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Fighting the Undercurrent: Second-Generation Gender Bias in the Canadian Armed Forces

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**FIGHTING THE UNDERCURRENT:
SECOND-GENERATION GENDER BIAS
IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

By Lieutenant-Colonel Sandra Humphreys

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FIGHTING THE UNDERCURRENT: SECOND-GENERATION GENDER BIAS IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is currently in the midst of an organizational crisis stemming from mounting allegations of inappropriate behaviour fuelled by a highly sexualized culture. Eradicating sexual misconduct in the CAF is a critical step towards improving the contemporary female¹ experience but these overt acts of discrimination are examples of First-Generation Gender Bias (1GGB).² For the CAF to achieve 25.1% female representation and beyond, Second-Generation Gender Bias (2GGB) must also be rooted out.³ This is a significant challenge because, unlike 1GGB, 2GGB hides within an organization's systemic practices and lacks obvious indicators but when left unaddressed, creates disparities that drive low gender representation and stereotypes.

For organizations like the CAF, two unique components work in tandem to fuel the 2GGB cycle: hegemonic masculinity and a gender-blind meritocracy. Hegemonic masculinity creates an environment where characteristically female qualities are undervalued and, for those who do not inherently possess masculine qualities, it demands the adoption of these tendencies. Concurrently, gender-blind systems of meritocracy build an illusion of equal opportunity yet systematically value and reward attributes found within the male warrior paradigm. These two components generate specific 2GGB phenomena that adversely affect the female experience and include *Masking*, *The Glass Floor*, *The Glass Ceiling*, *The Revolving Door* and *The Endowment Effect*. As such, after

¹ The terms *female* and *woman* includes cis and transgender women as well as femme/feminine-identifying genderqueer and non-binary individuals. They are inclusive terms applying to all who identify with them.

² The Women's Liberation Movement fought 1GGB from the late 1960s to the 1980s.

³ Canada, Canadian Armed Forces, Director of Human Rights and Diversity, "Canadian Armed Forces Employment Equity Plan 2015-2020," n.d., 7. The goal of 25.1% female representation is an arbitrary target based on yearly 1% increases for the period of 2016-2026.

examining the harmful effects generated from hegemonic masculinity and gender-blind meritocracies, one conclusion is blatantly evident: consequential increases in CAF female recruitment and retention lay in the organization's ability to purposefully understand, acknowledge, and break the 2GGB cycle.

First- and Second-Generation Gender Bias

1GGB is easily recognizable as it consists of organizational gender biases that purposefully, knowingly, and blatantly discriminate.⁴ Characterized by the more overt examples of discrimination and exclusion, 1GGB includes sexual violence, sexual harassment, psychological mistreatment, and financial abuse like failing to offer equal pay for equal work⁵. The practice of forcing females to leave due to marriage or pregnancy or restricting entry into certain occupations are examples of the CAF's previous 1GGB practices.⁶ Currently, the crisis of sexualized culture in the CAF is well rooted in 1GGB.

2GGB is comprised of biases that linger below the surface of an organization. It does not require intent to exclude nor does it necessarily produce direct immediate harm.⁷ Rather, "it creates a context—akin to "something in the water"—in which women fail to

⁴ Meryl Ann Batara *et al*, "Second-Generation Gender Bias: The Effects of the Invisible Bias Among Mid-Level Women Managers," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 18, no. 2(January 2018): 142, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332154630_Second_generation_gender_bias_The_effects_of_the_invisible_bias_among_mid-level_women_managers/link/5d37166ea6fdcc370a589432/download.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada (1970), Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada, Ottawa: Information Canada, last modified 7 December 1970, <https://cfc-swc.gc.ca/abu-ans/wwad-cqn/roycom/index-en.html>. The Women's Liberation Movements fought to enact laws abolishing such discriminatory practices and Canada enshrined these rights in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

⁷ Herminia Ibarra, Robin J. Ely, and Deborah M. Kolb, "Women Rising: The Unseen Barriers," *Harvard Business Review* 91, (September 2013): 65, <https://hbr.org/2013/09/women-rising-the-unseen-barriers>.

