as pregnancy, appear to affect the availability of personnel in units more frequently when units are disproportionately female or are undermanned.

Although supervisors have found ways to manage the strength differentials of their personnel, many personnel favor an occupation-specific qualification test to screen both women and men for the strength requirements for specific jobs and to relieve those individuals who did pass the test from the pressure to prove themselves. The current physical fitness test does not test for the ability to perform specific jobs and is thus not a test of qualification.

Finally, the value of female leadership is widely recognized, as is the scarcity of such female leaders, especially female E7s to E9s. These women are thought to contribute significantly to the quality and

readiness of individual units, especially those integrated with more junior female personnel.