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Research Memorandum 78-10

PRELIMINARY TABULATION BY RANK AND SEX OF SELECTED RESPONSES IN AN ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

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CAREER DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL PRODUCTIVITY TECHNICAL AREA



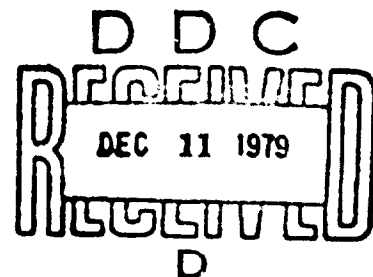
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PRELIMINARY TABULATION BY RANK AND SEX OF SELECTED RESPONSES IN
AN ATTITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE

163.22
During the two-week period 9-22 January 1978, ARI administered a 134-item questionnaire to approximately 1100 soldiers (both men and women, officers and enlisted) stationed in CONUS and USAREUR. The primary objective was to find out if the quality of data in a projected investigation of soldier attitudes is likely to be affected by certain variations in how the questions are worded and formatted. A second objective was to provide preliminary evidence concerning soldiers' attitudes regarding the use of women in a variety of rather specific combat-related roles. With respect to this second objective, however, the interest was not so much in the attitudes themselves as in the relationship these attitudes may exhibit to such things as previous experience working with soldiers of the opposite sex, combat experience, and desire to stay in the Army.

The present research memorandum presents and briefly discusses tabulations (by rank and sex) of some of the items used in the research effort described above. Subsequent reports will present and discuss the data on the methodological questions that were at the heart of this effort and the question of whether the attitudes are related to variables such as experience working with members of the opposite sex. 163.22

One final point. In the present report two types of items are distinguished. One is the Likert-type item, which presents respondents with an assertion (e.g., "Women are usually better at taking orders than men are") and invites them to agree or disagree, using a several-point scale. The other is a multiple-choice item (e.g., "Who are better at taking orders--men or women--or don't you think there is a difference?") that invites them to select from among several response alternatives. About half (570) the respondents received a questionnaire consisting mainly of Likert items, and the rest (573) received a questionnaire consisting mainly of multiple-choice items.

The first section of the questionnaire asked respondents for their opinions concerning what happens to various aspects of company functioning (such as morale, teamwork and group spirit) when women are assigned to support companies such as Signal or Military Police. A parallel set of nine questions asked for opinions of what would happen if women were assigned to combat companies such as Armor or Infantry.

By and large, the majority of respondents thought that the presence of women in support companies has no adverse effects and may even have positive effects on company functioning. For example, 86.5 percent of all Multiple Choice (MC) respondents thought that company morale either stays the same or improves; 81 percent of all Likert respondents agreed that there is just as much group spirit as before; and 83.5 percent of the MC respondents thought that the company carries out its mission as well as or better than before. The only problem area perceived by a majority of respondents was pregnancy: 52.5 percent of the Likert respondents agreed that "pregnancy very often becomes a serious problem."

Female soldiers were considerably more likely than male soldiers to have a favorable opinion concerning the effects of including women in support companies. For instance, 90 percent of the women taking the MC form thought that as much or more work gets done with women in support companies, as opposed to only 64 percent of the males expressing this view. However, a large number of women soldiers believed, as did male soldiers, that pregnancy could be a problem.

For the most part, women officers and enlisted personnel held similarly positive attitudes. Among the male soldiers, however, there was somewhat of a tendency for officers to have less favorable views than enlisted men. For example, 20 percent of the enlisted men and 34 percent of the officers (MC form) thought that when women are assigned to support companies, the company carries out its mission worse than before.

When the questions referred to combat companies, the opinions became considerably more negative. For instance, 56.5 percent of the MC respondents thought that the level of confidence soldiers develop in each other would decrease with women in combat companies, compared with 27.3 percent who felt this way when the question dealt with support companies. Nevertheless, a substantial number of respondents felt that women would not adversely affect combat company functioning: 48.6 percent agreed that morale would go up; 67.4 percent agreed that the soldiers would take their jobs just as seriously; 59.4 percent thought there would be as much teamwork; and 58.4 percent disagreed that less work would get done if women were assigned to combat jobs (Likert form). Once again, pregnancy was perceived by a majority of respondents to constitute a potential problem, with 70 percent of the Likert respondents agreeing that the problem would very often be serious.