thrive or reach their full potential.”⁸ Further, what makes 2GGB challenging is the absence of proof of discrimination as “victimization is premised on one’s perspective of restricted career advancement or social strivings.”⁹ When 2GGB is present, successful females are the exception while the non-successful females will fuel stereotypes like their lack of aggression or failure to commit to the job.¹⁰ The subversive and subjective nature of 2GGB means stereotypes often fill the gap as to why females have failed to achieve parity with males; thus, perpetuating a continually reinforced system of bias.¹¹

The presence of 1GGB and 2GGB will negatively influence gender representation goals for any organization. Considering both are currently present in the CAF, the personal safety issues embedded in 1GGB will take precedence but greater female representation and culture change will only be possible after addressing both forms of bias. Given the unique requirement to battle 1GGB and 2GGB concurrently, the CAF must have an appreciation for their differences; they are not the same. This is especially true when an element like hegemonic masculinity drives both 1GGB and 2GGB.

⁸ Ibarra, Ely and Kolb, *Women Rising: The Unseen...*, 65.

⁹ Phillip McCristall and Katherine Baggaley, “The Progressions of a Gendered Military: A theoretical Examination of Gender Inequality in the Canadian Military,” *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*, Vol 5, Issue 1 (2019), 123, <https://jmvfh.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/jmvfh.2017-0026>.

¹⁰ Ibarra, Ely and Kolb, *Women Rising: The Unseen...*, 66.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 64.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemonic Masculinity refers to the legitimization of “a societal hierarchy of dominance in which masculinity governs and other sexualities such as women are subordinate.”¹² Central to this is the heteronormative belief of masculinity wherein “men are expected to display physical strength, control, and aggression in conflict situations.”¹³ For centuries, militaries have held up the heterosexual male warrior as an ideal standard for heroic fighters; however, such hyper-masculine ideals are now at odds with modern, mixed gendered militaries.¹⁴ Specifically, the hyper-masculine *warrior ethos* encourages “the marginalization of female soldiers and the preservation of hyper-masculine dominant behaviour.”¹⁵

Hegemonic masculinity has long influenced the warrior ethos insomuch as contemporary civil society continues to associate leadership traits with the masculine paradigm.¹⁶ Military environments that directly link the physical prowess components of the warrior ethos to the effectiveness of their capabilities are especially at risk. For example, the United States Marine Corps (USMC) is an organization where the issues of hegemonic masculinity are particularly prevalent. In the USMC, masculinity provides access to organizational power; therefore, females experience significant difficulties when

¹² McCristall and Baggaley, *Progressions of a Gendered Military...*, 120.

¹³ McCristall and Baggaley, *Progressions of a Gendered Military...*, 120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Dee-Ann Schwanke, “Barriers for Women to Positions of Power: How Societal and Corporate Structures, Perceptions of Leadership and Discrimination Restrict Women's Advancement to Authority, *Common Earth Journal*, Vol 3, No. 2 (2013): 2, <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/864/2/barriers-for-women-to-positions-of-power-how-societal-and-corporate-structures-perceptions-of-leadership-and-discrimination-restrict-womens-advancement-to-authority>.

negotiating the balance between femininity and masculinity.¹⁷ This means, USMC females demonstrating too much masculinity can be threatening to the institution and those displaying too much femininity are less threatening but fail to “claim authority within a military setting.”¹⁸ As such, hegemonic masculinity plays a key function in an organization’s gender hierarchies which in turn:

...makes it easier to notice and understand why the U.S. Marine Corps, especially, so resisted the full integration of women into its ranks—why the perceived watering-down of its intensely masculine credentials could be so threatening to its very core.¹⁹

Unfortunately, there has been little interest in studying the effects of femininity²⁰ on hegemonic masculinity within the CAF. Instead, the CAF has invested significant time and resources towards making careers more attractive to women with a focus on achieving a statistically desirable number of females otherwise known as *gender balancing*.²¹ Consequently, there is less focus placed on *gender mainstreaming* which looks to achieve gender equality by assessing any planned action, policies or programs through the lens of gender.²² Gender mainstreaming represents the ways and means in which to address 2GGB; therefore, the CAF’s gender balancing approach may improve representation but the organization’s systemic biases will still exist.

