THE FACE OF AUSTRALIA:

WOMEN IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

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Abstract

Australia's foreign service is undergoing fundamental and rapid gendered change. Women form the majority of the Australian Public Service (APS) and a growing proportion of representation in international affairs agencies. Coinciding with an increasingly feminist and women-informed foreign policy across Australia, women verge on parity in diplomatic leadership for the first time in history. Yet, beyond high-profile appointments and shifting demographic profiles across agencies, gendered (and racialised, heteronormative, and classed) power structures continue to impact on whom is given the opportunity to represent Australia internationally. Women remain under-represented in senior leadership and international representation, and experience greater challenges in international affairs agencies than domestic government service. Therefore, this thesis uses a comparative case study approach to analyse women's under-representation in four of Australia's premier international affairs agencies: the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); Defence (inclusive of the Department of Defence (DoD) and the Australian Defence Force (ADF)); the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs); and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). The research applies Feminist Institutionalist (FI) theory to explore institutional history and change, as well as analyse the demographics and experiences of women in executive level (EL) and senior executive service (SES) in order to answer the research question of *why do women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs?* Data is triangulated through a mixed methods research design, involving 57 in-depth qualitative interviews, observation in the field, and quantitative data analysis from the past 34 years.

The research finds that gendered challenges pervade Australian international affairs. It is a field teeming with complex and multifaceted rules that challenge women at every turn, where gendered institutions endure through fluidity and adaptation. Gendered institutions have resulted in the under-representation of women in leadership and international representation. This is due to: (1) historical legacies that maintain male-domination and masculine supremacy in the field; (2) contemporary layering and duplication of regressive gendered institutions across individual, agency, diplomatic field, and society contexts; and (3) the compounding effect of challenges at different stages of women's posting cycles, careers and lives.

The thesis makes four core significant and original contributions. Firstly, it represents the largest and most comprehensive Australian study of gender in international affairs to date, and a significant contemporary global case study. Secondly, it develops a new FI framework for understanding gendered institutions in international affairs, applicable to researchers of gender and diplomacy and other international fields. Thirdly, it offers five original empirical findings, including that women were most proportionally represented in leadership and international representation in more militaristic agency structures, inverting conventional theory on militaries as the most male-dominated and patriarchal spheres of the state. Fourthly, this thesis contributes an FI mixed methods approach to understanding "hidden" informal institutions across contexts deeply layered, complex and cross-cultural.

Overall, it is clear that as long as gendered challenges continue to impede women's inclusion in international affairs, this damages states' abilities to accurately determine and maintain state sovereignty, as well as represent and decide on matters of national interest. Leaders at this level act as the filter through which all international decisions are communicated, assessed, implemented, and evaluated. In essence, who leads, matters.

Statement of Originality

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Elise Stephenson

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Conflict of Interest Statement

I received funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2019-2021) for an unrelated project running public diplomacy workshops across Southeast Asia.

Publications during enrolment

Journal articles

Stephenson, E 2019, 'Domestic challenges to international leadership: a case study of women in Australian international affairs agencies', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 73, Issue 3, pp. 234-253.

Stephenson, E 2020, 'Invisible while visible: An Australian perspective on queer women leaders in international affairs', *European Journal on Politics and Gender* (forthcoming).

Book chapters

Stephenson, E 2020, 'Am I ambassadorial enough? Gender and Australian international representation', book chapter in Lee-Koo, K and Ghazarian, Z (eds), *Gender and Australian Political Leadership*, Allen & Unwin, Melbourne (forthcoming).

Conference papers

Stephenson, E 2018, 'Why are women still marginalised in international representative leadership?', paper presented at the *Australian Human Rights Institute Gender & Politics Workshop*, Sydney, Australia, 16-17 July.

Stephenson, E 2018, 'Who represents Australia internationally? A case study of women leaders in Australian international-facing agencies across foreign affairs, defence, policing and immigration', paper presented at *International Political Studies Association World Congress*, Brisbane, Australia, 21-25 July.

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Stephenson, E 2018, 'Disrupting diplomacy: A comparative case study of Australian LGBT women leaders deployed in the Asia Pacific', paper presented at *Conference on Gender and Sexuality Justice in Asia (COGEN)*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 12-14 November.

Stephenson, E 2019, 'Identity disrupting diplomacy: A case study of Australian women leaders in international affairs', paper presented at *Diplomacy in liquid modernity: Disruption and transformation of diplomatic practices workshop, Asia-Pacific College of Diplomacy at ANU,* Canberra, Australia, 20 February.

Stephenson, E 2019, 'Who represents Australia internationally? A case study of women in foreign policy', paper presented at *Workshop in Equity, Diversity and Gender in Employment (WEDGE)*, Griffith University, 25 February.

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Glossary of Terms

ABF – Australian Border Force

ACIC – Australian Criminal Intelligence Agency

ADF – Australian Defence Force (military division of defence)

ADFA – Australian Defence Force Academy

AFP – Australian Federal Police (Australian Government agency)

AHRC – Australian Human Rights Commission

ASL Cap - Average Staffing Level Cap

APEC – Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation

APS – Australian Public Service

APSC – Australian Public Service Commission

ASIO – Australian Security and Intelligence Agency

AusAID – the Australian Agency for International Development

CDF – Chief of Defence Force

DA – Defence Attaché

Defence – refers to combined Department of Defence and Australian Defence Force (Australian Government agency)

DI – Discursive Institutionalism

DoD – Department of Defence (civilian department of Defence)

DFAT – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government agency)

DHOM – Deputy Head of Mission

DIBP – Department of Immigration and Border Protection (Australian Government agency)

EEO – Equal employment opportunity

EL – Executive level

FI – Feminist Institutionalism

GF – Governance Feminism

HOM – Head of Mission

HOP – Head of Post

IGO – Intergovernmental organisation

ILS – Integrated Leadership System

IPD – International Policy Division (Defence)

IR – International Relations

JOC – Joint Operations Command (Defence)

LGBTI+ - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and otherwise-identifying queer individuals

NGO – Non-governmental organisation

NI – New Institutionalism

OECD – Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

RCI – Rational Choice Institutionalism

SES – Senior Executive Service

SI – Sociological Institutionalism

UN – United Nations

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

UNSCR 1325 – United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

WPS – Women, Peace, and Security

WTO – World Trade Organisation

Chapter One: Background brief

Introduction

International affairs is one of the most male-dominated spheres of the state, traditionally guided by norms of masculinity and occupied almost exclusively by men (Towns & Niklasson 2017; Enloe 1989, 2014). Yet, in some corners of the globe, women are breaking beyond 'firsts' in leadership positions, representing shifting norms in the field. Australia now follows a global turn amongst many Western developed nations towards formalised gender equality measures within their foreign affairs, and by comparison, Australia is doing well. In fact, Australia is at a critical juncture (Stephenson 2019; Rossetti 2015): women have recently represented over 41.4 per cent of senior diplomats and sit between 17.2 and 47.2 per cent of international representatives across sectors of defence, diplomacy, and national security. There are more women in Australian Public Service (APS) leadership than ever before, more women ministers holding portfolios in international affairs agencies, and more women in other portfolios rising to senior APS positions. Australia gained its first female Prime Minister in the last decade (2010-2013). Australia recently appointed its first female Foreign Minister (2013), Defence Minister (2015) and shadow Foreign Minister (2016), marking the first time in history women have led these portfolios, and at the same time. Furthermore, these portfolios have continued to be held by two further female Defence and Foreign Ministers and Australia has its first female Departmental Secretary[1] for foreign affairs and trade (2016).

These initial statistics and achievements indicate Australia's considerable progress compared to global averages, in which women make up an average of only 15 per cent of international diplomats and heads of mission, and 15 per cent of permanent representatives to the United Nations (Towns & Niklasson 2017; UN Women 2017). Yet crucially, little is known about the women leading Australian international affairs. Equally, nor is much known about the effect of these 'new' formal gender equality policies or the persistence of informal gendered rules, which represents a major oversight. More women may be participating across key international affairs agencies, however the literature indicates that women continue to be chronically under-represented across international postings and remain stationed at lower levels and in lower priority countries (Towns & Niklasson 2017). Leadership may no longer

[1] Departmental Secretary or Secretary – head of department.

be dominated by old, 'straight white men', but diversity remains poorly represented in leadership, and often overlooked in the relevant literature (Aggestam & Towns 2019; Harris Rimmer 2017, 2019). Additionally, while reviews across some agencies have revealed decades of discrimination and harassment, they have not stemmed the flow completely or tackled more insidious forms of covert discrimination (Stephenson 2019).

In fact, many of the most damaging gendered rules, norms and practices holding women back in international affairs – like a reliance on unpaid spousal labour that only women appear willing to do – continue to be part of the foundations of Australia's international footprint. From keeping lists of predatory men to avoid in their departments, to detailing incredible abuses of power that indicate persistent sexual and physical harassment, women in this research documented decades of discrimination that in some cases, have intensified, not reduced, in recent years. Cassidy notes that "there exists *no steady upward trajectory* for women who serve the diplomatic corps" (2017, p. 213, emphasis in original) – despite high profile and visible achievements, women remain marginalised and under-represented. The question that remains is *why*, particularly in the face of such dramatic and rapid formal institutional change in Australia.

This research aims to understand how gender informs experiences of leadership in international affairs, and the institutional rules and norms that continue to affect women leaders despite recent changes. Canvassing agency history and women's contemporary experiences enables this research to make substantive theoretical, methodological and empirical contributions, presenting leading research on the question of *why do women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs?* It follows Enloe (1989, 2014) and Neumann's (2008, 2012) appeals for research on gender and international relations to answer the critical question, 'where are the women?' Supporting research questions that have guided the development of this thesis include:

1. How does agency history, structure and leadership affect women's representation and leadership in Australian international affairs contemporarily?
2. What demographics and 'rules of the game' characterise women's leadership in Australian international affairs agencies?
3. What are the pathways to and experiences of leadership for women in Australian international affairs agencies?

Feminist Institutionalism (FI) allows us to explore how institutions, norms, rules and behaviours in international affairs are gendered, helping us to explain both women's under-representation and their persistent marginalisation in the field. Based on the assertion that institutions matter (March & Olsen 1984), 'institutions' refer not solely to agencies, but also to the underlying system of rules that constitute daily life and human interaction. Formal institutions constitute "rules and procedures . . . created, communicated and enforced through channels widely accepted as official," whilst informal institutions embody "socially shared rules . . . created, communicated and enforced outside of officially sanctioned channels" (Helmke & Levitsky 2004, p. 727). The gendered nature of both formal and informal institutions has a significant effect on whether, when and in what circumstances women can represent the state internationally. This has specific implications for the four case agencies in which women's leadership and experiences are analysed: the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT); Defence (inclusive of the Department of Defence (DoD) and Australian Defence Force (ADF)); Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs); and Australian Federal Police (AFP).

This chapter begins by summarising the critical juncture and evolution of gender in Australian international affairs. The chapter then examines the research gap before justifying Australia as a case and the agencies as case studies. The conceptual framework and mixed methods comparative feminist research design are discussed, before recapping the research contributions and giving an overview of the thesis structure by chapter.

Australian international affairs is at a critical juncture

> *One truism that I believe passionately is that no nation will reach its potential unless and until it is fully engaged with the skills and ideas and energy and talent of the 50 per cent of its population that is female . . . if you get a critical mass of women, you see the narrative change because women bring their experience and interests and perspective to their role and I also believe passionately that the decision-making forums of the world, whether they be in Australian Cabinet or in the Security Council, will have better outcomes if there is greater gender equality in the composition. Better processes, better debates and better level of outcomes. I've seen that personally, I've experienced it, and I believe that to be true (Julie Bishop, pers. comm., 3 April 2019).*

In 2015, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) then- Departmental Secretary Peter Varghese launched the *Women in Leadership Strategy*, the first such strategy

to look into the reasons why women's career progression within the department was not equal to men's. The next year, Australia's first female Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop, launched Australia's first *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* across foreign policy, economic diplomacy and development programs – one of only a few such foreign ministries to do so in the world. Around the same time, other agencies within the Australian federal government's international affairs apparatus were experiencing their own landmark events relating to gender. The Australian Human Rights Commission had recently handed down two damning reviews and a further two audit reports[2] on gender harassment and discrimination within Defence, contributing to the establishment of the *Defence Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan 2016-2019*[3]. The Australian Federal Police (AFP) created its first International Deployment Group's *Gender Strategy*[4]. Plus, the Australian Border Force, which has since become an integral portfolio in the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs), reported it had been established with a gender-equal senior leadership team, making it one of the first such portfolios[5] to be established within government (Strategic Research and Communications Division 2018, 2019).

Shortly after these developments, the 2017 *Foreign Policy White Paper* was handed down. In many ways, it was in stark opposition to earlier foreign policies, such as the 2003 Howard government-era White Paper, which contained no references to women or women's rights. In contrast, the 2017 *Foreign Policy White Paper* states:

> (g)ender inequality undermines global prosperity, stability and security. It contributes to and often exacerbates a range of challenges, including poverty, weak governance and conflict and violent extremism. Australia's foreign policy pursues the empowerment of women as a top priority (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a, p. 43).

While the 2017 *White Paper* was far from a feminist manifesto, the connection between women's empowerment, gender equality and global governance was significant. The audience to which the *White Paper* was handed down to also spoke volumes in the history of Australian foreign policy. It included Australia's first female Defence Minister since federation[6], Marise Payne, Australia's first gay female *and* first Asian-born federal minister,

[2] See: Australian Human Rights Commission 2011-2014.
[3] Further notable in that it has since lapsed, with no replacement or extension.
[4] Now in its second iteration, under International Operations.
[5] If not the first.
[6] Australia was federated in 1901.

Shadow Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Australia's first female Departmental Secretary of DFAT, Frances Adamson. Matching the significance of the time, the *White Paper* was handed down in a particular moment in APS history that demonstrates there is currently a more feminist 'turn'[7] in Australian foreign policy. Across all APS departments, 50:50 gender parity in leadership targets by 2020 were set (Australian Public Service Commission 2019a)[8]. Most agencies have embraced gender equality strategies, inclusive of targets and/or quotas that have begun to change the face of government. The combined effect of these changes suggests a more women- and feminist-informed era of Australian IR – what Lee-Koo sees as the emergence of pro-gender norms in Australian foreign policy "by stealth"[9] (2020, p. 236). From being chronically and severely under-represented, with gender diversity in Australian international affairs agencies lagging significantly behind the APS and the corporate sector (Lowy Institute 2019c), institutions in the field are in the midst of rapid and seemingly dramatic gendered change.

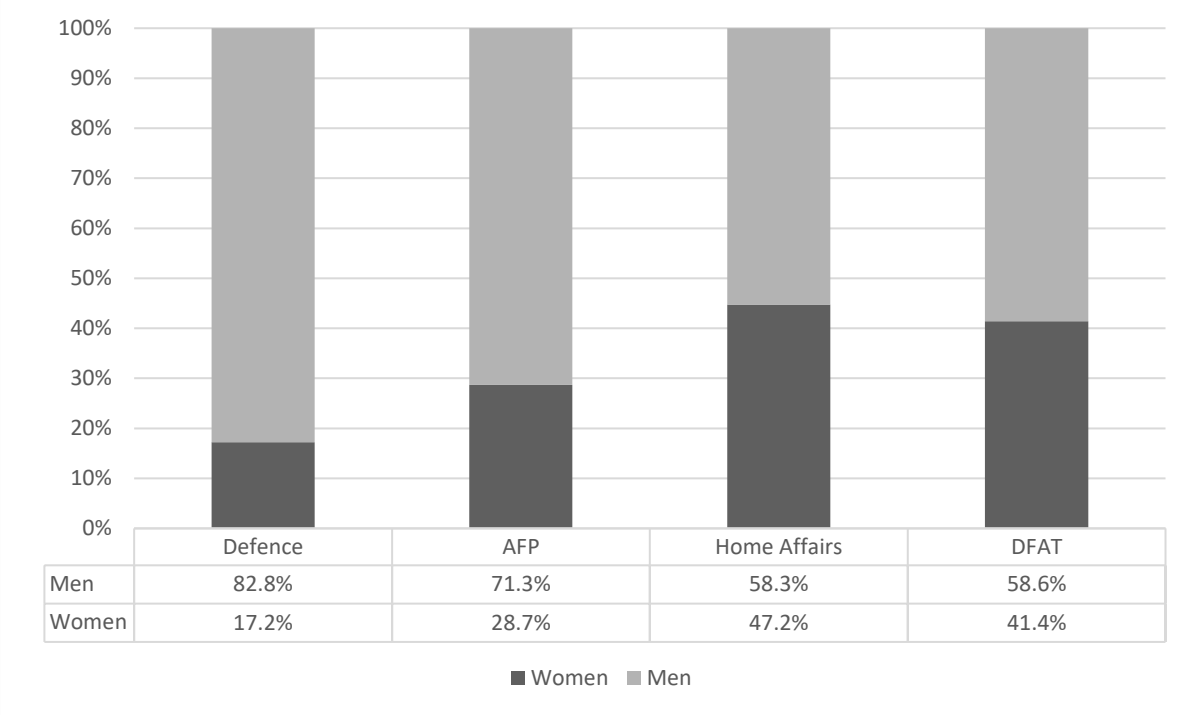
Australia's evolving international representation

Women's exclusion from key agencies in Australian international affairs was marked by legal exclusion under the Commonwealth Marriage Bar until its abolition in 1966, and since then, social exclusion by way of an enduring legacy of discrimination and differential treatment[10] (Conley Tyler, Blizzard & Crane 2014; Elizabeth Broderick & Co 2016; Westendorf & Strating 2020). In 1985, for the first time more women than men were enrolled in university, and as recruits in our premiere agency for foreign affairs – DFAT (Westendorf & Strating 2020; Dee & Volk 2007). At that time, there were only two women heads of mission (Peacock 2012). More than three decades later, in 2017 women in DFAT represented only 26.8 per cent of senior ambassadorial positions in diplomacy and 25.7 per cent of SES appointments (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017b; Australian Public Service

[7] A 'turn' is conceptualised as an increasingly feminist orientation, without the overtness and strict labelling of 'feminist foreign policy', as seen in other states (such as Sweden, for instance) (Lee-Koo 2020).
[8] As of May 2020, these targets have not yet been achieved. No new targets set post-2020 have been set.
[9] Lee-Koo notes that "there is a genuine embrace of pro-gender norms, but the masculinist cultures of Australia's politics limit the capacity for it to be publicly debated and celebrated" (Lee-Koo 2020, p. 236).
[10] In 1985, for the first time more women than men were enrolled in university, and as recruits in our premiere agency for foreign affairs – DFAT (Westendorf & Strating 2020; Dee & Volk 2007). More than three decades later, in 2017 women in DFAT represented only 26.8 per cent of senior ambassadorial positions in diplomacy and 25.7 per cent of SES appointments (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017b; Australian Public Service Commission 2017a). Women's pipeline to leadership seemed more than just leaky. The path of progress in Australian international affairs has neither been linear nor guaranteed.