As in the case of the questions relating to support companies, women soldiers were more optimistic than men about the inclusion of females in combat companies. For instance, 58 percent of the male soldiers, compared with 36 percent of the female soldiers, thought that discipline would go down (MC form). Once again, male officers were more pessimistic than male enlisted personnel, while rank differences among the females tended to be unimportant. As an example, 41 percent of the enlisted men compared with 56 percent of the male officers (MC form) thought that teamwork would decline if combat companies included women.

A second section of the questionnaire provided respondents with a list of various Army tasks, such as driving a jeep, carrying a full field pack, using an M-16 rifle to attack an enemy position, and so forth. The soldiers were asked their opinions about the ability of enlisted men and enlisted women to perform each of these 20 tasks.

Overall, respondents expressed the view that a substantially greater percentage of men than women would be capable of performing the various tasks. For example, 61 percent of the MC respondents thought that almost all enlisted men would be able to handle guard-duty alone in an isolated place, as opposed to 24 percent who believed that almost all enlisted women could do so. Similarly, 70 percent of the MC respondents felt almost all men could carry a full field pack, compared

with 14 percent who thought that almost all women could perform this task. The tasks for which there was the greatest perceived male/female discrepancies, in addition to these two, were the following: able to go for a week without a chance to shower, able to live in the field for two weeks, able to use an M-16 rifle to attack an enemy position, able to fire at an attacking enemy soldier, and able to carry and use a machine gun.

Despite large differences in the perceived abilities of enlisted men and women, a sizable number of respondents felt that many if not all women could perform the majority of listed tasks. For instance, 83.2 percent of the MC respondents thought that about half or more of all enlisted women could dig a foxhole; 64.4 percent thought half or more could keep going after a fellow soldier had been killed; 66.1 percent believed half or more could fire at an unsuspecting enemy soldier if the situation called for it; and 68.1 percent thought that half or more enlisted women could shoot to kill.

Sex differences in the perceived capabilities of male and female soldiers were considerable. With respect to the task performance of males, there were often no differences, but existing differences show that males thought men more capable than women thought they were. On the other hand, when the perceived abilities of women soldiers are examined, women respondents invariably felt that women soldiers are more capable than male respondents believed them to be. For example, 49 percent of the female MC respondents, compared with only 19 percent of the male MC respondents, thought that almost all enlisted women could use an M-16 rifle to attack an enemy position. By and large, women respondents indicated their opinion that fewer enlisted women than men could perform the tasks listed, but they were not nearly as pessimistic as the male respondents in this regard.

Differences associated with the rank of the respondents were most apparent among the women's perceptions of the abilities of enlisted women. On the whole, female officers thought that women soldiers would perform better than female enlisted personnel thought they would. For example, 71 percent of the women officers, compared with 54 percent of the enlisted women strongly agreed that almost all women would be able to dig a foxhole; 51 percent of the women officers vs. 29 percent of the enlisted women strongly agreed that women could go for a week without a chance to shower (Likert form). Male respondents tended not to differentiate themselves in terms of rank with respect to the perceived abilities of either men or women.

A third section consisted of two major sets of questions. One set solicited opinions concerning what policies should be adopted in utilizing women, such as policies concerning the draft, assignments and so forth. The second set dealt with the respondents' reactions to sex-role stereotypes.

Most respondents felt that women had an important role to play in the Army. For example, 85 percent of the Likert respondents agreed that women should be used in support units the same way men are used. A majority of the Likert respondents agreed that if men are drafted, women should be too (65%); and that women, like men, should be used in guard-

duty assignments (66%). However, there was much less agreement with respect to the use of women in combat roles. About half of the MC respondents (48%) felt that women should not be assigned to combat jobs under any circumstances--not even if a shooting war breaks out. The majority of respondents (MC form) thought that the Army would become less effective if women were assigned to combat units. Still, a sizable number (42%) thought the Army would be just as or more effective with women in combat jobs.

With regard to sex-role stereotypes, the sample as a whole tended to endorse the view that the characteristics of men and women are distinctly different, along traditional sex-role lines. For instance, more than half of the respondents taking the Likert form agreed that men usually make better commanders than women (58%); that men can usually endure extreme weather conditions better than women (59%); and that men can usually endure the rigors of outdoor living better than women (75%). On the other hand several stereotypes were rejected by the majority of respondents: 56 percent disagreed that women don't make good bosses; 81 percent disagreed that men have more common sense than women; and 58 percent agreed that female commanders get as much respect as male commanders.