¹⁷ A.T.R. Wibben, “Critical Feminist Insights on Security, Militarism, and the Inclusion of Women in the Military,” Special Issue, *Peace Science Digest* 49, (October 2018): 11, <https://peacesciencedigest.org/critical-feminist-insights-on-security-militarism-and-the-inclusion-of-women-in-the-military-2/>.

¹⁸ Wibben, *Critical Feminist Insights...*, 11.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Feminine* and *femininity* are subjective concepts and encompass attributes traditionally thought of as female. Any or all genders could identify with feminine attributes.

²¹ Egnell and Elam, *The Gender Perspective and Canada’s...*, 13.

²² *Ibid*; Kevin Rounding, Karen J. Rankin and Michelle MacArthur, *A Revision of the Canadian Armed Forces Competency Dictionary: Modifications Based on Legal, Diversity, Gender-Based Plus, and Readability Analyses*, (Defence Research and Development Canada: DRDC-RDDC-2019-L031), Ottawa: 2019. The CAF employs some gender-based analysis but not to the level of 2GGB. For example, the new personnel evaluation system’s gender analysis was limited to recommendations for inclusive pronouns.

Outwardly, the CAF's allies have noted its desire to draw a veil over the issue.

When assessing the progress of gender mainstreaming in the Combat Arms, the British military noted that the CAF has not engaged in any gender-based employment restrictions since 1989 and:

...from a policy perspective the integration of women into the combat arms is now considered a *fait accompli*. Thus, [the CAF] consider[s] that there is no formal requirement to continue monitoring the effects of gender integration on operational performance or team cohesion, because the principle is no longer considered to be an issue.²³

This is due to the CAF's preferred position of remaining gender-neutral or gender-blind; however, this approach, as observed by the British military, fails to appreciate that it is a gendered organization whether acknowledged or not. Further, the CAF's *operational focus*²⁴ pushes institutional issues like systemic gender bias to the sidelines because of its reputation as an effective military force; thus, becoming "a deterrent from changing the culture, especially because this adjustment is towards an acceptance of the feminine, which is currently equated with weakness."²⁵

Considering the example of the USMC, the Canadian Army (CA) is the element within the CAF that best aligns with the hyper-masculine image of the ideal warrior. From an Allied perspective, the British military questioned the CAF's position that "the Army has been operating successfully in a gender neutral environment for a generation and, as such, does not conduct gender based research."²⁶ The Canadian Army Lessons

²³ Richard Bray and Chris McLean, "Infantry Women," *Frontline Defence* 9, no. 5 (2012): 25, <https://defence.frontline.online/article/2012/5/1200-Infantry-Women>.

²⁴ Canada, Department of National Defence, Canadian Forces General Message 098/05, "CF Transformation Team Created/CDS Action Team Update," last modified 30 May 2005, https://mobile.caf-fac.ca/canforgens/page.php?path=098-05_e.

²⁵ McCristall and Baggaley, *Progressions of a Gendered Military*..., 123.

²⁶ Bray and McLean, *Infantry Women*..., 25.

Learned Centre further noted that during the Afghanistan conflict, there were “no gender-related issues arising from current expeditionary operations, or awareness of evidence that gender integration has had a negative effect on operational performance or team cohesion.”²⁷ It is difficult to accept this position as anything but conjecture considering gender was not a lens the CA or CAF writ large was looking through during the conflict.