Commission 2017a). Women's pipeline to leadership was more than just leaky[11]. The path to women's contemporary representation (see **Graph 1**) in Australian international affairs has neither been linear nor guaranteed.

Graph 1: International representation of women in the agencies, 2018, 2019



	Defence	AFP	Home Affairs	DFAT
Men	82.8%	71.3%	58.3%	58.6%
Women	17.2%	28.7%	47.2%	41.4%

Data source: Combination of agency annual reports and APS Employee Database Statistical Yearbook[12].

Australia is now making rapid progress towards being a world leader in gender equality in international affairs. Since DFAT's strategy was implemented in 2015, women's representation in international leadership[13] increased by 14.6 percentage points in one year[14]. Was formal institutional change all that was needed to help boost women's representation? If so, it suggests significant informal rules and norms were at play prior to the *Women in Leadership Strategy* that influenced 'who' could be chosen to represent Australia in leadership. It also highlights the need for further investigation.

[11] This reasoning, in part, influenced the decision to launch DFAT's first *Women in Leadership Strategy* in 2015. Yet DFAT was also one of the last federal government agencies to address women's leadership in Australia.

[12] Department of Defence 2019b; Department of Defence 2018; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2018a; APS Employee Database 2018; Australian Federal Police 2018b.

[13] Ambassadors, heads of mission, deputy heads of mission, high commissioners, consuls and consul-generals.

[14] From 2017-2018. When this research commenced in 2017, Australia's representation of women in such positions was only 26.8 per cent. In one year, in 2018, women represented 41.4 per cent of all roles. This has progress has since stabilised (Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade 2020b).

Women represent just over 47.2 per cent of all international A-based leadership positions within Home Affairs, which is notably higher than the other agencies. Even the agencies studied with the lowest representation of women in leadership, Defence and the AFP, are doing better than global averages (Embassy Magazine 2016; Towns & Niklasson 2017). 17.2 per cent of Defence Attachés deployed internationally are women[15], and in the AFP, 28.7 per cent of those deployed internationally are women[16].

These initial statistics indicate we have much to celebrate compared to global averages. Yet, beyond the cause for optimism, a need for caution remains. Since 1977 onwards, Australia enacted comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation at state, federal and international levels[17], with equal employment opportunity policy now specifically prescribed across public and private sectors. Women now outnumber men in the APS, representing 59 per cent of the workforce (Australian Public Service Commission 2019). Women are equally represented across global politics and international affairs at secondary and tertiary levels (Westendorf & Strating 2020), with Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane (2014) further debunking theories that women are less motivated or lack interest in 'hard' international affairs. However, women have remained a minority of overall executive level (EL)[18] and senior executive service (SES) appointments for as long as we have data[19] (Public Service & Merit Protection Commission 2001; Australian Public Service Commission 2019). Women's prospects for top appointments are worse than for men with comparable qualifications and experience, and their overall treatment as leaders indicates continued sexism, gender segregation and covert discrimination (Evans, et al 2015). If formal gender equality policies were all that were needed to achieve gender equality within Australian international affairs, it should have already been achieved.

[15] Although this is a decrease from 2017, where women represented 18.8 per cent of DAs (International Policy Division 2017).
[16] Up from 26 per cent in recent years (Australian Federal Police 2018b).
[17] Such as the *Sex Discrimination Act* (1984) and anti-discrimination and equal opportunity Acts across the states. During the last three decades, Australia also became part of commitments to international standards for gender equality, including: the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women* (CEDAW – signed in 1983); Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (passed in 2000)[17]; and, the Sustainable Development Goals (Hutchinson 2018)
[18] It is recognised that since 2015 women have represented over 50 per cent of EL1 positions, yet women's representation at EL2 and overall EL positions remains under 50 per cent.
[19] Data as kept by the APS Employee Database and since 2001, the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) first started conducting State of the Service Reports in 1998, even despite women representing a majority of ongoing staff in the APS since 2001.

Disaggregating data reveals distinctions. In DFAT, women form the majority of roles in only one area – deputy head of mission positions (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2020b). They are substantially under-represented in specialist ambassadorial positions, and are generally stationed at lower levels and in lower priority countries. In Defence, women represent 17.2 per cent of Defence Attachés (DAs) stationed internationally, down from 18.8 per cent in 2017, and represent only one senior executive in the Army, and two in the Air Force and Navy (Department of Defence 2020, 2019; International Policy Division 2017). Women leaders tend to come through the civilian side of the Department of Defence (DoD), rather than through the military Australian Defence Force (ADF), which is in line with the literature which has found that militaries remain heavily masculine, often misogynistic, and sexist (Enloe 1989, 2014; McGlen & Sarkees 1993; Bridge 2005). This presents layered barriers for women to attain the most senior leadership positions, which rely primarily on ADF experience[20].

The high proportion of women across Home Affairs masks an enduring gender gap in the most senior ranks of international leadership (Strategic Research and Communications Division 2018, 2019). While women and men are almost 50:50 in international representation[21], and women constitute a majority of overall employees, they are least represented in the increasingly para-militaristic, enforcement side of the agency. Additionally, recent changes have actually seen a decrease in women's overall representation, and in SES roles particularly.

Finally, while women already represent a minority of roles[22] in the AFP, as of 2020, both former Deputy Commissioner Leanne Close and Chief Operating Officer Sue Bird have left the AFP, leaving no women in the most senior roles reporting to the new Commissioner Reece Kershaw[23]. Women have better success in gaining leadership positions if they are 'unsworn' professional staff. Yet, similar to Defence, these leadership positions frequently do not equate with the prestige and responsibilities of the most senior leadership positions. Women are least represented in the cohort of 'sworn' police – where the most senior leadership positions are drawn from and where the majority of international deployments are

[20] A relatively recent phenomenon, following September 11, 2001 and the rise of the national security establishment through exposure to the National Security Committee (Carter 2019).
[21] What would be considered parity, representing between 40 and 60 per cent of roles.
[22] Overall, EL, SES, and international roles.
[23] At the time of submission.

offered.

While there have been steady increases in women leaders across Australian government, the most significant increases have occurred in domestic-facing agencies, in specific portfolios – human services, health and aging, families, housing, community services and indigenous affairs. When considering inherently international government portfolios, Defence was one of the largest agencies with the lowest representation of women overall and DFAT was one of the largest agencies with the lowest representation of women at SES levels (Australian Public Service Commission 2017a). Despite some change, international affairs remains pervasively gendered.

The research project

Scholarly literature has almost entirely overlooked women's identities and experiences as a relevant lens through which to understand Australian international affairs (Westendorf & Strating 2020; Stephenson 2019; Rosetti 2015; Conley Tyler, Blizzard & Crane 2014). This limits our understandings of why women remain under-represented, and our understanding of actors within international relations (IR), who remain conceptualised by male-agentic attributes, operating within worlds guided by norms of masculinity, and within agencies and roles occupied by men (Enloe 1989, 2014; Towns & Niklasson 2017). The lack of scholarly interrogation limits our understanding of the effect of new gender equality policies, as well as how institutions change or resist change (Aggestam & Towns 2019; Cassidy 2017; Waylen 2017). This represents a significant gap: not only is a solid baseline account of gender in Australian international affairs missing, but so is an account of women's rising representation during this period of rapid change and feminist turn in foreign policy.

Initially, I hypothesised that the combination of progressive gender equality measures within governments combined with an international context driving gender equality should make actors working within this sphere more gender equal, with better outcomes for women leaders, and agencies as a whole. In cases, progress is clearly being made. Yet, the data in this thesis demonstrates that despite all the progressive steps forward and women's representation verging on parity in some sectors, women continue to have specifically gendered experiences of international affairs. Women have *never* been equally represented in senior Australian international affairs. Further, applying Feminist Institutionalist (FI) theory

shows that despite recent shifts in Australia's formal foreign policy apparatus, informal gendered rules and norms continue to impact on women's under-representation in leadership and different experiences within government – because institutions are 'sticky', durable, and once made, often difficult to change (Chappell & Mackay 2017; Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell 2010). Institutions are not so stable and durable that they are immune to *all* change, with "constructive" gaps between formalised rules and informal norms providing points of ambiguity and malleability (Chappell 2016, p. 3). Indeed, Cornut (2019) argues that diplomacy is fluid and institutions, liquid[24] (Bauman 2000). These two concepts of institutional durability and fluidity help to explain why Australia's international affairs agencies remain marked by gendered differences in leadership despite the significant gains made (Lowy Institute 2019c; Conley Tyler 2016; Conley Tyler, Blizzard & Crane 2014).

Throughout this thesis, I argue that gendered institutions in international affairs endure through fluidity and adaptation. I build this argument through interrogating institutional history, the demographics and statistics of women currently in leadership, and analysing their experiences of international affairs. It becomes clear that while gendered challenges may have changed in shape and degree, they have not necessarily changed in overall nature, evolving and adapting fluidly to new social norms and 'operational realities'. I argue that there are three key elements that explain why women remain under-represented in international affairs:

- firstly, is through histories tightly bound in selective and exclusionary practices that have made gendered differences in treatment a normal, accepted mode of conduct;
- secondly, is through the layering and duplication of gendered institutions across spheres not only domestic, like family, society and the agencies, but also international spheres with their own institutions, norms and rules; and
- thirdly, is through the compounding effect of gendered rules in these different domestic/international spheres, plus gendered rules at different stages of posting (pathways to posting, on posting, returning from posting), careers (early, mid, late) and participants' lives.

This cumulative effect produces a workplace environment teeming with gendered rules.

[24] Fragility, temporariness, vulnerability and an inclination to constant change define 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000).

Further, through analysing the gendered norms, practices and processes (institutions) that affected women's pathways and leadership, this thesis makes original contributions and reveals surprising findings. Amongst these findings, five were particularly surprising:

(1) women are most proportionally represented in the most masculine, militaristic agencies;
(2) 'genteel' toxic masculinities dominate in bureaucratic agencies;
(3) international affairs relies on externalised costs borne mostly by women – resulting in queer women who deploy with female partners being most logistically capable of carrying out the duties of international representation, whilst simultaneously being most affected by heteronormative and homophobic norms prevalent to the field;
(4) women tend to experience more and worse gendered challenges domestically within their own agencies, rather than from their international deployments; and
(5) the gendered challenges of international representation are relatively homogenous across all agencies, which has substantial implications for the field in Australia and globally.

These findings reinforce the complexity of international affairs and highlight the considerable original findings that are generated through this thesis. Overall, the Australian Human Rights Commission notes, "(m)ilitary organisations do not easily lend themselves to the 'tried and true' strategies" available to other organisations when it comes to gender reform, noting that "the reality of posting cycles, operations and deployment makes the military different" (2012, p.15). The same applies to all the agencies studied, whose ethos and work requirements are defined by the need for employees to stand at the frontline, often in harm's way – if not physically, then as political scapegoats or social conduits through which formal state relations flow. These factors, and the relentless scrutiny, high accountability and standards distinguish international governmental roles from other careers.

Case study justification

The field of international affairs is typically as gendered and hierarchical as its constituent states (Harris Rimmer 2014; Charlesworth 2011), with women's representation therefore embedded in the actions of individual states and their agencies. For governance and IR scholars, Australia provides a significant case as a Western middle power in a key

geopolitical region of the world. Shepherd and True note that as Australia has a growing foreign military, aid and peacebuilding presence around the world:

> the country must play a role . . . in encouraging the participation of women in these peace and security decisions in order to create structural, gender-equal conditions for lasting peace (2014, p. 257).

Australia is a clear leader in terms of women's representation in diplomatic leadership positions, more than doubling global averages. This reinforces that, both within the agencies studied and the field globally, Australia has significant insights to share. **Table 1** demonstrates how Australia compares against regional averages.

Table 1: Representation of women in ambassadorial appointments, Australia compared with regional averages, 2017, 2018[25]

	% share of women in ambassadorial appointments
Oceania	25%
Asia	10%
Nordic Countries	35%
Europe	14%
Middle East	6%
Africa	17%
North America	25%
South America	18%
	% share of women in senior international representative positions (ambassador, high commissioner, head of mission, deputy head of mission, consul-general, deputy consul-general)
Australia	41.4%

Data for Australia source: DFAT 2018. Data for regional averages: Towns & Niklasson 2017.

Australia represents a leading case when compared to regional averages of women in ambassadorial appointments in **Table 1**. Further, as a US-aligned power, Australia has complex choices ahead, with the rise of China and India, power shifting within the region, and a rapidly changing diplomatic and security landscape unfolding following unprecedented

[25] While not directly comparable due to differences in measurement and data collection, these statistics are indicative of Australia's recent rapid progress and highlight significant points of comparison to global averages.

shifts as a result of COVID-19 (Byrne, Conley Tyler & Harris Rimmer 2016; White 2011, 2017). Australia is in a unique position as it strategizes not just to influence the changing power order, but to prepare for the uncertain and changing security arrangements ahead. During this change, Australia will look to protect its interests and values, such as human rights, gender equality, democratic principles and the rule of law (White 2017; Commonwealth of Australia 2017a). This presents a substantial opportunity for women leaders in foreign affairs, as well as for research at the cross section of international relations and gender. Australia has the potential to be a significant leader in the region and the world, bucking the trend for most theorising on women's roles in IR to come from the US or EU (Acker 2007, 2009; Tickner 1992). As Harris Rimmer (2019) notes, empirical data is needed, particularly on women and LGBTI+ persons and how their presence is shifting international affairs.

To ground Australia as a case, I chose four case agencies to analyse. The case agencies have sufficient shared goals around maintaining Australia's national interest and security, yet also have differences in terms of levels of women in leadership, policies supporting gender equality, and overall organisational culture and structure. All are federal agencies and were chosen as the core agencies responsible for maintaining sovereignty and national interest through their respective portfolios. DFAT, Defence and the AFP have been previously reviewed by external organisations to varying degrees[26]. Home Affairs[27] remains unstudied regarding gender relations, and all case agencies are missing qualitative, empirical evidence on women's positions and experiences, particularly with reference to their international representation.

Although all agencies have made specific efforts towards achieving gender equality, there remains little diversity in leadership beyond an increase of women leaders. The focus on numbers and statistics leaves a significant gap in understanding why there remains a lack of women and other forms of diversity, as well as the rules and norms that continue to exist around who is given the opportunity to represent Australia internationally. The lack of scholarly investigation contributes to a narrowness in accounting for how gender informs experiences of leadership in international affairs and how gendered institutions may or may

[26] See Evans, et al 2015; Australian Human Rights Commission 2011-2014; Elizabeth Broderick & Co 2016.
[27] And prior departmental configurations.

not be changing with the increase of women (Enloe 1989, 2014; Cassidy 2017; Towns & Niklasson 2017; Harris Rimmer 2019). Regardless of political rhetoric, formalised policies, and the feminist turn that foregrounds women's importance in international affairs, equitable experiences within Australia are yet to be fully seen or measured, and their experiences remain almost entirely obscured within the public realm. This is more than a conventional policy implementation problem: in this age of unprecedented technological and environmental change, rising nationalism, pandemics, and post-Trump politics, the stakes in international affairs are exceptionally high. Research has the ability to make transparent the previously opaque, such as enduring sites of inequality. Thus, the lack of empirical research within these case agencies could be a contributing factor to the low levels of women who have the opportunity, policy support and individual encouragement to lead Australian international representation and negotiation (Acker 2006, 2009). The agencies' focus on implementing formalised policies conceals findings on the changing nature of gender and institutions that a more granular focus reveals.

Conceptual framework

This thesis identifies institutions as a critical unit of analysis for understanding the gendered nature of international affairs. Drawing on the work of key Feminist Institutionalism (FI) theorists (for example Louise Chappell, Fiona Mackay, Georgina Waylen, Vivien Lowndes, Meryl Kenny, Sarah Childs, Joan Acker), I conceptualise women's experiences and leadership as hingeing on gendered institutions – formal and informal rules, norms, practices, and behaviours. The FI framework for studying international affairs, developed and expanded in Chapter Two, gives insight into women's representation within a multi-tiered context whereby norms in the diplomatic field, home and host countries, agency, and individual contexts all affect the individual in or aspiring for leadership. Additionally, informed by the literature and background discussions, institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of gendered change are factored into analysis. By mapping the formal institutions influencing women and uncovering informal gendered norms and 'rules of the game', it is clear that no location within international affairs is gender-neutral. Rather, international affairs is inherently gendered, teeming with gendered challenges[28], which in turn have an effect on producing gendered outcomes – in representation and experiences

[28] And gendered 'logics of appropriateness'.

(Chappell & Mackay 2017).

The concept of leadership is also integral to this study. Within the context of international relations, "global leaders are those people who most strongly influence the process of global leadership," and in the case of international affairs agencies, involves leadership in both domestic and international spheres, often cross-cultural (Adler 1997, p. 174). Leadership has historically been gendered, focusing on notions of the 'hero' and masculinised attributes around strength, courage, determination and vision. Rost's (1991) study of 221 definitions of leadership concluded that definitions of leadership can be seen as rational, hierarchical, management-oriented, quantitative, cost-driven, technocratic, male, short-term, materialistic, and pragmatic. Leadership has also had a propensity towards the public realm – while women may have historically wielded influence in private or domestic spheres, this has not always been seen as 'leadership' (Connell 2009).

Leadership is not just concerned with formalised roles and processes, yet its value is frequently equated with male-dominated public realms and formalised positions of power and influence. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin's (1967) seminal work distinguished representation as formal (institutional position and authority), descriptive (the nature or representativeness of a person), substantive (acting on behalf of constituents), and symbolic (assigned meaning and legitimacy). Formal representation within Australian international affairs, depending on the level and position, can rely on public elections (such as electing a minister or prime minister), political appointments (as in the case of a minister or prime minister appointing departmental secretaries or a politically-appointed diplomat[29]), and merit-based appointments to roles and positions of leadership. Further, informal influence, vision, courage, and action is not restricted to those in formalised leadership positions, and may provide influence in myriad ways not formally documented by studying leadership.