The questions in this section of the questionnaire elicited very substantial sex differences. Female respondents were more likely than men to encourage fuller participation of women in the Army and to reject traditional sex-role stereotypes. For example, 66 percent of the males, compared with 46 percent of the females, endorsed the statement that women should not be assigned to combat jobs at all (Likert form); 39 percent of the male respondents, as opposed to 13 percent of the females, agreed that the Army's mission is best carried out by men. When we look at the stereotype questions, it is found that, for instance, 77 percent of the men and 32 percent of the women agreed that men usually make better commanders than women. Whereas 73 percent of the male respondents felt that men can better endure the weather extremes than women, only 39 percent of the women agreed that this was true.

In many cases, sex differences were often affected by a conspicuous sex X rank interaction. Male officers often expressed the most negative view of women in the Army, while female officers expressed the most favorable opinions. For instance, the percentage "agree" responses to the statement "Women should not be assigned to combat jobs at all" is as follows: male enlisted-57 percent; male officers-76 percent; female enlisted-55 percent; and female officers-35 percent.

In a fourth section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked whether they thought enlisted men have enough strength, stamina and guts to be a combat soldier. The same questions were asked with respect to enlisted women.

Overall, respondents felt that male soldiers would be considerably more likely than women soldiers to possess these combat-related characteristics. For example, 83 percent of the MC respondents thought that most men--"almost all" or "more than half"--have enough stamina to be a combat soldier, while only 34 percent of the MC respondents thought this

would be true for most women. The statistics for the other two characteristics are as follows: Strength--most males 89 percent, most females 27 percent; Guts--most males 66 percent, most females 33 percent.

As in other sections of the questionnaire, male and female respondents differed considerably in their views, particularly with regard to the abilities of women. Forty-nine percent of the males, compared with 70 percent of the females, agreed (Likert form) that almost all enlisted women have enough stamina to be a combat soldier. A summary for each characteristic, broken down by respondent group, is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS AGREEING (LIKERT FORM OF QUESTIONNAIRE) THAT
"ALMOST ALL" EM/EW HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH, STAMINA, OR GUTS TO
BE A COMBAT SOLDIER

	Total Respondents	<u>Male Respondents</u>			<u>Female Respondents</u>		
		Officers	Enlisted	Total	Officers	Enlisted	Total
EM							
Strength	93%	95%	94%	94%	86%	94%	90%
Stamina	91	94	91	92	83	93	88
Guts	85	93	83	87	79	83	81
EW							
Strength	46	29	48	39	57	58	57
Stamina	58	40	56	49	69	71	70
Guts	52	44	43	43	72	59	65

This table reveals that, in addition to differences between the men and the women there also exist differences of opinion between male officers and male enlisted. A greater percentage of male officers than male enlisted thought that most men have enough guts to be a combat soldier. However, a smaller percentage of male officers than male enlisted personnel agreed that most women have enough strength and stamina to be a combat soldiers. This tendency for the male officers to be most pessimistic about the abilities and characteristics of women for combat roles is consistent with other sections of the questionnaire.

In a fifth section of the questionnaire, the same 12 questions appeared in both versions. Nine of the 12 questions asked respondents to make a decision concerning company strength reduction versus the inclusion of a certain percentage of women, in three different types of companies: light truck, military police, and infantry. In all cases, the majority of respondents thought that the company could do a better job when the company was at full strength--with women--than when the company was below authorized strength without women. This was particularly true for the light truck and military police companies. The percentage of respondents opting for full strength dropped in the case of the Infantry company, but nevertheless about 60 percent preferred an infantry company with 10 percent, 30 percent, and 50 percent women to a corresponding reduction in strength.

Sex differences in the responses were small for the questions dealing with the light truck and military police companies. This lack of differentiation is due largely to the fact that there was little overall variability in the responses: about 90 percent felt a company at full strength would be better than a company at reduced strength without women. On the other hand, women were considerably more likely than men to prefer a full-strength infantry company with women in it. A breakdown of those responses by respondent group is presented in Table 2.

Table

PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS PREFERRING FULL-STRENGTH COMPANY
WITH SPECIFIED PERCENTAGES OF EW TO AN ALL-MALE COMPANY
UNDERSTRENGTH BY THE SAME AMOUNT

Type of Company in Question	% Specified in Question	Total Respondents	Male Respondents		Female Respondents	
			Officers	Enlisted	Officers	Enlisted
Light Truck	10%	88%	87%	81%	98%	91%
	30	91	95	83	98	90
	50	90	92	84	97	88
Military Police	10	88	86	82	97	93
	30	90	91	84	97	90
	50	87	87	83	94	85
Infantry	10	61	46	56	78	71
	30	58	43	52	74	60
	50	61	56	59	77	58