The CA’s failure to create space for gender issues or consider the value of femininity may ultimately reflect in its low female representation (Figure 1). Following

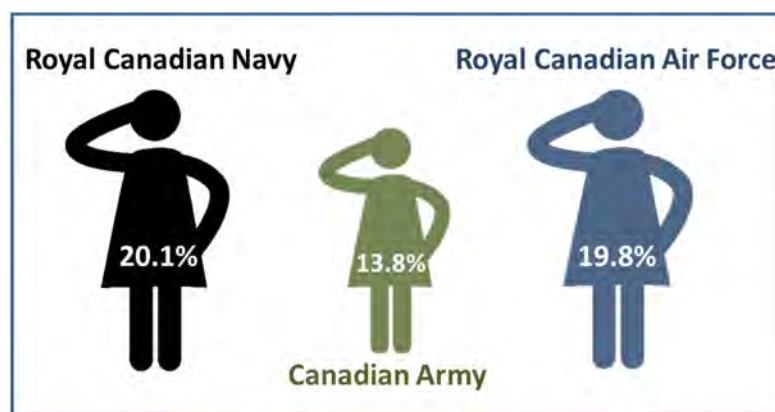


Figure 1 - Statistics of Women in the Canadian Armed Forces, 7 May 2021

Source: Director of Human Rights and Diversity, *CAF Employment Equity Database*.

this logic, the CAF’s more technological environments of the Royal Canadian Air Force and Royal Canadian Navy place less emphasis on physical prowess and show greater female representation. As such, the data indicates the existence of a correlation between environments that uphold the warrior paradigm, like the USMC and the CA, and low female representation.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 24.

To achieve equal status in environments with hegemonic masculinity, females are not only required to meet the physical warrior standards, but they must also conform and assimilate to the masculinized values embedded within the military's culture.²⁸ Specifically "females must acquire the socially acceptable standards of behaviour within the military and performatively [sic] express their identity in a manner that allows them to better assimilate into the masculinized military culture."²⁹ The inability to express an authentic self is an issue within the CAF. Females have described their experience with joining the Canadian military as *assimilation* rather than *integration* and expressed a common theme where "they had to conform to a male warrior culture or face professional and social exclusion."³⁰ As such, the more a female *masks* their femininity, the more they reduce disturbances to male social cohesion.³¹

When female success and career advancement within a masculinized culture depends on their ability to physically appear, communicate, and behave like a man, 2GGB is present. Without a doubt, hegemonic masculinity in a military environment creates hyper-masculine standards for all genders. When that same organization employs a merit-based system of advancement without due consideration for gender, it now legitimizes the systemic marginalization of females.

²⁸ Lindy Heineken, "Military Women Need to Trouble Gender Relations and Roles for Peace's Sake," last modified 8 August 2016, <https://theconversation.com/military-women-need-to-trouble-gender-relations-and-roles-for-peaces-sake-63360>.

²⁹ McCristall and Baggaley, *Progressions of a Gendered Military*..., 121.

³⁰ Stefanie von Hlatky, "The Gender Perspectives and Canada's Armed Forces: Internal and External Dimensions of Military Culture," in *Women and Gender Perspectives in the Military: An International Comparison*, ed. Robert Egnell and Mayesha Alam, (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 78.

³¹ McCristall and Baggaley, *Progressions of a Gendered Military*..., 123.

Meritocracy

Meritocracy is a term coined in the early 1960s and refers to “a social system as a whole in which individuals get ahead and earn rewards in direct proportion to their individual efforts and abilities.”³² The inequalities generated from a merit-based system are deemed fair and just because all participants presumably had an equal or sufficient opportunity to succeed. Within a meritocracy, individual merit is the driver of success; therefore, those considered as the most talented, hardest working and most virtuous are entitled to the greatest rewards.³³ Conversely, unsuccessful participants lack intrinsic motivation, intelligence, and/or skills as compared to their successful counterparts. Given the inherent equality of opportunity, the theory assumes individuals within meritocracies are personally liable when failing to achieve individual or organizational success.

The CAF subscribes to a meritocratic system that largely does not factor gender into its process and assumes that all candidates are equal, even going as far as eliminating gendered pronouns from annual performance assessments.³⁴ While principled on the surface, this approach fails to consider how gender influences a meritocratic system within the context of hegemonic masculinity. This gender-blind approach may result in maligning females rather than creating the intended level playing field for career advancement in the CAF. As evidenced by a series of experiments by Emilio Castilla and

³² Stephen J. McNamee, *The Meritocracy Myth*, 4th ed. (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, 2018), 2.