This research recognises that women's leadership manifests both formally and informally within international affairs, and may be expressed in ways that are different to prevailing masculine stereotypes. For ease of comparability, this study has selected women participants based on their *formalised* positions of leadership as there are clear power differences bestowed by role and title. Women's descriptive under-representation is therefore a key

[29] As opposed to career diplomats.

concern of this research. Role and title appear to have considerable influence in diplomatic and security spheres, which remain heavily influenced by hierarchy and status (Enloe 1989, 2014; Towns & Niklasson 2017). Focusing on position and rank aids the ability to make cross-comparisons and find significant controlled variables across the research.

Intersectional feminist friend research design

This thesis builds on and adds to feminist studies of government and IR, applying a critical feminist friend methodological approach (Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming) to research Australian international affairs agencies. This approach recognises the aspirations and dilemmas for feminist researchers "entangled" in the international organisations they study, arguing that "critical friends" can be at once engaged and critical (Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming, p. 2, 20). This approach provided a way to navigate the political and ethical tensions that "relations of proximity" introduce into the research, which was particularly important given my partial 'insider' status in working with the agencies studied[30] (Holvikivi 2019, p. 132). Methodologically, the approach:

> offers researchers a mid-position between uncompromising critique about oppressive (gendered and/or patriarchal) structures and monolithic (neoliberal) logics on the one hand, and overly positive, actor-centric, voluntaristic accounts of gender change on the other (Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming, p. 2).

It draws from Ackerly and True's critical IR approach, which is based on five points that feminist critical IR research should cover. It should:

> 1. be grounded in observation of human experience, key material developments, and processes of historical change;
> 2. evaluate current practices and policies from the perspective of how they are constructed;
> 3. draw out the emancipatory potentials of existing social formations, the processes of social learning of which they are the result, and the implications of both for the transformation of the world order;
> 4. reflect on the very process of theorizing and role of the intellectual or scholar in society; and
> 5. be ongoing (2006, p.255).

My positionality and approach will be expanded upon in Chapter Three.

[30] As will be explored in Chapter Three, this involved my research of the agencies over a long period and work externally with some of the agencies on unrelated projects.

Feminist analyses of international affairs question what issues and types of knowledge we count as important, legitimate, or authoritative when investigating international politics – and provide ways for accounting for them (Shepherd 2010). The value of using a feminist approach to the research is that, without it, we do not always see 'other' or alternative worlds of international politics as they are "methodologically obscured" when not looked at through a gendered lens[31] (Shepherd 2010, p. 30). Therefore, following calls for empirical research in international affairs (Harris Rimmer 2019), grounded in human experience (Towns & Niklasson 2017), this research is specific in its choice to study *women's* leadership and experiences. Tickner (1992, 2014) identifies that the history of international relations is the history of *men* in international relations. While Chappell (2010) argues for the study of 'gender' – inclusive of men and women (or anyone not defined by the binary) – in comparative studies of politics, she and Vickers (2006) do acknowledge that research focussing on women remains a gap. As Chappell goes on to say, "[i]t is essential that we do not lose sight of women as a category of analysis . . . to do so leaves men in control of formal political institutions" (2010, p.184). Additionally, Ramji-Nogales (2019) notes that the study of the complex hierarchies within the category of women grows increasingly important. Binary narratives of men and women have largely consumed IR, which leaves little room for analysis of the intersection of gender with other categories (ethnicity, sexuality, class, and so on). Ramji-Nogales highlights that, more than anything, a focus on women results in a process of inclusion in the research.

Intersectionality therefore underpins this research. Intersectional analysis acknowledges that societies and organisations have multiple bases of inequality, whether they be of gender, race, sexuality, class or otherwise (Crenshaw 1989). Building on the seminal work of Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), intersectional analyses therefore recognize the significant crossover between different forms of inequality and their compounding effect on discrimination. Because intersectional analyses have not yet been mainstreamed in IR research, intersectionality is insufficiently understood in producing solutions for women's equality in leadership – also remaining a gap in the FI theoretical field. This research therefore puts women's voices at the forefront of analysing leadership, employing a feminist approach that is aware of the intersection of inequalities produced by gender, class, disability, sexuality,

[31] It is important to continue to analyse and rethink old, seemingly intractable issues in IR through the perspectives of diverse women – previously barred from the 'hard', public issues of the state.

and ethnicity. Employing intersectional feminist approaches allows this research:

> to uncover and remove the blinders that obscure knowledge and observations concerning human experiences and behaviours that have traditionally been silenced by mainstream research (McNae and Vali 2015, p. 298).

Additionally, by designing research to specifically explore women and their unique challenges in international affairs, this research acknowledges that targeted understanding and responses for women are required (Reilly, et al 2016). This is significant. Not making specific reference to women and their unique experiences implies that the genders are equally disadvantaged within international relations and that no targeted response or understanding is needed. As Tickner states:

> since knowledge about the behaviour of states in the international system depends on assumptions that come out of men's experiences, it ignores a large body of human experience that has the potential for increasing the range of options and opening up new ways of thinking about interstate practices. Theoretical perspectives that depend on a broader range of human experience are important . . . as we seek new ways of thinking about our contemporary dilemmas (Tickner 1992, p. 9).

As a result, this research focuses on understanding women's representation and experiences across four of Australia's key international-facing government agencies (the agencies): DFAT, Defence, Home Affairs, and the AFP. The "distinctive way of life" that characterises international deployments cements the participants and their case agencies as part of organised, enduring groups charged with representing Australian international affairs (Angrosino 2007, p. 1). While not all would be comfortable or feel represented by the word 'diplomat', by virtue of their international representation of Australian interests, values and government overseas, their roles are inherently 'diplomatic' and involve highly developed skills of diplomacy[32].

A mixed methods approach informed analysis of the agencies, comprising in-depth qualitative interviews with women leaders, quantitative data analysis on gender over the last 34 years, observation, and document analysis. The literature, critical feminist friend approach, research questions, and the quest to discover detailed, substantive understandings

[32] Aggestam and Towns understand diplomacy as a "set of assumptions, institutions and processes for managing international relations peacefully" (2019, p. 3). Rossetti characterises the traditional role of diplomats – "to provide information about their host country and report timely and reliable information about developments in their host countries" – as changing, expanding with new actors and new forms of public and informal diplomacy (2015, p. 286).

of women's leadership in Australian international affairs guided the choice of methodology. Such a rigorous methodology provided many opportunities for theoretical and empirical insights into the gendered nature of institutions in diplomacy and security, as well as important opportunities to triangulate the data. The mixed methods research approach chosen reinforces a feminist tendency towards "face-to-face, qualitative and interactive methods," yet also recognises the benefits of quantitative data, particularly in uncovering trends and findings that would have remained obscured without holistic analysis (Ramanazoglu & Holland 2002, p. 155; Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming).

The primary data for this thesis comprised in-depth interviews with 57 women in executive level (EL) and senior executive service (SES) level positions, as well as named interviews with Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard, and first female Foreign Minister, Julie Bishop. I focused on interviewing those who are or have represented Australia internationally[33] in the last 10 years at the highest levels, and I have spent extensive time in the field learning from women both in their domestic and international postings across more than 10 countries and three regions, allowing observation to complement the interviews undertaken. The research also involved a further 27 informal discussions with former heads of departments (both men and women), politicians, human resources managers, and other related individuals within the agencies to establish context, test ideas and guide the research direction.

Analysing quantitative data from annual reports and the APS Employee Database (APSED) *Yearbook Statistics* since 1984 provided important trend data on the last 34 years[34], breaking down gender, rank, and international deployment across the agencies. Textual and document analysis of surrounding policy informed an understanding of the formal rules, their implementation, successes, and gaps. Additionally, undertaking a comparative case study research design ensured a rigorous approach to understanding a complex field, in which many different individuals, agencies and stakeholders are involved in the same core duties of maintaining national interest and state sovereignty. Comparative research of gender and political institutions, gender and diplomacy, and informal versus formal institutions is needed

[33] As will be canvassed in later chapters, while women's roles varied between portfolios, rank, duties, and type of work, all were bound by policies, norms, practices and constraints that delineated their roles in representing Australia internationally.

[34] The most recent APSED database statistics at time of submission was 2018, although some agency annual reports had been released, and statistics was also used from these, where possible.

to address scholarly gaps (Aggestam & Towns 2019; Harris Rimmer 2019; Bjarnegård & Kenny 2017; Waylen 2017; Chappell 2010).

Research significance and original contribution

There are four core significant and original contributions of this thesis. Firstly, the research presents the most comprehensive, rich qualitative and quantitative dataset on gender in Australian diplomacy and security to date, and one of the most significant novel case studies globally on the topic. Through doing so, it presents a rigorous baseline study into who currently represents Australia internationally, as well as how they got there and what their experiences have been, addressing important gaps within both the literature and agencies. It helps to raise the profile of pioneering women in the field, whilst simultaneously problematising why and how women have been systemically under-represented. Further, in a time of unprecedented technological, environmental and social change, where women are noted as "the most relevant emerging power this century," the analysis of these women's experiences has important ramifications not just within Australia, but more broadly on representing global security, state sovereignty and the determining of national interest (Plassnik in General Assembly of the United Nations 2008, para 2). As former Prime Minister Julia Gillard notes:

> I think there are challenges for DFAT and others that would also be true in big organisations everywhere. It's the overlay of a set of challenges that come when you're asking people to go overseas for large sections of their life. How do you reconcile that with work and family life? How do you reconcile the careers of spouses? The historic model of being an ambassador or high commissioner has been that a man does it with a non-working spouse . . . and we're finding it hard to move from that model. It's not a uniquely Australian challenge (Julia Gillard, pers. comm., 21 May 2019).

Secondly, this research develops a new framework informed by FI theory to understand gendered institutions in international affairs. The transferability of this framework to other agencies within government, as well as intergovernmental organisations and diplomatic missions globally, extends the relevance and significance of this contribution across multiple cross-cultural contexts. The international affairs context – where institutional gendered practices of agencies meet international politics and their specific hierarchies and gender practices – is a rich site for exploring how institutions act to constrain or enable leadership

depending on gender *and* ethnicity, sexuality, and so on. These contexts are not simply domestic or international, but 'intermestic' – "where domestic and international policy issues and implications blend" (Byrne, Conley Tyler & Harris Rimmer 2016, p.587). Applying FI theory and the framework intersectionally contributes significant original findings to IR, particularly around gendered *and* racialized, heteronormative and so on institutions that affect women's representation in international affairs.

Thirdly, the thesis offers five original empirical findings, adding to core IR concepts from perspectives previously marginalised and excluded, uncovering substantial new knowledge in international affairs (Ackerly & True 2006, p. 252). Comparison has broadened the research's impact and implications, leading to some of the most significant and counter-intuitive findings, demonstrating benefits of militaristic agencies in promoting more proportional leadership, plus providing key insights on the true cost of international affairs to those at the coalface – a burden disproportionately borne by women. Extending research beyond traditional conceptions of diplomacy to other aspects across international affairs, such as defence diplomacy and police-led diplomacy, reflects important changes globally yet to be fully explored by the literature. Those across different portfolios appear increasingly important as elements of traditional diplomacy erode and are reformed by new technological, political and social realities that redefine and magnify actors' roles determining national interest and securing state sovereignty (Rosetti 2015; McGlen & Sarkees 1993). Many of these empirical findings establish a foundation for future research.

Fourthly, this thesis contributes to FI methodologies, particularly in aiming to understand "hidden" informal institutions and their intersection with formal institutions across contexts deeply layered and complex. The mixed methods research design, informed by the critical feminist friend approach, involved an extensive pilot and background phase of research, in-depth interviews, observation, and analysis of trend data over a period of decades that has revealed findings that would have been obscured by a temporal or one-sided approach to analysing women's under-representation. The ability to undertake research domestically and internationally, was a further critical addition to the research, allowing the day-to-day realities of women's experiences to be observed and better understood.

Ultimately, this thesis addresses calls for research on how to best equip government leaders to meet the "demands of the future" and bridge the gap in senior representation across

international affairs (Wyse & Vilkinas 2004, p. 210; Harris Rimmer 2019; Cassidy 2017; Towns & Niklasson 2017). The research serves a practical purpose by giving public administrators across foreign affairs, defence, immigration, intelligence and policing a way to think more effectively about the (often invisible) processes which produce equity outcomes. While evidence and rational analysis form only part of policy development in practice, evidence-based comparative research of this kind can play a decisive role in informing policy-makers' judgments (Banks 2009). It also informs the conditions of the policy environment within which those judgments are made (Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming). There is precedent for this kind of comparative research, with Elizabeth Broderick and Co's (2016) review of gender diversity in the AFP comparing strategies used in the ADF and AFP towards the aim of increasing women in leadership. 'Whole of government' approaches to gender equality and Australia's diplomatic and security action must be met with research that reflects this.

Thesis structure

This chapter has introduced the key research questions and concerns. **Chapter Two: A Feminist Institutional analysis of international affairs** continues to develop the theoretical and conceptual framework of the thesis. Extending Feminist Institutionalist (FI) theory to the spheres of diplomatic and security decision-making, I posit how formal and informal gendered rules, norms and practices impact on women's pathways to, and experiences of, international leadership. I situate the research in the field of IR, then explore the gendered nature of diplomacy, from historical and conceptual perspectives. I examine how gender and institutions have previously been conceptualised with reference to Australian international affairs, before developing the framework and core factors guiding analysis across the subsequent chapters.

Following the literature review, **Chapter Three: Research design** presents the methodology used to explore the women's experiences of international affairs leadership. This chapter expands on the critical feminist friend methodology, the choice to use an intersectional feminist mixed methods approach, and data collection and analysis. Access to elites and the agencies is then canvassed, before I explore reflexivity, the comparative approach, and ethical considerations.

Chapters Four, Five and Six analyse the primary data collected during fieldwork research in Australia and overseas. **Chapter Four: History and contemporary environments of the case agencies** provides a brief historical analysis of each of the four case agencies, dissecting the policy and organisational environments and process-tracing the current more women-informed and feminist turn in foreign policy. This is particularly important in grappling with the different organisational histories of the agencies. In combination with the prior chapter, I propose the characterisation of the agencies as militaristic, para-militaristic and bureaucratic – categories that define many of the gendered institutional contexts across the agencies. This chapter establishes the core argument that gendered institutions in the field endure through fluidity and adaptation.

Chapter Five: Who represents Australia internationally? characterises what the Australian women leaders 'looked like' – canvassing aggregated and disaggregated statistics on women's representation, before exploring the participant demographics. Through applying FI theory, gendered 'rules of the game' emerge, delineating who is chosen to represent Australia internationally. The chapter breaks down the data, demonstrating a broad pattern whereby women remain segregated by status, prestige and strategic importance of posts and positions gained. The chapter presents some of the first surprising conclusions around militaristic versus bureaucratic structures when it comes to gendered experiences. It also outlines key ways in which the 'rules of the game' are policed and enforced: particularly with regards to women's voice, value and visibility internationally.

Chapter Six: What are the experiences of women leaders in Australian international affairs? analyses women's pathways to senior leadership in the case agencies. This chapter concentrates on mapping women's career paths and the factors considered at each step of the journey to international representation and leadership. It presents key insights around the most likely time when women leave the 'pipeline', and the core considerations for doing so. It becomes clear that both formal and informal institutions impact on women's career trajectories, highlighting not just the time-lapse between institutional change and the desired result, but how some institutions resist change.

Chapter Seven: Discussion of why women remain under-represented in international affairs collates the findings of the previous three chapters on history, demographics and experiences. Applying FI theory, three core trends explaining women's under-representation

are found, including: the legacy of history on the contemporary agencies; the complexity and duplication of gendered institutions; and the compounding effect of rules at different stages of women's careers and posting cycles. Additionally, five of the most surprising and original findings from the research are explored. It becomes clear that complex institutions continue to exist in the face of the feminist turn in foreign policy, resulting in an environment teeming with gendered rules and norms of behaviour.

Finally, **Chapter Eight: Fluid and enduring institutional roadblocks** summarises the core findings and implications of the research. Addressing remaining limitations, directions for further research are outlined. Overall, the chapter brings together findings to shed light on who represents Australia and the gendered rules that guide Australian international affairs. To conclude, it answers the core research question of why women remain under-represented in international affairs leadership.

Chapter Two: A Feminist Institutional analysis of international affairs

Introduction

Leaders in international affairs "articulate the meaning within which others from around the world work and live," (Adler 1997, p. 176). They shape social and governance norms, frame what is important and marginalised, and play powerful and influential roles shaping laws and policies, negotiating on war, peace and security, and representing states in international fora. Yet, the study of the dynamics and developments underscoring Australia's contemporary diplomatic practice has been "largely neglected" (Byrne, Conley Tyler and Harris Rimmer 2016, p. 581). This reflects a broader trend in international relations (IR), "while it has for the most part resisted the introduction of gender into its discourse, [IR] bases its assumptions and explanations almost entirely on the activities and experiences of men" (Tickner 1992, p. 3). Due to the primacy of realist orthodox approaches, the field of IR has privileged states as primary actors and 'hard' military power as central to how states negotiate war and peace (Blanchard 2003). Until recently, women have remained largely invisible in the field of international relations and excluded from leadership in these key vehicles of international decision-making between states (Tickner 1992, 2014; Enloe 1989, 2014).

Through analysing the literature, this chapter argues that gendered institutions in Australian

international affairs are durable and resistant to change despite formal institutional change. Yet, the mechanisms and means through which they endure are *adaptation and fluidity* – expanding on concepts drawn from both FI and diplomacy scholars. To build this thesis's core argument, I first highlight the relationship between gender and the formal and informal rules that guide political life by analysing FI theory. Next, I situate women's under-representation within IR. The chapter then explores diplomacy as a gendered space, and the emerging research on Australian international affairs agencies. Last, I outline the theoretical framework accounting for gendered institutions across international affairs, a core contribution of this thesis.

Feminist Institutionalism as a theoretical concept

Much feminist political science has centred on seeking out "real world puzzles", which have often been linked to institutional change and development (Waylen 2009, p. 246; Thomson 2018). The study of institutions is premised in the belief that institutions – rules – matter (March & Olsen 1984). Drawing from Rational Choice, Discursive, Sociological, and Historical Institutionalism, Feminist Institutionalism (FI) is a strand of New Institutionalism (NI) that considers how institutional norms, practices and rules shape behaviour, politics, and power.

Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) concentrates on utilising the micro-level (actors – who are viewed as 'rational') to understand the macro-level (actors effect on institutions). Rational Choice Institutionalists view institutions not only as structures of coordination but as structures of coercion, power and domination (Ostrom 1990; Lowndes 2010). Discursive Institutionalism (DI), focuses on micro- to macro- levels of analysis, foregrounding the influence of ideas and discourse in shaping actors and institutions (Schmidt 2008, 2010). Institutions are viewed as both constraining and enabling factors in the construction of meaning. Discourse is one of the primary methods through which meaning is communicated.

