The Italian Army is in the midst of a transformation process toward an All-Volunteer Force (AVF). The research reported here builds an analytical framework for understanding the key policy issues and tradeoffs affecting such a transition. The analysis specifically focuses on the management of the enlisted and non-commissioned officer (NCO) force.

This effort depended considerably on the gathering of official policy guidance and personnel management data, which was in large part obtained with the assistance of the Italian Army General Staff. The data collection effort began in the Spring of 1999, and ended in January 2001. This implies that the following discussion does not explicitly take into account the laws and regulations adopted in 2001 (and most importantly Legislative Decree 82/2001, which modifies the promotion path of career soldiers as well as the steady-state targets for NCOs). However, the basic findings of this dissertation have not been overtaken by events--the Italian Army will continue to face the challenges that stem from a very senior target force mix and the considerable length of military careers. Moreover, the recent revisions made to the system do not address the shortfalls the Army is currently experiencing in its recruitment and career personnel management processes.

This research should be of interest to policy-makers who wish to learn more about the future structure and capabilities of the Italian military, and/or to explore some the policy implications of transforming a military to an All-Volunteer Force. The dissertation work was in part supported by RAND’s National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Department of Defense. It was completed in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the RAND Graduate School for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Policy Analysis.