³³ McNamee...*The Meritocracy Myth*, 3.

³⁴ Chief of Military Personnel, *Canadian Forces General Message 045/20 – Changes to CAF PER for 2019/2020*, last modified 13 February 2020. The CAF employs Employment Equity Special Measures in the allocation of additional Joint Command and Staff College seats to females.

Stephen Benard, organizations that laud the use of merit often are the most likely to produce non-meritocratic outcomes.³⁵ Specifically, their research concluded:

...the idea of meritocracy gives evaluators ‘moral credentials’ that convince them that they are unbiased, precluding them from being on the lookout for bias. Thus, the paradox of meritocracy is that a belief in it can lead to even more inequality, rather than less.³⁶

When reviewing the data for female advancement through the lens of Castilla and Benard’s research, it is difficult to uphold the CAF’s gender-blind approach as a positive, equitable practice: clearly, implicit bias exists. Such bias is evident in the composition of General Officer/Admiral Corps positions showing a lack of female representation commensurate with their overall population in the CAF. Specifically, the data for 2020 showed “women make up only 7.7 percent of the general officer and admiral corps, which is half of what their representation should be, based upon 15.7 percent women in the current force.”³⁷ Further, Defence Research and Development Canada found that CAF females, more than any other groups, perceive the merit system as favouring males.³⁸ This finding supports the 2GGB theory where females cannot clearly identify the problem yet can still detect the presence of a gendered undercurrent.

³⁵ Emilio J. Castilla and Stephen Benard, “The Paradox of Meritocracy in Organizations,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (December 2010): 570, 55400-Masthead.indd (mit.edu).

³⁶ Sarah Kaplan, “Meritocracy: From Myth to Reality,” *Rotman Management Magazine* (Spring 2015): 50, <https://www.rotman.utoronto.ca/Connect/Rotman-MAG/Issues/2015/Back-Issues---2015/Spring-2015---Smarten-Up/Spring-2015-Free-Feature-Article---Meritocracy-From-Myth-to-Reality-by-Sarah-Kaplan>.

³⁷ James Pierotti, “Barriers to Women in the Canadian Armed Forces,” *Canadian Military Journal* 20, No. 4 (Autumn 2020): 24, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol20/no4/page20-eng.asp>. The month of May 2021 saw a record number of females promoted to General Officer/Fleet Officer but the CAF’s system of meritocracy normally appoints only a small percentage of the overall female representation to these ranks.

³⁸ B.T. Waruszynski, K.H. MacEachern, and E. Ouellet, “Women in the Profession of Arms: Female Regular Force Members’ Perceptions on the Attraction, Recruitment, Employment, and Retention of Women in the CAF” in *Personnel Research Insights in Support of the CAF Human Resources Strategy*, (Defence Research and Development Canada: DRDC-RDDC-2018-R182), Ottawa: 2018, 47.

Finally, the *equity for all* messaging engrained within meritocracies is powerful and those within its system, including females, will defend it vigorously. As such, “most women are unaware of having personally been victims of gender discrimination and deny it even when it is objectively true and they see that women in general experience it.”³⁹ In the case of the CAF, the quantitative proof provided in female representational data for the General Officers/Admiral Corps unquestionably demonstrates that implicit bias exists yet the meritocracy narrative provides only one suitable explanation: a lack of competitive female candidates. Unfortunately, whether females acknowledge it or not, the data belies any notion that gender bias is absent from the female CAF experience.⁴⁰ Ultimately, the CAF’s current gender-blind, meritocratic career advancement system helps perpetuate stereotypes as to the unsuitability of females in armed forces based on their failure to ascend to the highest levels.

Components of the 2GGB Cycle

Hegemonic masculinity and meritocracies drive several specific undesirable consequences propelling the 2GGB cycle. Specifically, the demand for masculine mannerisms drives the phenomena of *The Glass Ceiling* and *The Glass Floor*.⁴¹ A female’s inability to achieve upward advancement within an organization despite being qualified and deserving is the more common understanding of The Glass Ceiling; a

³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰ Robert Egnell and Mayesha Alam, “Gender and Women in the Military – Setting the Stage,” in *Women and Gender Perspectives in the Military: An International Comparison*, ed. Robert Egnell and Mayesha Alam, (Washington D.C: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 14.