Sociological Institutionalism (SI) makes many contributions drawn on in this research. It focuses on both micro- and macro- levels of analysis, and understanding the co-constitutive effect of institutions and actors (DiMaggio & Powell 1991). SI frames institutions as reflecting actors' and societies' understandings of "the way the world works", and include not only formal rules and processes, but symbols, cognitive scripts, and moral guides that

provide “frames of meaning” that influence human behaviour (Thelen 1999, p. 386; Hall & Taylor 1996, p. 947). Actors within institutions are seen to follow a “logic of appropriateness” in particular situations, prescribing acceptable forms of behaviour (March & Olsen 1989, p. 161; Chappell 2014a, 2014b). Historical Institutionalism (HI) has also contributed much, particularly to the meso-level of understanding. HI focuses on ‘real world’ questions surrounding politics and history, viewing institutions as historical legacies of past struggles, and formal and informal rules. HI tends to see institutions as path dependent – once made, there are limited options for how institutions may change, evolve and adapt (Steinmo, Thelen & Longstreth 1992).

NI provides many salient contributions to the FI theoretical framework. However, a core contribution of FI is the explicit and specific focus on viewing and seeking to understand institutions as gendered. This was a major gap of past theory, which saw rational actors as genderless (or male), and institutions as blank, gender-neutral slates with equal effect on woman as on men. FI and its theorists therefore push further than prior gender-neutral analyses, to consider how institutions are gendered, which has effects on all of the salient themes they seek to analyse: including, of course, power (Thomson 2018; Waylen 2017). FI seeks not only to understand institutions as a relevant category of analysis, but also to remedy past Institutionalisms’ gender ‘blindness’– thereby addressing both theoretical and empirical gaps.

Mackay, Kenny and Chappell note “[t]o say that an institution is gendered means that constructions of masculinity and femininity are intertwined in the daily life or logic” of its actions (2010, p. 580). The term ‘institution’ does not refer solely to an organisation, agency, or department, but also to the underlying system of rules that constitute daily life and human interaction. Institutions are stable, recurring operating systems that both prescribe and proscribe actions and sanctions – determining what behaviours are accepted, and what are not. Not only do these rules guide human behaviour, but humans have a co-constitutive effect on them. Thus, Chappell (2002) recognises that both agents and structures are relevant to the study of power and politics, unlike previous studies that may have preferenced the importance of agents over structures, or vice versa. Rarely are gendered structures the result solely of top-down movements of power (Chappell 2002). Rather, gendered structures represent a complicated dance between actors and institutions that requires holistic and

methodical explanation.

In defining institutions, Leach and Lowndes remind us that "actors do not always follow rules, but they do know when they have broken them" (2007, p. 185). Lowndes advocates for mapping patterns of behaviour to understand formal and informal "rules of the game" (2014, p. 686; 2019). She notes that they have five commonalities, being: specific to particular political or governmental settings; recognised by actors, even if not adhered to; collective in their effect; subject to some kind of third party enforcement, even if this enforcement is informal; and are able to be described or explained to the researcher (Lowndes 2014). From this understanding, institutions operate to constrain or enable certain actions, following a 'logic of appropriateness' that not only guides behaviour, but also whose behaviour is deemed appropriate (Chappell & Waylen 2013; Chappell & Mackay 2017). There is an obvious association of rules with the formal – such as policies prescribing behaviour or laws with enforceable sanctions when breached. Yet rules are also associated with the informal – beliefs, norms, and practices, which may not be found in a rulebook or policy paper, but are still enforceable, and still have a marked effect on behaviour (Helmke & Levitsky 2004; Waylen 2017). Andrew (2010) notes that the formal is often founded on informal norms-based practices. While informal or hidden rules (often causing covert forms of discrimination and bias) have regularly been overlooked in the measurement and attainment of gender equality (Waylen 2017), they do nonetheless have a considerable impact on women's under-representation.

FI offers insights into how institutions might encourage greater levels of women's representation (Kenny 2013), how actors might devise their own strategies and tactics to make change (Piscopo 2017), and also how positive cultural and gender changes within organisations might be resisted or obstructed (Thomson 2018; Nazneen 2017; Chappell 2014a, 2014b, 2015; Kenny 2013; Mackay 2014; Mackay and Waylen 2014; Waylen 2014). Kenny (2013) demonstrates that formal institutional reforms have proved powerful in increasing women's participation in politics. Yet, formal rules do not always translate consistently to an informal level, which has resulted in the erosion and drift of policy implementation, particularly given that candidate selection in Kenny's research was "largely guided by informal practices" (Kenny 2013, p. 175). Kenny notes that in Scottish political institutions, gendered change was often 'nested' within pre-existing, 'old' structures and

institutions. Kenny's work is important for this research on women in international affairs, as much agency focus remains on formal institutional change. The growing focus on informal institutions in the literature is significant to this research, as international deployments remain largely assessed accordingly to operational needs and "who you owe favours to, rather than your skills", as one observer noted (pers. comm., 30 November 2019).

Waylen (2014) identifies how actors can either adjust collective expectations to new frameworks (such as gendered culture change) or stymie and distort the intended impact of that reform. She highlights four core ways in which institutions can change: displacement; drift; layering, and; conversion. While displacement involves the wholesale replacement of old rules with new, this is an uncommon gender change strategy, usually because it relies on the absence of a strong veto, and rarely do those seeking to make change have the requisite power to instil change fully. Drift is generally not a chosen strategy that actors employ to enact change because it relies on slow-moving changes in an external environment that give institutions new meaning. Waylen notes that:

> drift might be used where changes in wider societal norms and practices, combined with gaps in existing rules, facilitate the nonenforcement (turning a "blind eye") of some rules … rather than their replacement (2014, p. 219).

On the other hand, layering and conversion are often witnessed in institutional change. Layering refers to the layering of new institutions on top of already existing ones. While layering is an important part of institutional change, Waylen (2014) notes that often actors do not wield sufficient power to enact the gendered change sought, which results in conversion – whereby actors exploit ambiguities in rules in order to get the outcomes they desire. Conversion can prove beneficial in influencing gendered change particularly where one group (women) may be systematically underpowered. Yet, conversion also highlights inherent risks in attempting gendered change without having the formal power needed. All four methods of gendered change highlight the fact that institutional change is complex. Further, in the most successful cases, it appears dependent on the power, endurance and will of critical actors.

Critical actors are those who have the requisite power and ability to influence change. However, critical actors have dual roles, not just championing gendered change, but also challenging or rejecting it. Thomson (2018) highlights how critical actors may stymy the introduction of progressive gender legislation or resist gendered change. She notes that key

individuals worked to preserve the status quo when it came to restrictive abortion laws in Northern Ireland, explicitly pushing back against any proposed change in legislation. These individuals came from across ethnic and ideological groups, demonstrating that sites of resistance are often multi-situational and driven by different motivations, even though united in resistance. Thomson notes that these critical actors were typically more conservative in their approach. This finding may be consistent for actors in international affairs, particularly given that the case agencies are generally risk-averse, noted for their culture of conservativism (Australian Public Service Commission 2013). Thomson's findings highlight that while critical actors can be important to ensuring that change happens, they can also be crucial for ensuring that change *does not* happen – often with the latter occurring over the former.

Analysis of formal policies delineate the institutional contexts within which women work, as well as how these institutions change or resist change. This forms a significant part of the history and background sections of this thesis. Yet, because Chappell argues that there is a gendered logic of appropriateness, whereby "the masculine ideal usually dominates political and legal settings," studying the informal institutions is also key to analysis (Chappell 2014a, p. 184; Waylen 2017). Narratives and observation, as sought through the in-depth interviews conducted in this research, provide an important source of insight into informal institutions. Narrative allows us to focus not only on what is said, but unsaid – "inaction, silences, and lacunae" (Chappell 2014a, p.193). The attention to both actors and institutions, and both formal and informal rules, then enables us to understand how:

> even the most well-designed formal gender equality rules, such as efforts to increase the number of women in the public sector, often fail to produce their intended effects (Chappell & Waylen 2013, p. 612).

In fact, examining *unintended effects* is an equally important task. The literature advocates for understanding whether instead of 'new' pro-gender equality policies are having a positive or neutral effect, they are having a negative effect for women leaders. Hudson and Leidl found that in the U.S. State Department and USAID, "gender programming requirements had become a thoughtless box-checking exercise that did not, in the end, help women" (Hudson & Leidl 2015, p. 62).

This is a key concern of some scholars – that governance feminism (the installation of feminists and feminist ideas into legal-institutional power) overlooks the background

conditions, distributional effects and unintended consequences of legal and policy reforms regarding women's violence and oppression (Halley, et al 2006). Some have repeatedly argued that we cannot just add women or other minority groups to see a change in foreign policy (Hughes 2010; Wilson 2007; Sjolander 2005; Steinstra 1994). Further, True notes that there is an assumption that changing gendered norms and rules are 'good things', stating that:

> gender balance in state decision-making and women's presence as UN peacekeepers are emerging regulatory norms . . . that are expected to promote more democratic, transparent, and less corrupt government and to civilise international peacekeeping thus bringing about greater peace and security (2010, p. 2).

Halley, et al (2006) argue that our understanding of policy and institutional change must be distributional. True (2010) presses feminist IR scholars to question whether new gender norms and rules (even those aimed at gender equality) should be promoted, given that it is exactly the presence of *old* norms and practices that have been known to harm women. This is a sentiment echoed by Keohane, who notes, "we should not assume that the consequences in international relations of more egalitarian practices within some societies will necessarily be benign" (1998, p. 197). An end goal of FI and this research may be emancipatory and seek to positively change conditions for women *and* the field, yet this should be undertaken with care. As True (2010) notes, having observed the harmful effects and difficulty in fighting against hegemonic masculinity and femininity, feminists have been, and should be, cautious about recommending the normalisation of any gender-specific behaviour.

Gaps do remain in FI research, particularly in understanding: inclusion and exclusion across intersectional identities; comparative research that can help to distinguish between general trends and context-specific dynamics, and; what the interplay is between informal and formal institutions (Bjarnegård and Kenny 2017). To date, much theory across IR and FI fields remains largely blind to the intersections of race, sexuality, class, disability (and so on) as they combine with gender. Yet, there is room within the FI framework to further understand how institutions are not only gendered, but heteronormative, ableist, classed, racialized and so on, with institutions likely having a compounding effect on women from diverse backgrounds (Acker 2006, 2009, 2012). Women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and sexually diverse backgrounds often experience higher rates of marginalisation, silencing and discrimination (Stephenson, forthcoming); Conley Tyler 2016), and the diplomatic field is one with specific scripts around class, inclusion and exclusion (Neumann

2008, 2012). Therefore, the application of intersectional FI theory in this research is a major contribution to both FI and IR literature.

Additionally, whilst the concept of institutional 'layering' has been used to understand the layering of progressive gender equality policies and rules on top of pre-existing rules (Waylen 2014), there remains a gap for conceptualising the layering of *regressive* institutions. Given the complex and multidimensional contexts in which gendered institutions operate, applying the concept of layering to understand multiple sites of regressive rules, norms, and institutions could be of major benefit to FI theory. It could also help in addressing issues of causal complexity (Ragin 1987, 2011), the idea that social phenomena is often the result of different, sometimes overlapping, combinations of conditions. Discovering and outlining the layering of regressive institutions across contexts or sites could prove revealing for understanding the interrelated nature of formal and informal gendered institutions – a site of further desired research (Bjarnegård and Kenny 2017). This concept of layering will be explored throughout this thesis, as a key part of understanding the gendered institutions at work in international affairs. It represents another major contribution to the FI and IR literature.

Finally, the durability and 'stickiness' of institutions has remained a core concern of FI and this research. In particular, contributors to Waylen (2017)'s book on *Gender and Informal Institutions* highlight that while formal institutions may change, informal institutions in particular are frequently defined by their stability, 'stickiness', and endurance (Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell 2010). This durability remains a core concern of this research. However, recognising gaps and spaces of institutional malleability, Cornut (2019) argues that rather than viewing the diplomatic practices of international affairs – practices that are often more informal, than formalised – as fixed and inflexible, they are more fluid. This fits along the lines of Zygmunt Bauman's (2000) notions of liquid modernity, whereby he argues that structures and institutions (formal and informal) are somewhat less stable. Institutional durability and change is therefore perhaps best summed up by North, who notes that institutions have a "tenacious survival ability" (1990, p. 45). This survival ability does not preclude institutions from change, although it does suggest that enduring threads of continuity remain. In the context of this research, I draw both from concepts of instability and stability to argue that gendered institutions in international affairs *endure through fluidity and*

adaptation. I will return to this throughout the thesis.

Situating the research within the field of IR

Few FI analyses exist in the field of international relations (IR), yet their approaches fit comfortably within it – both remain focused on power relations. Within IR, as late as the mid-1980s, women were invisible and feminist scholarship was largely excluded from discourse, which Pettman identifies was a "normalised absence" (1993, p. 47). Until recent decades, "gender was not considered a relevant or useful analytical category in IR" (Pettman 1993, p. 47). Now, feminist analyses of IR are increasingly mainstream within the discipline. Following the seminal work of Charlesworth, Chinkin and Wright (1991), Tickner (1992) and Enloe (1989, 2014), scholars and advocates have increasingly drawn attention to and explored the relationship between women's rights and the opportunities offered by international law, policy, and relations. Feminists have highlighted links between masculinity and power in international relations (Cohn 1987; Campbell 1992), characterising states as like humans – with the weaker more often associated with the feminine (Sjoberg 2012). IR theorists, from realist and liberal perspectives, have also concerned themselves with questions around differences in actions and influence between male and female actors, as well as what are the dynamics of women's roles in international organisations and international decision-making (Danspeckgruber 2010). Neo-institutionalist sociology and constructivist IR approaches that centre on the rise and diffusion of norms have gained traction in the literature, which has remained historically dominated by rational/materialistic perspectives of what gets done and how (Ackerly & True 2006; Chappell 2010). Theoretical questions across the IR spectrum require much-needed empirical evidence, and both studies on gender in international affairs and FI theoretical approaches remain gaps within the field (Danspeckgruber 2010; Enloe 2014; Hudson & Leidl 2015; Chappell 2010; Cassidy 2017).

In existing studies globally, the status of women in this this field has been predominantly analysed from a United States perspective (for example, Morin 1994; Shoemaker & Poire 2014; Shoemaker & Park 2010) or European perspectives (for example, Aggestam & Towns 2019; Towns & Niklasson 2017; Niskanen & Nyberg 2010). Per such studies, the status of women is far from ideal, with women marginalised not only within the field of diplomacy, but also within the scholarly field studying it (Tolleson-Rinehart & Carroll 2006, p. 507;

Smith & Cornut 2016; Tickner 1992). While Chappell (2015) begins to apply FI theory to international organisations, such as the International Criminal Court, and Rossetti (2015) begins to apply feminist neo-institutionalism to Australian diplomacy, the application of the theory to wider IR and diplomacy studies remains largely neglected. This is a site where this thesis makes significant theoretical contributions.

Scholarship internationally includes studies of gender in individual Ministries of Foreign Affairs (MFAs) and within diplomacy more broadly (Crapol 1987; McGlen & Sarkees 1993, 1995; Jeffreys-Jones 1995; Neumann 2008, 2012). Since Morin (1994) studied 50 years of US Foreign Service envoys, repeated studies have found that women have been posted to less significant posts, often in lower status positions and lower priority countries (Towns & Niklasson 2017). Towns & Niklasson's (2017) pioneering research analysed almost 7000 ambassadorial appointments globally to test whether similar patterns of gender segregation exist as in other institutions. They found that 85 per cent of the world's ambassadors are men, and that female ambassadors are less likely to occupy high-status ambassadorships than their male colleagues. They acknowledge that women are reaching leadership in international affairs, particularly in ambassadorial and diplomatic positions, yet they confirm that women's prospects for leadership are worse than men's, and that diplomatic communities continue to reproduce the link between men and power that is predominant in IR. While their study does not cover why the patterns continue despite the abolition of many discriminatory practices, and rise in gender equality initiatives globally, this is evidently the next question to be answered, reinforcing the timeliness of this thesis.

Towns and Niklasson's global comparison of gender in diplomacy is joined by other comparative studies, including their own of women's representation to militarised and violent countries (Niklasson & Towns 2017), Niskanen and Nyberg's 2010 comparative case study of women in MFAs in Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland, and Bashevkin's (2018) comparison of foreign policy leaders in the US. Yet, very few studies were found to address international representation across different aspects of diplomatic leadership, moving away from studies solely of MFAs, or "big picture" comparison (Towns & Niklasson 2017b, p. 101). McGlen and Sarkees (1993) remains one of the most important studies on this topic, presenting critical insights into the lives and experiences of foreign policy 'insiders' across the US Defense and State Department. Drawing on Duerst-Lahti (1987) and Powell (1988),

they claim that research must look at three different variables affecting individuals in organisations: societal, organisational, and individual factors – elements of which are combined into the theoretical framework developed later in the chapter.

While MFAs might lead and coordinate a country's international relations, they are dependent on the working of multiple international-facing government agencies and their representatives, which highlights the need to capture new and rising forms of diplomatic action, including police-led and defence-led diplomacy. In fact, while research on defence diplomacy is growing, the research appears to have entirely overlooked the gendered dimensions of defence *diplomats*. Increasingly, Australia's international affairs is the responsibility of 'team Australia' – leaders across politics, diplomacy, security, trade, policing, immigration, border protection, business, and education. This is reflective of interdependencies within the core executive of government[35], and is not a trend isolated to Australia (Rhodes 2006). As researchers have extended work on women's representation to male-dominated arenas of diplomacy, so this study seeks to extend it further beyond MFAs to demonstrate consistencies across a broader set of international affairs leadership. This is another core contribution of this thesis.

Gendered nature of diplomacy and international affairs

Rosetti notes that diplomacy is both a primary international institution, and one that has largely been considered within the IR field as "gender neutral" despite evidence to the contrary (2015, p. 285; Parashar, Tickner & True 2018). The gendered nature of diplomacy is a principal concern of this research. Connell finds, "[g]ender, like other social structures, is multi-dimensional; it is not just about identity, or just about work, or just about power, or just about sexuality, but all of these things at once" (Connell 2009, p. 11). To speak of diplomacy (in both its specific application and more broad understanding across the agencies) as 'gendered' then refers to the fact that like other aspects of our lives, diplomacy operates within specifically gendered understandings and constructs, with access to power and resources often dependent on, or influenced by, gender.