⁴¹ Vijay Kumar Grover, “Second Generation Gender Bias: Invisible Barriers Holding Women Back in Organizations,” *International Journal of Applied Research*, Vol 1, Issue 4 (Winter 2015): 2, ([PDF](#)) [Second generation gender bias: Invisible barriers holding women back in organizations \(researchgate.net\)](#).

phenomenon normally associated with 1GGB.⁴² The 2GGB version of this effect is far more subversive and manifests when females challenge the hyper-masculine culture by failing or refusing to conform and, as a result, experience consequences to their career progression via the meritocratic system.⁴³ Modern armed forces, including the CAF, traditionally suppress feminine characteristics like compassion, sensitivity, soft-heartedness and conciliation because “such traits are neither valued, nor promoted in the military. They run counter to masculine traits embodied in military culture, such as dominance, aggression and toughness.”⁴⁴ The 2GGB version of The Glass Ceiling ultimately affects the merit of those who possess more femininity than the organization’s hegemonic masculinity will tolerate.

The Glass Floor is firmly rooted in 2GGB as an “invisible, discriminatory obstruction that prevents women from being fully accepted and acclimated into the male-dominated military subculture.”⁴⁵ Related to *masking*, this phenomenon describes the sense of instability projected both internally and externally when females navigate social and professional ecosystems with inauthentic characteristics. When seeking advancement in a gender-blind meritocratic system, *masking* females will lack a stable footing when standing on *The Glass Floor* and, consequently, appear less confident and self-assured as compared to their *non-masking* male counterparts.⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the insidious nature of 2GGB creates the illusion that adoption of these personality traits is a choice. Ultimately,

⁴² Canada, Department for Women and Gender Equality Act, last modified 13 May 21, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/W-11.3/page-1.html>. Section 15 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms provides equality under the law and the right to equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination based on sex.

⁴³ Schwanke, *Barriers for Women...*, 1-2.

⁴⁴ Heineken, *Military Women Need...*

⁴⁵ McCristall and Baggeley, *Progressions of a Gendered Military...*, 122.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

the need to conceal feminine character traits and/or femininity runs counter to the CAF's want for authentic leadership; however, career advancement is predicated on submission to hyper-masculine standards. This duality is a stark example of 2GGB.

In the case of *The Revolving Door Syndrome*, organizations draw females in with the belief that they can pursue a career unfettered, but “the road towards such goals either leads to a dead end or a maze-like trap.”⁴⁷ Within a meritocratic system, inherent gender bias fuels a vicious circle depriving females of access to opportunities that result in a lack of qualifications. In other words, such inequities “make it more difficult for objects of discrimination to develop merit; therefore, the likelihood that their merit will be recognized and rewarded is reduced.”⁴⁸ Without a clear path to advance, females look externally as evidenced by the 2019 attrition rates for female CAF officers that were 30% as compared to 15% for males.⁴⁹ Further, research conducted in 2019 into why senior ranking females depart once pensionable found they left because the CAF was “not an environment that enables them to succeed in all aspects of their lives” and some participants held the belief that advancement past Lieutenant Colonel was unlikely.⁵⁰ As such, these findings support the 2GGB phenomenon of The Revolving Door.

The CAF's near-total elimination of gender considerations within its meritocracy ensures that the only remaining rationale for females who fail to progress is their lack of motivation, intelligence or skills; however, there is an abundance of evidence suggesting females and males are assessed differently. When assessing leadership potential and

⁴⁷ Batara *et al*, *Second Generation Gender Bias...*, 142.

⁴⁸ McNamee, *The Meritocracy Myth...*, 172.

⁴⁹ Tania Maurice, “A Critical Evaluation of the Perceptions of Senior Female RCAF Officers at Pension Point Informed by Turnover Theory,” (master's thesis, University of Portsmouth, 2019), 4.