One of IR's pre-eminent theorists, Francis Fukuyama, notes that pursuing women's inclusion

[35] The 'core executive' refers to the interdependence of several actors at the heart of government – power is not concentrated with one individual or department, but rather more widely dispersed.

in international politics will make states weaker, arguing that "(a)s women gain power in these countries . . . [they] should become less aggressive, adventurous, competitive, and violent" (1998, p. 27). Women's exclusion from decision-making in IR is justified by the perception that women are a "security risk" (Edwards 2003, p. 1302), with "international relations . . . such a thoroughly masculine sphere of activity that women's voices are considered *inauthentic*" (Tickner 1992, p. 4, emphasis added). When Neumann (2008) speaks of diplomats as the 'hero', he also argues that these conceptions are deeply gendered, with the diplomatic and hero script best filled by the traditional male civil servant.

Until recently, the Foreign Service, as well as security spheres typically within the military, remained patriarchal strongholds as the most male-dominated spheres within the state (Towns and Niklasson 2017). Enloe (2014) notes that men are presumed to be the diplomats, and Tickner states that women's leadership has historically been constrained by the widely held belief "that military and foreign policy are arenas of policy-making least appropriate for women" (1992, p. 2). Women have historically remained under-represented for every period in which we have studied the topic[36] (Towns & Niklasson 2016; McCarthy 2015; Neumann 2008; Morin 1994). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the focus of diplomacy became more professionalised and bureaucratised (McCarthy 2015). During this period, women's exclusion from international affairs became deeply institutionalised – "women were expressly and officially barred as a sex from holding diplomatic positions" (Aggestam & Towns 2019, p. 6). Within security agencies, women were completely barred from combat positions, and, where they were found, was generally within gender-segregated units (during war times) that at times have been dismantled completely (post-war).

Eagly and Johnson (1990) argue that the domination of men within specific fields of work effects the tendency to attribute gender characteristics to those roles and occupations (Eagly & Johnson 1990). Correlating with men's historic dominance within most roles in international diplomacy and security (Tickner 1992; Enloe 2014; Towns & Niklasson 2017), IR leadership is generally associated with masculinised attributes. For instance, Ticker notes that:

> strength, power, autonomy, independence, and rationality . . . [are the] characteristics we most value in those whom we entrust the conduct of our foreign policy and the

[36] Women occasionally served in formal diplomatic roles, particularly when royal courts reigned supreme, yet their influence is documented largely through their informal representation.

defence of our national interest (Tickner 1992, p. 2).

Boyce and Herd find that “the underlying stereotypical perceptions of leadership in the military are masculine in nature,” stereotypes also extended to policing and enforcement (2003, p. 374). Even those fields now perceived as more humanitarian and ‘soft’, such as immigration, remain to exhibit hyper-masculine stereotypes around enforcement, judgement and protection. Stereotyping, assumptions and expectations about the gender ‘appropriateness’ therefore infiltrates many fields of work, with role congruity theory or social role theory highlighting that women are likely to be employed in relatively low status positions, with lower opportunity for advancement, and perceived lower levels of achievement and competence. Eagly and Karau note that role congruity has an effect on: "(a) perceiving women less favourably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles and (b) evaluating behaviour that fulfils the prescription of a leader role less favourably when it is enacted by a woman" (Eagly & Karau 2002, p. 573).

Building from Enloe’s findings of diplomacy as a world deeply guided by norms of masculinity, Neumann (2008) notes that differing masculinities also exist within a hierarchy. In this way, hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2009) both legitimises men’s dominant position in the field and justifies subordination of women and men along lines of gender, as well as ethnicity, sexuality, ability and class. Masculinities and femininities that do not conform to the hegemon are likely to experience differential treatment based on whether their particular identity is perceived as ‘legitimate’ or not. As Krook and Mackay note, “constructions of masculinity and femininity are intertwined in the daily culture or ‘logic’ of political institutions”, influencing accepted and appropriate behaviours in the field, as well as ‘who’ – male, female, or otherwise – can occupy the field (2011, p. 6).

In characterising identity within diplomacy, Neumann’s work *The Body of the Diplomat* found that women represented two different femininities and hierarchies for understanding their roles: “as a diplomat that happens to be a woman” and “as a woman who happens to be a diplomat” (Neumann 2008, p. 687). Neumann asserts that these characterisations are due to inherent tensions between the status of being a ‘woman’ and a ‘diplomat’, and that women felt they had to make a strategic choice to identify and privilege one status over another. Neumann found that there were hefty career costs associated with identifying as women-first-diplomat-second, as it reproduced stereotypes and was “professionally wasted and even

counterproductive" (2008, p. 688). Neumann also notes that:

> (g)iven that general social discourse operates on a hierarchical principle with males being privileged, the woman-first-diplomat-next confirms and perpetuates that hierarchy, to her own loss as well as to the loss of women who embody other femininities (2008, p. 688).

As Tickner states, "(s)o long as women are seen – by politicians, career diplomats, media editors, and other women – first and foremost as wives, the sexist barriers will remain high and the normalisation of masculinized diplomacy will remain entrenched" (2014, p.143). Yet, in the past, Sawer (1992) notes that early Australian women politicians were expected to identify as woman-first-job-next. Sawer notes of these women, "their first commitment was to traditional gender roles in the home, and … housekeeping the state could only come later and never at the expense of the primary role" (1992, p. 18). This places women's identity in a bind. For those who identified as diplomat-first-woman-next, costs still existed as:

> making male diplomats your circle of recognition and insisting that as a diplomat, you are just the same as the boys, means to accept playing and being umpired on terms that are masculine, and so not your own (Neumann 2008, p. 688).

Edwards, et al sum up the implications of this in the APS:

> [t]wo factors at work crystallized around the commitment of women to their families: either women choose to place a priority on their family responsibilities over the demands of their career or assumptions are made about their reliability, availability and/ or commitment. In both cases, [women] miss out on opportunities to take-on challenging and high profile work, which is needed to develop their experience and reputation to progress their careers (2013, p. 6).

In US and EU-based research on women in international affairs careers, workplace culture for women in government agencies has changed for the better, and there are more women in leadership (Shoemaker & Park 2010; Shoemaker & Poire 2014; Cassidy 2017). However, women often do not get the support they need, and organisational environments are experienced differently for male and female staff. Though women's representation has improved over time, social isolation continues and women possess weaker social networks that are important for career progression and insider knowledge on specific tasks and responsibilities (Connell 2009; Cassidy 2017). Women are still excluded from widely evidenced 'old boys clubs' and networks that are depended on for information, rumours, social support and assistance for new jobs or postings (Neumann 2008). Neumann (2008) also noted that once tokenism had given way to mass recruitment of women into international representations, homosocial interaction increased, to the exclusion of women. This is not

helped by the fact that women are often horizontally segregated, restricting them to particular policy portfolios (Shoemaker & Poire 2014).

If we understand institutions as difficult to change (Mackay, Kenny & Chappell 2010), historic accounts of women in diplomacy should provide an apt background for contemporary gendered rules as explored in this research. Morin's (1994) study analysing 50 years of US Foreign Service envoys is one such critical study, and demonstrates diplomacy's reliance on the unpaid labour of diplomatic spouses. She found that women ambassadors often had to hire extra help to enable them to complete their diplomatic duties – such as hosting events and functions which were traditionally the role of the 'trailing spouse'. This work, although unpaid, was (and remains) expected as part of the 'package' of being the partner (traditionally, the wife) of a diplomat (Harris Rimmer 2017, 2019). As a result, one of Morin's most interesting findings was that women ambassadors lack a 'wife', a theme that will be returned to in this research.

Morin (1994) also asserted that gender makes little difference to women's leadership in the Foreign Service, which contrasts much of the literature since then and even some of her own findings (Towns & Niklasson 2017; Cassidy 2017; Aggestam & Towns 2019). Morin found that women political appointees were more likely to have children and be in priority postings, as opposed to women career diplomats who were generally posted in lower priority posts, and of whom almost none had children – a deliberate choice made "convinced they could not have both" (Morin 1994, p. 26). Despite the assertion by Morin that gender makes little difference in diplomatic practice, the diplomatic practice had considerable effects on women's career and family options.

The language used by Morin and her participants also reveals gendered 'rules of the game' – what is required to be an international representative. Morin mentions that the women were "good athletes", had "high energy", "reported being tomboys" as children, had prevailing physical and moral "courage", were "risk takers," and "pragmatic" in their decision-making (1994, p. 27). Morin also notes that her participants were taller than the national female average and attractive – "(g)ood brains went along with good physical endowments" – a statement which reflects the researcher's perspective at the time as much as the field's (Morin 1994, p. 27). In Morin's study, the more masculine attributes of the women studied come into focus, akin to Rost's (1991) study. One woman devised "a black evening costume that

closely resembled formal male attire, with a long black skirt in place of trousers, so as to be less conspicuous at diplomatic functions" (Morin 1994, p. 28). Another woman was widely disregarded both within her own service and her host country (who were reportedly humiliated by being sent a woman ambassador) as she was "the antithesis of the soft-spoken, subservient woman then admired" (Morin 1994, p. 28). These messages reinforce a pattern of masculinised attributes being associated with diplomacy, and that, where a woman's identity is permitted, it should be in the form of the archetypical *subservient* woman.

The 'genderlessness' of women in diplomacy or their categorisation as a 'third gender' is also a theme that features throughout the literature and data (Marriott 2017). One of McGlen and Sarkees' participants state:

> the ladies I speak to about it, say if they can be regarded as a third sex or something they can get by in the Middle East. Because that's the only way. If they are regarded as women, then men in those countries go to put them off somewhere. And they can't be regarded as men, so they have to be regarded as something else present in the discussion (cited in McGlen & Sarkees 1993, p. 99-100).

This will be revisited in the discussion chapters.

Overall, Rossetti (2015) argues that the growing number of women entering the Foreign Service is beginning to challenge the gendered nature of diplomatic and security leadership. Yet as Cassidy (2017) notes, that there is no steady upward trajectory, nor no single experience women share once they enter the diplomatic realm, presenting a strong case for understanding changing gendered institutions within international affairs, and within the context of Australia.

Locating gender in Australian international affairs agencies

The rapid prioritisation of women in Australian foreign policy – and gains made – warrant further investigation. Like much of the world, a gender imbalance clearly exists in Australian international affairs, with women remaining underrepresented at senior levels across virtually all sectors in Australia (Broderick, et al 2010; Conley Tyler, Blizzard & Crane 2014). This is nothing new. Australia recruited its first women diplomats in 1943, six years after the first Australian overseas representation was established in its own right in 1937[37] (Dee & Volk 2007, p. 3). Yet the Marriage Bar restricted women's potential advancement until it was

[37] After previously being handled through British legations.

abolished in 1966[38] (Conley Tyler 2016; Dee & Volk 2007). The bar required that married women were to only be employed as temporary staff, often meaning that they had no means to accumulate superannuation or experience to count towards promotion. In many cases, it forced women to resign on marriage, and during APS downsizing in the 1950s, resulted in the retrenchment of many women before men[39]. Towns and Niklasson state of this phenomena globally:

> while the formal Marriage Bar on female diplomats may have been lifted in most states, in practice, the combination of life as a Foreign Service officer and marriage (especially with children) continues to be particularly problematic for women (Towns & Niklasson 2017, p. 538).

The shortage of men on the home front during World War II allowed new opportunities for women to serve in war bureaucracies. At this time, the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF) was formed (1940), as well as the Australian Women's Army Service (AWAS - 1941) and Women's Royal Naval Service (WRANS - 1942). Women's recruitment as diplomats followed in 1943. These early efforts were followed by periods of little to no recruitment of women across international affairs, and it was a period where women faced various forms of discrimination, as well as horizontal segregation into 'soft' policy areas such as human rights, cultural relations, human resources, administrative and consular work (Dee & Volk 2007). Diplomatic experts at the time called for the need to recruit the "very best men available," with the service in Canberra noted as "privileged," competitive" and dependent on the strength of personalities to drive the post-war international agenda (Clunies Ross in Dee & Volk 2007; Tange 1996; Edwards 2006). Many international postings were deemed unsuitable for women based on safety or strategic reasons, with leading Australian political figures (male) securing most international deployments (Edwards 2006). McGlen and Sarkees talk about the 'evidence' used to keep women from foreign political posts, such as "the cultural stereotypes of other nations" – a notion that has, until recently, continued to hold sway (1993, p. 99; Stephenson 2019). In 1973, six years after the Marriage Bar was lifted, women received equal pay under law, flexible working hours and paid maternity leave, which helped remove other barriers to women's advancement. It was not until recent decades that many of the affirmative action policies and gender strategies were embedded across government – and equal pay remains as abstract now as it was almost 50 years ago.

[38] Coincidentally making it the first Western foreign service to lift the bar.
[39] In order to make way for men to fill these roles after returning from war.

Contemporary Commonwealth public sector employment accounts for over 242,000 jobs (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2019). Constitutional authority rests with the Commonwealth federal level of government, referred to as the Australian Public Service (APS), and Australia's engagement in international affairs based on maintaining the national interest and strengthening international frameworks and norms that promote Australian[40]. The principle of 'merit' is significant to APS appointments, underpinned by legislation and deeply engrained in decisions surrounding recruitment and progression[41].

Merit is typically understood as gender neutral[42]. Yet, merit has specific implications, especially in public service, assuming that "those with the requisite training, experience, and personal motivation will succeed in a meritocratic society, while those who fall behind have only themselves to blame" (Cech & Blair-Loy 2010, p. 371). Within Australia, pre-eminent researcher and government advisor on merit and promotion in the workplace, Clare Burton, presented cornerstone research on merit in Australia in 1988. She found that not only is merit subjectively assessed, but also "that men are perceived to be more able, to have more natural ability in a range of areas, than women" (Burton 1988, p. 2) This issue remains three decades later (Williamson & Foley 2017). Simpson, Ross-Smith and Lewis agree, stating that:

> (f)ormal procedures based in merit can "hide" or justify difference in outcomes and cannot guarantee gender-based "fairness" . . . This may be because formal procedures may be circumvented by informal practices (2010, p. 199).

This demonstrates how informal norms and processes within organisations can derail meritocratic outcomes and the formal processes of merit.

Empirical studies of women in international affairs remain marginalised and infrequent within the Australian context, except for a few recent book chapters, interviews, and studies

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[40] Values – such as human rights, gender equality, democratic principles and the rule of law, international security, and open and transparent global markets (Commonwealth of Australia 2017a).

[41] The Australian Public Service Commission notes that:

> "A decision to engage or promote a person is based on merit if:
>
> - all eligible members of the community are given a reasonable opportunity to apply
> - an assessment is made of the relative suitability of candidates, using a competitive selection process
> - the assessment is based on the relationship between the candidates' work-related qualities and the qualities genuinely required to perform the relevant duties
> - the assessment focuses on the relative capacity of candidates to achieve outcomes related to the relevant duties
> - the assessment is the primary consideration in making the employment decision" (2019c, para 1).

[42] And, in theory, merit is meant to be applied gender neutrally.

(see Westendorf & Strating 2020; Lowy Institute 2019c; Stephenson 2019; Rossetti 2015; Conley Tyler 2016; Conley Tyler, et al 2014; Harris Rimmer 2014; Hewitt 2017; Shepherd & True 2014). Melissa Conley Tyler, Emily Blizzard and Bridget Crane begin to explore Australia's 'missing' women in international affairs in their 2014 paper, presenting important pre-cursor research to this. They debunk theories that women are less motivated (Roggeveen 2009) or lack interest in 'hard' international affairs (Shanahan 2011). Instead, they offer four reasons for the continued under-representation of women in leadership: direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, family commitments and socially constructed gender roles.

Firstly, direct discrimination includes historic institutions such as the Marriage Bar and other practices that normalised bias and discrimination against women, particularly prior to the institution of anti-discrimination legislation. This direct discrimination has resulted in "women who today would have acquired the necessary seniority, experience and qualifications to occupy senior positions in international affairs" being lost to the field (Conley Tyler, Blizzard & Crane 2014, p.161). Historical discrimination has a legacy effect on institutions today.

Secondly, indirect discrimination is the result of laws, policies or programmes that are seemingly gender-neutral, but have gendered effects. Indirect discrimination may persist due to a failure to recognise women and men's different experiences. This is evident in the AFP, where the 2016 *Cultural Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police* review found that women have different experiences to their male counterparts, despite men's belief that their experiences were the same (Broderick & Co 2016). DFAT's *Women in Leadership Strategy* also notes that "the department's culture constrains women's choices and is not applying the merit principle fully or making the most of its talent", which aligns with Burton's findings on merit (Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade 2015a, p. 4).

Indirect discrimination may also be the result of informal power structures within departments. Embassy Magazine's (2016) analysis of foreign diplomats internationally found that 87 per cent of respondents agreed when asked whether diplomacy was a man's world. Within the AFP, women experienced difficulties 'fitting in' to the male-dominated organisational culture, feeling pressure to 'prove themselves' in a sexualised environment (Elizabeth Broderick & Co 2016). Over half of women in male-dominated departments that were identified in *Not Yet 50/50: Barriers to the Progress of Senior Women in the Australian*

Public Service, felt excluded from informal networks important for career progression (Edwards, et al 2013). 'Boys clubs' and similar informal exclusionary networks can be particularly challenging within the field of international affairs due to the dominance of masculine norms within the field (Conley Tyler, Blizzard & Crane 2014). Further, Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane find that "[w]here senior managers and decision-makers share group characteristics – typically white, Anglo-Celtic, heterosexual, able-bodied, middle-class men – it can create an exclusionary culture" (2014, p. 163). This presents considerable challenges to individuals who differ in one or more of those aspects.

Thirdly, family commitments were found by Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane to negatively impact women's opportunity to form part of senior positions in international affairs. Because women continue to carry the burden of greater responsibilities for caring duties within the home, the hours in which women can undertake paid work are restricted and it is more difficult for women to pursue jobs in other locations (Cowden, et al 2012). For women in the APS, Edwards, et al (2013) found the absence of available and affordable childcare to be a key barrier to career progression, which has implications for deployed women in which access to reliable, safe and affordable childcare may be more difficult to negotiate. Additionally, the Community and Public Sector Union (2011) found that 40.5 per cent of women believed that taking time out for family reasons would damage their future careers. While flexible work arrangements affect both men and women, women are disproportionately affected and tend to be over-represented in part-time and flexible work (Department of Education, Skills and Employment 2019). The practical considerations involved in relocating to a new country imply that there is an even greater need for flexibility in work for women.

Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane's final reason for the low representation of women in Australian international affairs was socially constructed gender norms. As set out earlier, diplomacy has specific scripts, norms and expectations of its actors, which are characterised by gendered differences. Lee-Koo (2007) finds that within IR discourse in Australia, masculinity is associated with power, autonomy, rationality and public space, while femininity is associated with weakness, dependence, nurturing, private spheres and emotion. Not only do these constructs have an impact on who is seen as capable of occupying leadership positions and representing 'Australia', effecting vertical segregation, but they also

have the outcome of horizontally segregating women into policy and portfolio areas (Bell 2010). This will be discussed in later chapters.

When viewing the case study agencies through the established literature, a few further salient factors explaining women's under-representation in international affairs can be found. *The Review of Employment Pathways for APS Women in the Department of Defence* states that "strong internal group culture and structures has led to development and implementation of *localised, disconnected practice and process*" (Commonwealth of Australia 2011, p. 8-9, emphasis added). FI highlights that institutions 'travel' – that is, geography and different portfolios across the agencies may affect the local informal gendered rules and norms, regardless of what the formal rules delineate. This highlights potential difficulties in implementing 'whole of organisation' policy across divisions, agencies, or posted countries.

Additionally, agency structure has an effect on women's under-representation. Defence and the AFP, as highly structured military and hierarchical organisations, could be expected to present further barriers for women seeking leadership than DFAT and Home Affairs. This is based off existing research on military and enforcement agencies, with McGlen and Sarkees (1993) finding that organisational structure influenced gender ratios within the organisations, as well as hierarchical structure and leadership, division of labour and the degree of centralisation of power. Later chapters will address the validity of this expectation.

Diversity beyond gender markers also remains a key concern across government, with Conley Tyler (2016) highlighting four challenges to the greater inclusion of Indigenous Australians within DFAT. She argues that direct discrimination, indirect discrimination, family and cultural responsibilities, and social constructs all affect Indigenous Australians' career progress, mentoring and retention. Australia only appointed its first Indigenous Ambassador, Damien Miller, in 2013, and appointed its first female Indigenous Ambassador, Julie-Ann Guivarra in 2018. Further challenges may exist for Indigenous Australians wishing to represent Australia internationally (Riseman 2016, 2014; Larkin 2013). Yet, considerable gaps remain in understanding CALD, sexually diverse, disability, and other intersectional experiences of diplomacy beyond gender. This gap is not just limited to Australia, and is a gap where this research makes a key contribution.

Developing a framework for analysing gendered institutions in

international affairs

I propose the following framework in **Figure 1** to guide analysis of the gender institutions in international affairs agencies. This framework derives from a combination of theory, which highlighted salient gendered institutional contexts, and insights gained during pilot background interviews, which highlighted gaps in existing theoretical models[43], where they existed.

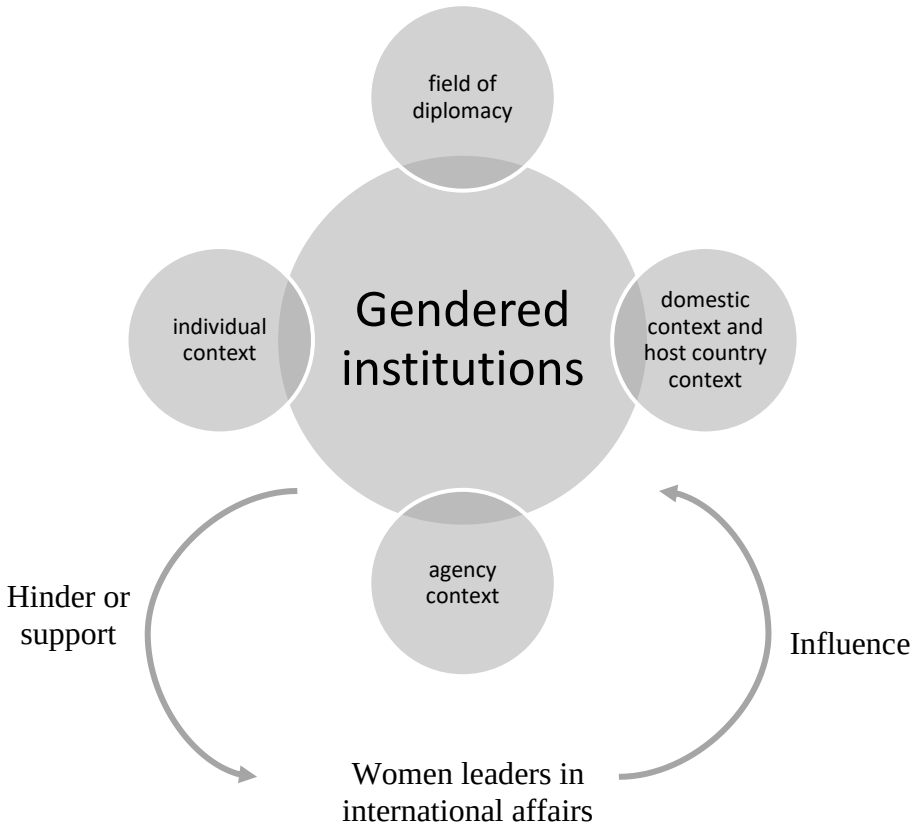


Figure 1: Gendered institutions in international affairs

I identity four core sites as influencing gendered institutions: the field of diplomacy; the individuals' context; the agency context; and the domestic and host country contexts. This covers all three aspects that McGlen and Sarkees (1993) argue research on women in foreign policy should assess – societal, organisational, and individual. Yet, it has further broken down factors and extended analysis to capture important differences. For instance, if one studies the impact of 'society', which society do they study? For international affairs' leaders,

[43] Such as the framework developed by McGlen and Sarkees (1993).

home society and host society are specific environments that deserve complete analysis. The field of diplomacy is neither a society nor an organisation, but as gendered norms are significant and consistent across diplomacy globally, it is still a relevant unit of analysis, and should be differentiated from other contexts. As canvassed earlier, the diplomatic field is posited to influence not just diplomats in DFAT, but all internationally deployed staff across the agencies, given the informal (and formal) rules of their deployment. The individual is also analysed in this research, including analysis of family contexts – because whether and how women deployed internationally was always dependent on their family circumstances, and what other social supports they had.

While not exhaustive, each of these sites present critical insights into norms, behaviours and practices that either hinder or support women in international affairs. The framework also acknowledges the co-constitutive relationship between institutions and actors. Not only do institutions work to support or hinder women leaders, women leaders also exert influence over institutions, changing them both formally and informally through their presence and the enactment of new rules and norms. This framework is posited to provide an effective rubric for measuring gendered institutions across international affairs agencies globally, allowing analysis of multiple core sites of institutional change and resistance.

In applying this framework throughout the thesis, a few further factors are considered. These include understanding institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of change. History is posited to continue to play a significant role in upholding gendered institutions across all agencies, particularly given the 'stickiness', durability and difficulty to change institutions addressed earlier in this chapter. Stability has implications for ingraining gender equality measures, particularly where progressive gendered change initiatives may be overlapping, layered or instable in a way in which creates inconsistencies and gaps. Given actors have a co-constitutive effect; women's increasing representation should have an effect on institutions. Additionally, the presence, or absence, of critical actors to advocate on behalf of gender equality is important to assess whether new institutional rules are taken up, to what degree, and how quickly. Finally, timing refers to wider social movements and changes that may strengthen (or weaken) gendered change initiatives, as well as the lag between implementation of progressive policy and outcomes. This framework for identifying gendered institution in international affairs represents a major contribution with

wider application in the literature.

Summary

This chapter has developed a Feminist Institutionalist (FI) framework that can be used to analyse the relationship between gender and experiences in international relations, to answer the question of why women remain under-represented despite recent gendered changes in foreign policy. This framework highlights actors and institutions co-constitutive effect on each other. The success of gendered change in institutions is further dependent on institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of change. The most salient sites of gendered institutions in Australia international affairs include the diplomatic field, the individuals' context, the agency context, and the domestic and host country context. From this, we understand international affairs leadership as being at the nexus of complex relationships and multifaceted challenges, as well as a site that is being steadily disrupted by the greater presence and perspectives of women.

The lack of in-depth qualitative research directly with women leaders in the field of international relations that represents a significant gap in the literature. In acknowledging the theoretical and practical contributions this type of research can have, Conley Tyler, Blizzard and Crane (2014) recommend that women interested in engaging in international affairs leadership should refer to the experiences of women who have a strong record of achievement within the field of international affairs. This re-affirms the ambition of this study to not just be a critical feminist friend to the agencies, but also to offer insight on pathways for women in international affairs. Further, this research addresses gaps in the IR and diplomatic literature, adding gendered accounts and multi-case study accounts to the field, and identifying rising forms of diplomacy across different international affairs agencies. Much of this knowledge has remained entirely undocumented, particularly in contexts outside of Europe or the US, despite the growing profile and pressure placed on Australian diplomatic and security initiatives, and the significant gains Australia is making compared to global averages of women's representation in international affairs. Additionally, core contributions of this research to FI theory are identified: developing and applying the FI framework for analysing international affairs agencies; conducting intersectional FI research, and; expanding the FI concept of layering to understanding the layering of regressive gendered institutions.

Drawing on methodologies used by theorists in this chapter, the next chapter identifies how the research was undertaken and the theoretical framework applied, by canvassing the research methodology.

Chapter Three: Methodology and fieldwork on the global stage

Introduction

To closely examine why there remains an under-representation of women in Australian international affairs, we must first understand the successful cases of women leading international affairs. The last chapter developed a Feminist Institutional (FI) framework for analysing the gendered institutions in international affairs leadership. This chapter outlines the methodology, which was derived from the theoretical framework, and developed for its capacity generate meaningful data to answer the research question. Intersectional feminist methodologies have informed the research design, as has the approach of being a 'critical feminist friend' of the agencies. This chapter argues that a comprehensive mixed methods comparative study highlights small wins against historical gendered, political and institutional odds, as well as analyses sites of enduring inequality, revealing hidden informal institutions and extracting core empirical data on international affairs. This methodological choice is pragmatic and one delivers on my contributions to both the academic field and the agencies. The research choice has also been shaped by the imperative to authentically represent the experiences of the women took part in the research.

This chapter will first outline the critical feminist friend approach and mixed methods research design. Next, I unpack the settings used for fieldwork and data collection, before expanding on the primary data source: qualitative interviews. I discuss the women leaders selected for the research, outlining how and why I selected them, and the means taken to assure anonymity and the integrity of their narratives. I highlight the opportunities and challenges that come with gaining access to elites, as well as the ethical requirements involved in working with government and international affairs agencies. Throughout this whole process, I demonstrate the importance of reflexivity and 'checking in' on how the interviews were progressing, in order to ensure I was both answering the questions I set out to, and completing the research in a way that was aware of subjectivity and bias. Finally, I outline the choice to use comparison and justify the case selection before summarising my research approach.

Critical feminist friend

A critical social science methodological understanding underpins this research, defining

social science as:

> a critical process of inquiry that goes beyond surface illusions to uncover the real structures in the material world in order to help people change conditions and build a better world for themselves (Neuman 2013, p. 110).

The purpose of critical social science research is not only to uncover conditions, but to empower people and become a catalyst to transform social order, a method that lends itself to intersectional feminist research (Neuman 2013). Chappell and Mackay argue for employing a critical feminist approach, particularly in conducting research that is embedded and "entangled" with the international organisations researched (forthcoming, p. 1). Common features of the approach include the researcher's relative autonomy, expertise, "close distance"[44], shared goals, and "a commitment to understanding of contingency and contextual entanglement" (Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming, p. 4). The positionality of being an academic engaged in researching the agencies over a long period of time, as well as being externally engaged with some of the agencies studied, has resulted in my 'close distance' to those researched. Researchers have debated the challenges, opportunities and compromises of feminist 'insiders'[45], generally accepting that "improvements in women's lives rest, for the most part, on engagement with and entrance into institutions" (Chappell & Hill 2006, p. 158). Yet, the dilemmas of this 'closeness' include that for agencies, privileged access may be given at the expense of relative autonomy. For researchers, developing a sense of loyalty to the agencies studied presents dilemmas in disseminating findings, even if findings have been openly disclosed and approved by participants. Researchers may find it difficult to speak hard truths and may face co-option by those researched. Humility, awareness, sense-making and reflection all provide avenues to balance these dilemmas (Ackerly & True 2013; Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming; Holvikini 2019).

Engaging in a critical friend approach was crucial in order to balance the needs of gaining access to elites in international affairs, with the need to produce rigorous, empirical research and critical conclusions. Chappell and Mackay note that it is rare to be given access to international organisations (government or otherwise), and "rarer still to examine institutional

[44] As an academic who is engaged in researching an institution over a long period of time; as an expert advocate who works in close cooperation with an institution or sector on reform; or a "recovering femocrat" – a bureaucrat or insider who moves into, or returns to, an academic or quasi-academic role and reflects critically upon their experience (Chappell & Mackay 2015, p. 14).

[45] Those who take this approach are variously referred to as "gender policy entrepreneurs" (Chappell 2006), "outsiders within" (Collins 1999, p. 85), "femocrats" (Sawer 2016), and "insiders" (McGlen & Sarkees 1993).

change from the inside" (2015, p. 10). After gaining access to the agencies, trust, time and "institutional churn"[46] all factored as considerable challenges in this project, and highlighted the need to balance critique and collaboration – values closely associated with feminist research methods (Chappell & Mackay, forthcoming, p. 18). The critical friend approach stems from the ability to ask "provocative questions," analyse data through a different lens, and critique work as a "friend" (Costa & Kallick 1993, p. 49). Ultimately, this enabled me to recognise progress made, as well as highlight enduring sites of inequality. The approach also allowed me to give back to agencies and participants too[47], fulfilling the emancipatory goal of the feminist approach. The research has therefore aimed not only to provide theoretical and empirical contributions to the academic community, but also keep in mind audiences of government, and women leaders and aspiring leaders.

This critical approach has similarities to governance feminism – "feminism that seeks not only to analyse and critique the problem, but to *devise, pursue and achieve reform to address the problem in the real world*" (Thomas in Halley, et al 2006, p. 348, emphasis in original). Halley, et al (2006) argue for the ongoing assessment of the effects of this approach. They argue that researchers need to take into consideration possible unintended consequences, such as legal and policy changes and background conditions to the policy issue, as well as whether reforms would generate more vulnerability for the women involved. Shamir argues that:

> Governance Feminism ("GF") – well-intentioned as it may be – is pre-loaded with a strong tendency to overlook or underplay the costs it might cause to some and to fix its gaze on the benefits gained by others (in Halley, et al. 2006, p. 394).

These concerns informed my reflexivity, research approach and analysis.

Turning to epistemic and ontological approaches, an interpretivist epistemological understanding informed the research. As Weber states, interpretivism is a "science which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action in order to arrive at a causal explanation of its course and effects" (in Bryman 2012, p. 29). The task of causal explanation originates with an interpretive understanding of social action, rather than a value neutral understanding in which external forces have no meaning for those involved in social action. Interpretivism is thought to include a hermeneutic-phenomenological tradition and Weber's

[46] Staffing turnover of those researched or of gatekeepers to the research.
[47] I had the opportunity to present initial research findings back to some of the agencies. This also gave me an opportunity to receive feedback from senior agency representatives that were not part of the research, and gain further participants.

verstehen (understanding) approach, both of which situate social action as being meaningful to actors, therefore requiring interpretation from their point of view (Van Krieken et al 2010). As Bevir and Rhodes explain, political studies rely on narrative as a form of explanation:

> we account for actions, practices and institutions by telling a story about how they came to be as they are and perhaps also how they are preserved . . . to understand actions, practices and institutions, we need to grasp the meanings, the beliefs and preferences of the people involved (2002, p. 6-7).

This research approach allows multiple levels of interpretation: interpreting other's interpretations of the world, before then interpreting these interpretations through concepts, theories and literature in the discipline (Bryman 2012). It also foregrounds the importance of understanding and unpacking narratives from individuals' perspectives, highlighting the benefit of interviews and observation.

This research is also informed by a constructivist ontological position, which implies not only that social phenomena are produced through social interaction, but that they are in a constant state or change, negotiation, and revision (Bryman 2012). This is highly relevant to women's leadership in international affairs, as "a preoccupation with the formal properties of organisations (rules, organisational charts, regulations, roles) tends to neglect the degree to which order in organisations has to be accomplished in everyday interaction" (Bryman 2012, p. 34). As opposed to natural science's "availability of a preconstituted world of phenomena for investigation", the constructivist position allows the examination of "the processes by which the social world is constructed" (Walsh 1972, p. 19).

Intersectional feminist mixed methods

Most feminist research is "motivated by the common goal of attempting to describe and explain the sources of gender inequality, and hence women's oppression, and to seek strategies to end them" (Tickner 1992, p. 8). Feminist analyses of international relations (IR) seek to question what issues and types of knowledge we count as important, legitimate, or authoritative when investigating international politics – and provide ways for accounting for them (Shepherd 2015). In IR, this is particularly important given the rise of new challenges, from climate change to world terrorism, and the potential to rethink old, seemingly intractable challenges through different methodological approaches.