⁵⁰ Tania Maurice, *A Critical Evaluation...*, 46.

communication abilities, the evaluations of females show less leadership potential than males, even amongst the ranks of outspoken females.⁵¹ Further, despite engaging in the same amount of verbal communication as males, females are “seen as controlling, less competent, and unsuitable for leadership positions.”⁵² Finally, assessments of verbose females are generally negative, but there is a significant pronouncement of that negativity when females hold positions of power.⁵³ Gender-based research has demonstrated repeatedly that “accomplished, high-potential women who are evaluated as competent managers often fail the likability test, whereas competence and likability tend to go hand in hand for similarly accomplished men.”⁵⁴ What proves interesting is that both males and females will uphold this perception.⁵⁵

When organizations fail to address 2GGB, the focus shifts towards highlighting 1GGB achievements: a phenomenon referred to as *The Endowment Effect*. In this case, females will over-value what is already possessed and will under-value what they do not, even when there is no rational basis for this preference.⁵⁶ Consequently, the emphasis remains on previous 1GGB achievements. Related to this effect is the fact that younger females in male-dominated professions like the CAF “often avoid, if not reject, a feminist critique of policies designed to mitigate the historical legacies of sexism.”⁵⁷ While likely influenced by hegemonic masculinity, the collective voice of non-believing females

⁵¹ Batara *et al*, *Second Generation Gender Bias...*, 142.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ Ibarra, Ely and Kolb, *Women Rising...*, 68.

⁵⁵ Batara *et al*, *Second Generation Gender Bias...*, 142-143.

⁵⁶ Egnell and Elam, *The Gender Perspective and Canada's Armed Forces...*, 14.

⁵⁷ Carroll Seron, Susan Silbey, Erin Cech and Brian Rubineau, “‘I am Not a Feminist, but...’: Hegemony of a Meritocratic Ideology and the Limits of Critique Among Women in Engineering,” *Sage Journals* 45, no. 2 (March 2018): 2, https://anthropology.mit.edu/sites/default/files/documents/silbey_i_am_not_a_feminist_but.pdf.

serves as an extremely powerful counter-argument against pursuing 2GGB resolutions and may help explain why the CAF has not employed additional Special Measures under the Employment Equity Act.

As depicted in Figure 2, hegemonic masculinity and meritocracy are forces that underpin the 2GGB cycle and trigger phenomena that drive its perpetuation. Considering