A mixed methods approach to research was a pragmatic choice as both quantitative and

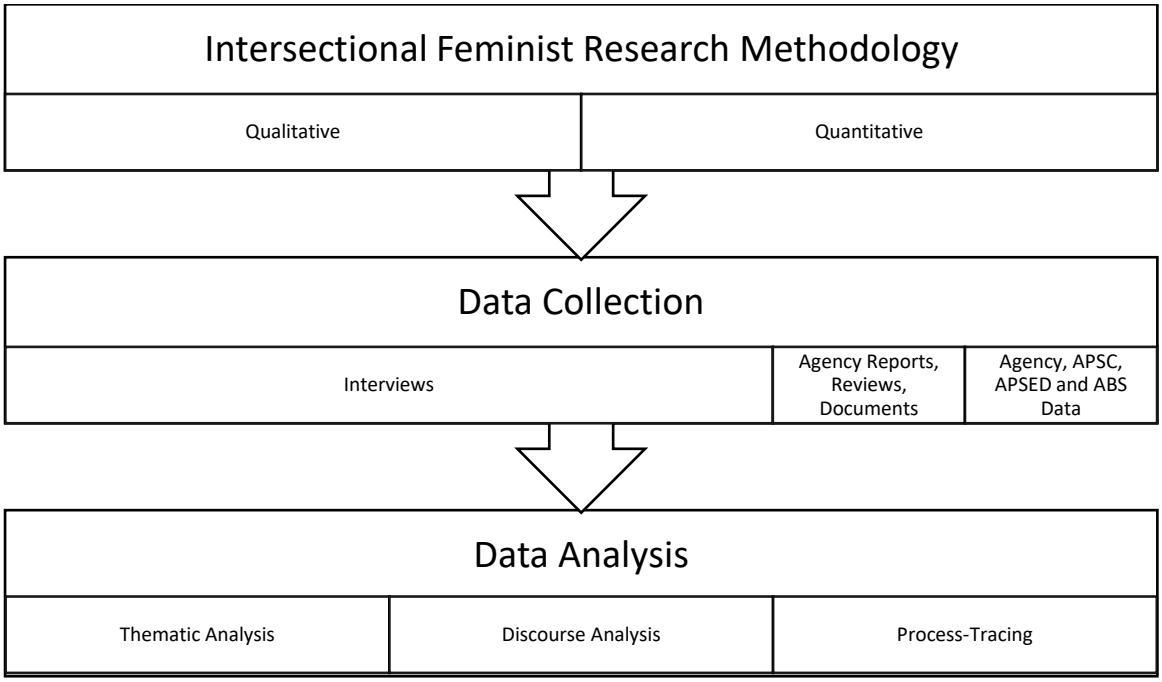
qualitative studies have largely neglected the topic of women's leadership in international affairs within the Australian context. Qualitative research is particularly fitting for feminist approaches, where "face-to-face, qualitative and interactive methods" are preferred (Ramanazoglu & Holland 2002, p. 155). Qualitative methods have traditionally provided "greater opportunity for a feminist sensitivity to come to the fore" than quantitative methods, and was a specific choice in this thesis chosen for its ability to delve deeper into the narratives and oral history accounts of participants (Bryman 2012, p. 410). Yet, from the beginning of the research, I have also seen great value in the use of a quantitative approach, both to triangulate the data and further validate the findings. Quantitative methods can provide important large-N analysis of phenomena, in a statistically rigorous manner, to produce compelling results (Bryman 2012). Such results are important for driving policy development, evaluation, and change. Using mixed qualitative and quantitative methods therefore aided in my critical feminist friend approach – both approaches are important for wider use by the agencies and academia.

Additionally, my choice to use mixed methods was reinforced by concerns that reliance on any one approach could leave significant gaps. Mies (1993) argues that quantitative research suppresses the voices of women and buries their experience under statistics and facts, exemplary of the objectification and exploitation of women through a one-way exchange that takes but does not give. Quantitative research's reliance on predetermined variables is also troublesome, as research may be limited to what is already known, potentially silencing the women's own varied voices (Maynard 1998). Further, while "valid knowledge" associated with quantitative research means that the study of women should be undertaken in a value-neutral way, the reality of feminist research is precisely "to conduct research specifically *for* women," and their, and society's, greater emancipation through research sensitive to a diversity of experiences and social realities (Bryman 2012, p. 410). This highlights the benefits of not choosing either qualitative or quantitative methods exclusively, but combining them in order to triangulate the data and provide a more holistic picture of women's leadership[48] (Van Krieken et al 2010).

[48] Quantitative research would suggest that we are gaining more women leaders towards the goal of gender parity. However, qualitative analysis aims to broaden our understanding of the topic beyond statistical increases, for the simple reason that the increased proportion of women in leadership (however big) is no guarantee that gender relations more broadly have improved as well. As Evans, et al state, "the quest for equality in the workplace (indeed any form of equality) is an ongoing struggle which should not stop with the

Hesse-Biber and Griffin state that mixed methods research "provides the potential for deepening our knowledge around a particular topic" (2015, p. 76). The "qualitative approach . . . may allow for validation of quantitative findings," and combining methods allows both a deep analysis of specific cases and wider generalisations to be made (Hesse-Biber & Griffin 2015, p. 76). My overall methodological approach is laid out in **Figure 2: Research Approach**.

Figure 2: Research approach



Feminist methodologies allow a more balanced and equitable research experience, yet dilemmas do exist in feminist research. Such dilemmas include the tension between the characterisation of an interviewee's experience and the researcher's interpretation of it, as well as the issue of subjectivity. The use of mixed methods helped to minimise this issue. Self-reflexivity and triangulation of the data (including with external sources) was also an essential part of the process, allowing me to explore knowledge in ways that reduced distortion and elevated truths (Tickner 1992; Bryman 2012).

achievement of a performance target" (2015, p.501). The research question would therefore be un-answerable without a deeper understanding, which the mixed methods approach allows (Meier & Lombardo 2013).

Data collection: on-ground, in-person and international

Qualitative interviews

In-depth qualitative interviews with senior executive women leaders form the primary data collected for this thesis. As Jacoby states, "interviewing provides access to people's ideas, thoughts, and memories in their own words rather than in the words of the researcher" (in Ackerly, Stern & True 2006, p. 161). Through conducting interviews, experience is understood as a "source of legitimate knowledge", which raises certain inherent dilemmas (Jacoby in Ackerly, Stern & True 2006, p. 161), such as the tendency to equate experience with truth. Interviews therefore reveal narratives, which are not only powerful in themselves, but can be analysed alongside other forms of evidence as produced by discourse, document and statistical analysis.

Formal interviews with 57 women leaders took place from May 2018 to May 2019, and informal discussions for background with a further 27 men and women from June 2017 to December 2019. Informal pilot backgrounding discussions were essential, and allowed me to narrow down critical issues prior to undertaking the main data collection period, assessing potential relevant and irrelevant factors. This was particularly important as gaining access to elites and international institutions can be difficult and limited, and I needed to ensure that my research focus, questions, and theoretical framework was robust. This pilot period allowed me to have an informed, 'insider' perspective from the outset. As Chappell and Mackay note, gendered "rules are often taken for granted – usually submerged and barely visible – and therefore difficult to study" (2017, p. 24). Therefore, this methodological choice enabled me to understand institutions and actors from multiple perspectives. Those consulted during this period were typically individuals in a position relational to the agencies, such as former secretaries, human resources teams, research and communications teams, and diversity and inclusion strategists within the agencies.

Inevitably, I could not conduct research at every agency or department involved in Australia's diplomatic and security arrangements in international affairs. However, recognising Cohn's evaluation that "national security discourse and policies are created by the workings of many complex social organisations", I chose four of the most salient agencies to international relations based on their roles and their ease of access (in Ackerly,

Stern & True 2006, p. 94). Of these, all four case agencies have headquarters nationally in the Australian Capital Territory in Canberra and have overseas representatives in Australian embassies, as well as embedded units in host government offices.

I undertook data collection both domestically and internationally. My fieldwork domestically was critical in order to gain the perspectives of those in the highest positions of power within the agencies. These individuals are typically Australia-based with sporadic international representation. Australia-based research was also highly accessible, as internationally deployed staff tended to return home between deployments, providing plenty of opportunities to connect with recently returned staff. From Australia, in-person interviews were undertaken in concentrated blocks in Canberra and telephone/skype interviews were undertaken on and off over the data collection period with internationally-based staff. My fieldwork internationally was undertaken to round off the data collection, allowing me to undertake six (10.9 per cent) of the interviews in-situ. I also undertook informal discussions and observations across Japan, Vietnam, United States of America (USA), India, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei – with the ability to negotiate further access a key contribution of the research. This allowed me to gain an observational understanding of the workings of embassies, as well as in-country relationships and dynamics that could not be gained from a distance. It gave context[49] to the often highly guarded and elite spaces in which international representatives work, and enabled me to begin to understand aspects of their lives, like isolation and disconnection from home and host counterparts, as well as from family and other support networks.

Purposive sampling was deemed the most appropriate method to gain participants, as in similar studies (see Corbett & Liki 2015; Spark, Cox & Corbett 2018). Purposive sampling involves a "practical sample with which to carry out an in-depth and detailed study" of a specific target population (Emmel 2014, p. 48). This approach ensured homogeneity among participants – that they occupied a certain level of occupation or hierarchy in their organisations. Purposive sampling is an "organic practice, which grows and develops throughout the research", and is "shaped and formed by what the researcher wants to achieve analytically" (Emmel 2014, p. 47). Participants were recruited per the following criteria:

[49] Including insight into the bilateral and multilateral relationships of some of our most important allies: the USA as a key strategic power; and those in the Indo Pacific region particularly given Australia's policy orientation towards Indo Pacific engagement.

- that they identified as a woman[50];
- that they occupy/ied an EL or SES level position in one of the four case agencies in the last 10 years;
- that their position was international-facing; and
- that they had been internationally deployed or are involved in international diplomatic or security representation.

All participants studied are characterised by their 'whole-of-life' commitment to their jobs because of the circumstances of their international relocation. They are also characterised by their access to deployment allowances and the requirements of their overseas conditions of service (Department of Home Affairs 2020a; Department of Defence 2020a; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2019c; Australian Federal Police 2013a, 2018). Further, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations establish many of the rules of their international engagement, and characterise the forms of their diplomatic action. Participants formed part of the following case units within the agencies (see **Table 2**).

[50] A language choice to include both cis-gendered and trans women. Best efforts were made to include representation from the transgender community, however to the researcher's knowledge, no transgender women were able to be found in the relevant positions.

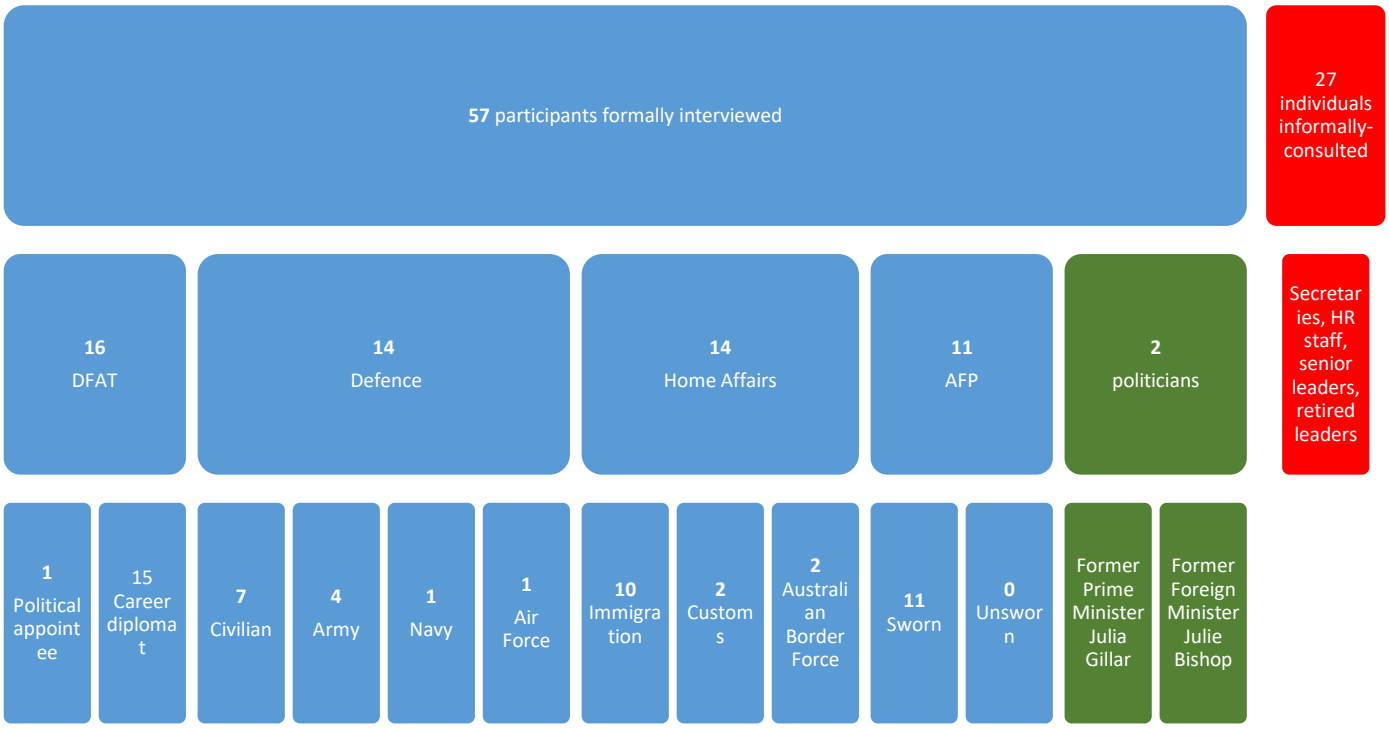
Table 2: Research participant details

Case Study Department	**DFAT**	**Defence**	**Home Affairs**	**AFP**
Case Study Unit	Senior overseas representatives (heads of mission (HOM), heads of post (HOP), consul generals, deputies and special ambassadors)	Defence Attaches (DA) and DA staff deployed internationally (ADF and DoD staff part of the International Policy Division)	A-based Australian Border Force (ABF) and Home Affairs portfolio (Immigration and Customs) staff	Staff deployed in International Operations (IO)

The problem of selection bias was mitigated by focusing on individual women selected from government employment databases to reflect different levels of senior leadership, roles, and portfolios. Even where agencies provided lists of potential women to interview, I did my own research to ensure I approached a range of women across a range of portfolios, experiences, ages, and rank. Further, a network strategy was used to gain participants. I initially contacted participants via email, and on occasional relied on 'snowballing'.

I determined the number of people I interviewed by both the availability of participants and the saturation level (Fusch & Ness 2015): when there was enough data to replicate the study, little new information was attainable, and further coding was no longer feasible. I initially aimed to interview at least 10 women per agency, however due to the potential of this research to capture these women's experiences in many cases for the first time, I also conducted interviews with individuals who contacted me wishing to participate (providing they met the criteria). In the end, I formally interviewed 16 women in DFAT, 11 in the AFP, 14 in Defence, and 14 in Home Affairs, plus two further interviews with politicians – as outlined in **Figure 3**.

Figure 3: Research participants



Note: All formal participants are anonymised apart from former Prime Minister Julia Gillard, and former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop.

As a form of ethnography, the interviews drew out experiences, which were cross-compared against each other, accounting for the various contexts of the women's work domestically and internationally. This kind of insight into 'everyday diplomacy' is a robust methodological choice to understand "the ways individuals and communities engage with and influence decisions about world affairs" (Marsden, Ibanez-Tirado, Henig 2016, p. 2). I used a semi-structured interviewing technique, which I chose because of its capacity to provide insights into how the research participants viewed the world (Bryman 2012). An interview guide (attached as **Appendix 2**) was compiled using main questions or topics, yet the process remained flexible and able to be adapted per participant responses. Participants were questioned on: their career path; employment challenges and opportunities; their leadership role; their experiences of international deployment and/or representation; negotiating the difference in gender norms and experiences in Australia and internationally in countries they may be based; their perceptions of the importance of women leaders in international relations; and any advice that they would give to other women aspiring-leaders.

I conducted only one interview per person for the majority of interviews, with subsequent

emails to clarify points or gain feedback on theories developed. I interviewed five participants[51] multiple times, as part of a process to gain a deeper understanding of agencies with which I had fewer interviews. This dataset allowed me to gain data across different portfolios and types of work (service lines) within the agencies. While a representation of participants was sought across the different divisions or service lines, in some cases only one or two participants were interviewed per service line/division[52]. Where this happened, further corroboration was sought through the established data[53] or informal background discussions.

I carried out all interviews one-on-one, and where possible, undertook face-to-face interviews as they generally allowed me to establish rapport and trust quicker, and gain a more collaborative research feel. For instance, when I conducted interviews face-to-face in an overseas embassy, I had lively discussions and was given the opportunity to tour the premises on many occasions. I was also able to employ some observational methodologies by doing this, which helped me to understand the circumstances of interviewees better. In many cases, prior to meeting an interviewee in person overseas I would have an initial phone or skype call to introduce myself, which both helped to organise the interview, and to establish rapport and trust. From experience interacting with DFAT in particular and representing Australia in an international capacity prior to this research, I had a level of "cultural and relational understanding" of the workplaces and international context (Fletcher 2013, p. 1555).

Interviews ranged between half an hour to two hours long, with most taking an hour, and were located in the participants' location of choice, mostly their offices, with occasional meetings in other meeting rooms, libraries, or cafes. Halvorsen (1987) notes that a source of error can be that the context in which interviews take place affects the conversation. In some circumstances, basing the interviews within agency offices may have had the effect of limiting what the women were willing to discuss. Likewise, in cases where no other meeting space was available or suitable, we used cafés as a safe third-space (not being a work or private, home context). These spaces were generally comfortable locations for the interviewees who felt that the noisiness and business of the space were private enough for them to speak candidly. However, they did present challenges to transcribing the interviews

[51] Three in the AFP, one in Home Affairs and one in Defence.
[52] No unsworn members of the AFP were interviewed, largely because they were not deploying internationally at the leadership position required to fit the research criteria.
[53] Particularly the Australian Human Rights Commission or Broderick and Co reviews.

later.

All participants gave informed consent, when the participants were first contacted and again prior to the interview taking place, where the participants signed information and informed consent sheets or otherwise gave their verbal consent. To respect the privacy, anonymity and confidentiality of participants, I contacted and liaised with interviewees directly, until after participants had access to the information and consent form, at which time some interviewees scheduled their interviews with the help of their executive assistants. Names of participants have not been used in this thesis to maintain confidentiality, which was an important consideration for many. In the text, participants are referred to by number, agency and date of interview – for example, Participant 1, DFAT, 21 June 2018. Participants were concerned about being named due to the perceived affect this might have on their careers. In fact, only the most senior women leaders, who had reached the peak role in their careers, were unconcerned about being named. Likewise, the two politicians interviewed – former Prime Minister Julia Gillard and former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop – agreed to be named due to the significance of their roles and the importance of recognising their roles in Australian international affairs. In their case, I gained additional (addendum) informed consent. Named participants had the opportunity to review and approve their quotes in situ in the thesis prior to submission. Interviews were transcribed ready for analysis, either by myself or by a paid transcription service, Pacific Transcriptions.

Quantitative trend data

Quantitative data on agency, gender, rank, role, and international deployment from 1984-2018[54] represents the second major dataset analysed in this PhD. There were considerable difficulties in gaining access to data due to inconsistent reporting methods, gaps in the data, and limited accessibility. The primary sources analysed include:

1. Australian Public Service Employee Database (APSED) Yearbook Statistics, accessed under a Request For Information (RFI 763) which compiled data on gender and rank, by agency, from 1984-2018[55].
2. Agency annual reports from each agency studied[56].