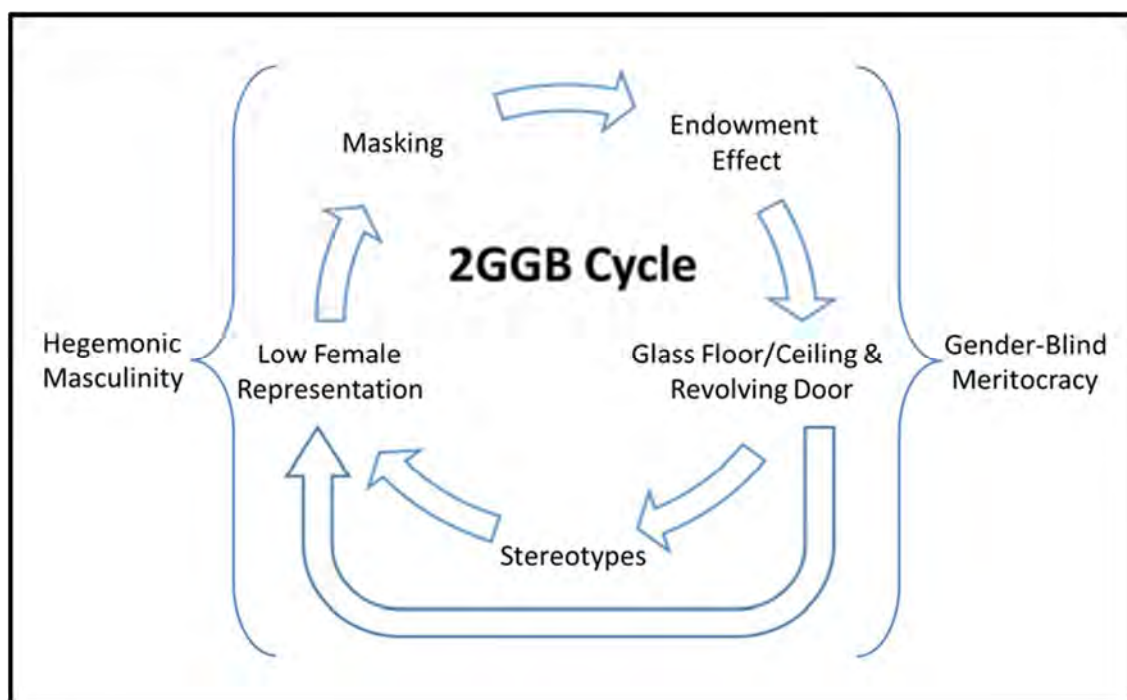


Figure 2 –2GGB Cycle

Source: Modified from Batara *et al*, *Second Generation Gender Bias*, 148.

The Endowment Effect will obscure females’ ability to perceive discrimination, breaking the 2GGB cycle often requires education for both genders; however, recognition by the dominant group is imperative. As such, for male-dominated environments like the CAF, “a gender-aware man may sometimes be more effective than an unaware woman.”⁵⁸ To

⁵⁸ Egnell and Elam, *The Gender Perspective and Canada’s...*, 14.

this point, evidence indicates that when males fully recognize barriers faced by females in a meritocracy, they are better able to put aside their own biases.⁵⁹

In environments like the CAF where females are under-represented, there is a real need for a feminine viewpoint but this requires the adoption of a new *gender-inclusive* stance that recognizes female capabilities as a form of merit.⁶⁰ In a paradoxical twist, hegemonic masculinity creates a rich environment for biases to thrive yet the male cohort remain the CAF's best option break the 2GGB cycle. This means that interventions with the CAF's dominant group are critical and should focus on "male privileges that stem from the patriarchal social order and change in practices and beliefs of men, whilst contributing to an overarching goal of change in the configuration of masculine ideals."⁶¹

Conclusion

There is no doubt that hegemonic masculinity ensures feminine attributes carry less value than male attributes and the warrior ethos is an important component in the marginalization of females in the CAF. While *masking* may minimize social and professional disruptions for males in the majority group, there are real career consequences for those forced to adopt a masculinized disposition. Further, failing to conform to the ascribed masculine paradigm inhibits career advancement and leaves females with few consequence-free choices. When a gender-blind meritocracy legitimizes

⁵⁹ Colleen Flaherty, "Belief in Gender Bias and Promotions for Women," last modified 27 August 2019, <https://www.insidehighered.com/quicktakes/2019/08/27/belief-gender-bias-and-promotions-women>.

⁶⁰ Rainbow Murray, "Merit vs Equality? The Argument that Gender Quotas Violate Meritocracy is Based on Fallacies," last modified 7 December 2015, <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/merit-vs-equality-argument/>.

⁶¹ Rachel Jewkes *et al*, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Combining Theory and Practice in Gender Interventions," *Culture, Health and Sexuality* 17, no. S2, S122, Hegemonic masculinity: combining theory and practice in gender interventions (nih.gov).

such practices, females are subject to negative career outcomes including *The Glass Ceiling*, *The Glass Floor* and *The Revolving Door*.

The lack of female representation at the highest levels of the CAF supports the supposition the 2GGB is present; however, the current battle with 1GGB combined with the organization's staunch gender-neutral stance means the *Endowment Effect* will hinder progress towards meaningful 2GGB solutions. Nevertheless, the CAF must recognize how 2GGB alters its frames of reference. It must root out systemic organizational processes that unfairly devalue female contributions and reinforce the privileges of the dominant group.⁶² Without intervention, 2GGB will endure as a forcing function against the CAF's preferred representation levels and leave females to continue their fight against the undercurrent of bias.

⁶² Kaplan, *Meritocracy: From Myth to Reality...*, 53.

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