[54] The most recently-available data at the time of submission.
[55] This data mainly covers DFAT, Home Affairs, and the Department of Defence (DoD).
[56] This includes data from 2000 – 2018 for DFAT, Home Affairs and Defence, and from 1984 – 2018 in the AFP, due to its exclusion from the APSED dataset. DFAT annual reports for 2011-2012 were missing, and AFP annual reports from 1990 to 2003 were missing and unable to be sought by the AFP Freedom of Information

3. Agency websites[57].
4. Data requests made directly to the agencies.

Data on Defence Attachés was requested from Defence's International Policy Division in 2017, and access was granted to previously unpublished raw data dated in 2017 (International Policy Division 2017). Data on Home Affairs A-based employees was requested twice, once in 2017 prior to the merger from Department of Immigration and Border Protection into Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs), and again in 2019 under the new Home Affairs structure (Strategic Research and Communications Division 2018, 2019). Both datasets were previously unpublished raw data. Data on EL, SES and HOM/HOP leadership was requested from DFAT in 2019 (Women in Leadership Secretariat 2019). This data was previously internally published, but not previously publicly accessible. The quantitative data collated in some cases for the first time represents a major contribution of this thesis.

Data analysis: themes, narratives and trends

Thematic analysis, discourse analysis and process-tracing tools were used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis was used to analyse interview transcripts and notes taken throughout the research process, using two steps as described by Baumgartner and Schneider (2010) involving: (a) identifying emerging themes by coding the transcript data for each research question; and (b) compiling prevailing themes into a matrix. I evaluated themes for both internal and external homogeneity, described respectively as the extent to which data coalesces in a meaningful way within each category, and the differences between categories being bold and clear (Baumgartner & Schneider 2010; Guba 1978). Discourse and narrative analysis presented the opportunity to study the language and framing used by participants to understand their experiences of international affairs leadership. Discourse analysis, as employed here, not only seeks to understand language choices and discourse, but the relationship between discourse and social action (Chouliaraki & Fairclough 2010). Language

(FOI) team, as they had not yet been fully digitised. Not all agency annual reports recorded data on gender, with the ADF only recording this data since 2012.

[57] Particularly for DFAT and the AFP. DFAT's Australian ambassadors and other representatives page was analysed and gender data collected at multiple points throughout the research (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2019a, 2018, 2017b). The AFP publishes data on international representation on their website, updated yearly, however this data was pure percentage data, with no numerical data accessible (Australian Federal Police 2019, 2018a). It broke international representation down by gender, but not by rank or role.

choices were identified as important throughout analysis of texts and interviews, reinforced by the understanding that language shapes social reality (Bailey, LaFrance & Dovidio 2019). Additionally, process tracing was used to gain descriptive and causal inferences by analysing a temporal sequence of events (Collier 2011), and was particularly useful in analysing agency history and institutional change and formal policy layering in Chapter Four.

In line with the critical feminist friend method, supplementary observation as a result of "being there" in the field for periods internationally and nationally, enabled me to make sense of the interview data, the quantitative trend data, and the document analysis (Rhodes, 't Hart & Noordegraaf 2007, p. 206). Similar research dilemmas exist in observational analysis as in critical feminist friend approaches, in which researchers and the researched remain more entangled throughout the research process. However, navigating dilemmas through reflexivity and through combining methodological approaches aided in triangulating data, reconciling inconsistencies and elevating truths. The combination of these analytical methods helped to strengthen the findings and discover points of commonality and causal inferences relevant for understanding why women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs.

Accessing the 'diplomatic bubble'

I chose to focus my research on those who were at the highest levels of leadership to be deployed internationally, resulting in a case selection of women in Executive Level (EL) and Senior Executive Service (SES) level positions across DFAT, Home Affairs, and the AFP, and equivalent ranks across Defence – the "leadership cadre of the APS" (Podger & Chan 2015, p. 259). As stated by Mills, elites are those whose positions "enable them to transcend the ordinary environments of ordinary men and women; they are in positions to make decisions having major consequences" (2000 (1956), p. 3-4). Neumann asserts that being within the field of diplomacy has a consolidating or furthering effect on social status, with civil servants generally, and diplomats specifically, forming part of a social elite. Rank, as in Defence, Home Affairs and AFP military, or sworn roles, heightens this 'elite' status. Rank and the requirement for participants to have been internationally deployed was the main way to ensure a comparative sample of women were gained across very different agencies involved in international representation. Collectively, the women represent the elite of the

foreign policy establishment and are an enduring group characterised by their way of life, their level of leadership, and their representational duties on behalf of their agency and Australia. Implicit in interviews with elites therefore is a power imbalance, which creates several challenges, but also opportunities, for interviewers (Lancaster 2017).

Because of my status as a young, Caucasian woman and PhD student, and the interviewee's status, which was always more senior to me and 'elite', power imbalances did exist. Some elites are often "used to being in a position of authority, leading discussions rather than following [them]" (Aldridge in Kezar 2003, p. 407). Generally, this did not present a problem, and the women's high level of interest and engagement with the topic made most of their narratives insightful, honest, and frank. As a researcher, they also seemed to respect that I came in with specialised knowledge, which minimised power imbalances. Because "attempts to assert power and to change relations may have a negative effect on the study," I generally let the interview flow naturally following a semi-structured approach (Kezar 2003, p. 409). As I was someone with very little power relationally to them, I felt that they were happy to speak honestly without consequence, and many had had media training and so were comfortable with the interview questions and format. On occasions, particularly with more senior members or politicians, I felt that I did not hear the most complete account of their experiences. However, the silences, gaps and lacuna proved to be just as revealing, as did corroborating and analysing their narratives in combination with other accounts.

Identifying women who fit the research criteria was easier in some agencies than others. DFAT publishes a list of overseas representatives who fit the criteria online, which is regularly updated, and includes those in positions of Ambassador, High Commissioner, Consul-General, Deputy Head of Mission, Deputy Consul-General, Special Ambassador, and Permanent Representative. Women from a range of levels/positions in a range of countries/regions of the world were approached, in order to get a representative sample, yet snowballing was also used where some participants would identify others with whom they thought I should speak. After approaching senior leadership in the AFP, I was provided a number of recommendations for individuals to approach. I also relied on online accounts (news articles and profiles) of senior women leaders deployed internationally and snowballing of participants.

Home Affairs and Defence had more structured recruitment of participants. The Strategic

Research and Communications team at Home Affairs noted that a representation of women across Immigration, Customs, and the Australian Border Force should be sought, and volunteered to collate a list of names of individuals who fit the research and would be willing to take part. I also relied on snowballing, and similar to the AFP, added to this set of participants with senior women leaders whom I found profiled online. I did this to ensure that Home Affairs as an agency did not know the participatory status of particular individuals in the research (unless they self-disclosed, which sometimes occurred). This also allowed me to ensure a broader range of participants were sought than those identified by the agency, whom could be handpicked by the agency as 'good' examples or cases.

I was aware early of the challenges I might face in gaining access to elites, and understood that, because of time concerns and the busy nature of their work, there would be difficulty in gaining access to them, and in conducting multiple interviews with any one individual. Therefore, in the first year of research, an early strategy I employed was networking and agency introductions, with the aim of becoming 'known' and trusted. Once interviews commenced, I maintained a flexible schedule and was prepared to be persistent in following up potential interviewees – however I found interviewees relatively easy to approach and secure. I did have some links to individuals, particularly across DFAT; however, in general I relied on researching who senior women were in the agencies, and then cold contacting them through email. This enabled me to speak directly to the women themselves first (rather than go through executive assistants or secretaries), which was an important ethical consideration given participants have been de-identified in this thesis and agencies do not know the participatory status of their staff.

Credibility and connections were important in gaining access to participants for interviews, in alignment with the literature (Morris 2009). On occasion, I relied on the knowledge and help of my supervisors to speak to contacts already known to them. Once I had established credibility in one agency, I was able to establish credibility more quickly across other agencies and their staff. Personal connections allowed me to speak to very senior individuals quicker than I might have been able to otherwise, and this snowballed quickly into opening access to other individuals.

Throughout the course of the interviews, I noticed that those who spoke most freely were largely in their last position before retirement or moving on from the agency and were

generally at senior levels of their careers and in SES or equivalent ranks. I often found that they asked more questions about my own career ambitions and what was next for me – and many stated that they wanted to be part of the project in order to 'give back' to the next generation of women coming after them. Lower ranked participants (EL1 and EL2 levels particularly) were more guarded in what they spoke about, and often would write to their agency to confirm that they had permission to speak to me, regardless of the approvals that I had already gained and told them about. On occasions, some of my interviewees would discuss the research with their colleagues. In some circumstances, if they were not able to participate but knew someone who would, they might forward my email directly to that colleague. In these cases, I did notice that participants were more guarded in what they spoke about, and they may have felt more obligated to participate by being asked by a colleague. This may have added to what Dexter (1970) found, that elites, who often have more conservative perspectives, may not be as forthcoming when interviewed by academics who are often perceived as more liberal.

For those who were closer to my age, participants often spoke more openly, perhaps as it was perceived we shared a kinship or understanding as young women. In these cases, the interview almost took on a 'gossipy' form – it was more relaxed and colloquial, and often rapport was quicker to establish. Further, some power imbalances were minimised by being of the same gender, and I felt that there was a kind of mentorship being offered by some of the women. Cohn (2006) found that as a young woman interviewing elites in the military, she was able to ask 'naïve' questions and receive honest, straightforward responses. Similarly, I tried to treat each interview as if it were the first I had done, and not bring prior knowledge to interviews so as not to lead participants. When themes started to recur, I was then able to continue to dig deeper and test theories, however I felt that this kept the integrity of listening to women's voices and letting their experiences come to the fore without my 'leading'.

With that said, Cohn states:

> [t]here was an "I" who asked the questions, and inevitably, who I am shaped not only what I noticed and was able to hear, but also what people would say *to* me and *in front of me* (in Ackerly, Stern & True 2006, p. 96-97).

In some cases, an interviewee would withhold their opinion on a topic, yet often the silences, and reading in between the lines, helped me to understand their gaps. Some women, although happy to participate, had more of an agenda than others did – for instance, if they were in a

senior administrative or managerial position, they might give me a more established narrative about the agency. I felt that much of what they did or did not tell me was dependent on their position in the agency, seniority, and stage of career, as well as my status as an ‘outsider’. Because Kezar states that as there is "virtually no way for the interviewer not to impact the nature of information shared," I found that establishing an environment that was secure, had protocol, and established confidentiality early encouraged elites to share openly (2003, p. 406).

I found that interview structure mattered. I would always start by asking participants to tell me about their personal life history and career path since leaving secondary school. I found that this enabled them to get into the rhythm of sharing their lives, and was a ‘friendly’ subject. The first half of my interview would be taken up by this topic, over the course of about 1-3 questions. Interviewees responded better to guided questioning than might have come with a more strict and structured interview. The interview adopted a conversational tone which helped to build rapport and trust. By the time I got to the critical questions around the gendered nature of international deployments, and their gendered experiences within the agencies, participants had relaxed into the interview more. I felt this made their answers more open and honest, particularly where they had to be conducted over the phone, which was more difficult to establish rapport than in-person interviews.

I noticed that in some circumstances, if I mentioned at the start of the interview how a participants’ agency was responding to gender equality, I set the interview up and potentially biased the results. On two occasions, I distinctly remember making a comment to the effect of how their agency was better at gaining representative leadership than other agencies. I felt that the entire interview then took a different path to the other interviews – more scripted and less open or critical. After this occurred twice, I realised my mistake and was more conscious of what I revealed about agencies in my future interviews. Employing reflexivity and sticking to an initial script and structure helped to mitigate my giving away too much information too early that might influence what we spoke about.

I noticed that the two politicians formally interviewed, Julia Gillard and Julie Bishop, were already retired or were about to retire by the time we conducted interviews. Although I approached current Shadow Foreign Minister Penny Wong, current Foreign Minister Marise Payne, and current Defence Minister Linda Reynolds, none of these politicians gave me an

interview, despite some initially agreeing. This may be due to their busy schedules, or could be indicative of the 'political' and 'sensitive' nature of the topic, in which many participants were anxious about revealing their stories of differential gendered treatment. For instance, my interview with former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop was conducted in her last sitting week in parliament. After retirement, she commented in the media that during her time in politics she realised that she had experienced a kind of "gender deafness", which may have affected our earlier interview and the information shared (Martin 2019, para 1).

Overall, it became clear that many participants drew on deep courage to participate. This reflects the status of discussions about gender in the field – it remains a contentious topic. Acknowledging gendered treatment is seen as weak and/or damaging to the women's careers. Fear of repercussions resulting from speaking out clearly remain to affect women. Even so, fewer than five individuals did not answer, or refused to take part in the research. This is indicative of participants' commitment and ambition to see progress, often driven by the work they were doing and the opportunities it afforded. It demonstrated that a desire to see change was more important than the risk of speaking out.

Working with international agencies

Access to international affairs agencies can be difficult, with ethical clearance arrangements varying by agency, revealing elements of agency culture and approach to information. Prior to commencing fieldwork, I sought to have casual conversations off-the-record with academics and individuals who worked with or had knowledge of the agencies and international context for work. This background information helped to shape what questions would be useful to ask, which agencies were going to be most pertinent to the research, and which groups of people would be best placed to participate. Before commencing interviews, ethical approval was then sought and gained through the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GU 2018/059). Some of the agencies required extra ethical or approval processes. Initial approval to conduct the research was sought from DFAT and the AFP through direct contact with senior leadership and/or agency gender teams. For Home Affairs, contact was made with the Strategic Research and Communications team, which assessed the research proposal, helped to collate raw unpublished data, and called for expressions of interest within the main divisions of the department: Immigration, Customs and the

Australian Border Force.

For Defence, secondary ethical approval was required[58]. The Defence ethical approval process took nine months to complete, by which stage I had gained unconditional ethical approval through the Low Risk Ethics Panel (Number: 098/18)[59]. As part of Defence research protocols, after gaining ethical approval, my contact in the International Policy Division (IPD) sent out an expression of interest email to everyone who might fit the research criteria, with instructions for them to contact me directly. This way, Defence was able to ensure that those who fit the research criteria had the opportunity to take part in the research, whilst protecting their anonymity insofar as the agency did not know who then participated in the research.

A reflection on insiders and intersectionality

In designing the research methodology and questions, intersectionality[60] actively informed the research, shaping the way and manner in which I asked questions: the way I introduced the research topic and myself mattered. I used this as an opportunity to share my own personal credibility, as well as the research context and the 'safety' of the interview space. Creating a 'safe' space was important, particularly as not just sexism, but racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and harassment may have factored into women's stories. To establish the space as safe, I would often mention my own work in the fields of gender equality, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI+), culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) or other inclusion, and would always use the language of 'diverse' women, and the diversity of their experience. Sometimes, additional to

[58] This secondary approval process commenced in June 2018, and involved first speaking with the Department of Defence and Veterans Affairs Human Research Ethics Community (DDVA HREC). Initially, a research proposal was submitted to the National Health and Medical Research Committee (NHMRC) before being forward on to the Defence People Group Low Risk Ethics Panel, who were my primary contacts throughout the ethical approval process. Prior to providing a research proposal and details of the research, chain of command approval and sponsorship for the research was required. The International Policy Division granted sponsorship and chain of command approval. Because Defence views their staff to be 'on duty' when they participate in research (even if participating outside working hours), chain of command approval ensured participants had approval to take part in the research. Research sponsorship meant that the International Policy Division had responsibility for my research whilst I was conducting it, and for practical purposes was my point of contact.

[59] Key considerations for Defence were that the research cover unclassified information only and that I interview participants across the Navy, Army, Air Force and Department. Informed consent conditions were slightly varied for Defence participants, which required that participants were granted an opportunity to review a transcript of their interview within two months of the interview being conducted.

[60] A way of accounting for the often multiplicative and compounding effects of gender, race, sexuality, class, disability, and so on, on individuals experiences.

my gender, I would further disclose elements of my background to establish a safe environment. This contributed to a kind of 'embodied intersectionality' approach to research. My personal identity as a young queer woman researcher, who had been involved in international public diplomacy efforts with the associated agencies, and whose life had been affected by various aspects of disability, gender and sexuality, brought a very specific understanding and ability to connect and explore the research.

Without my positioning as a researcher, whose lived reality is affected by race, gender, class, education, sexuality, disability, and so on, I may not have received access to some of the data I gathered. Here, I argue that who undertakes the research *matters* to the data gathered. While much of the objective of research and evidence gathering is that it should be able to be undertaken by anyone, and the results gained would be the same, the reality is that researchers can influence the research undertaken (Ackerly, Stern & True 2006). As much as it was important to display credibility when gaining access to the diplomatic and security field, my 'credibility' or embodiment of identity was also important in gaining access to participants' perceptions, narratives and emotions. This is not to say it would be impossible to gain the same data I gathered without being 'me' – however it does acknowledge that who I am was important in order to have some of that data revealed, and some of those stories shared. As a sort of 'insider', this presented me with the ideal opportunity to explore how the intersection of women's diverse identities affected their experiences and pathways to leadership.

Yet, it also carries a warning: namely, that this should not provide me with a (false) sense of familiarity with participants' lives, who are as complex, unique, and ever-changing as my own (Harvey 2011). This highlights the multiplicity and fluidity of identity. Regardless, embodiment of experiences relatable to the participants aided them in sharing of stories in which they thought I would understand, whether that was both of us sharing a history working in the same country or region or the world, or sharing common sexuality, or gender, and by extension, implicitly understanding some of the unique challenges of that experience. I believe this resonates within the field of IR, which has not only failed to represent women equally as researchers within the field, but also traditionally failed to consider the experiences and perspectives of women. No doubt, the two are related.

I also employed a methodology where I allowed the women to raise the topics and

experiences that had most affected them. I generally did not ask explicit questions around topics such as whether they were married or had children; nor did I ask about their sexuality or ethnicity. Yet, without fail, interviewees spoke of their personal circumstances. Many individuals volunteered their sexuality and ethnicity, or other background information such as their rural/regional upbringing. The intersectional feminist approach made me strongly aware of the fact that most interviewees had care responsibilities and I was careful not to schedule meetings after-hours where possible. Meetings after-hours were often common for internationally-based women in order for time zones to line up with their Canberra headquarters. However, I wanted to ensure that the research project was not adding a further challenge to women than they might already experience. It was therefore not unusual for me to take an interview in the middle of the night or early in the morning.

Reflexivity – a process of self-awareness – is critical in feminist research, as:

> [a]ny researcher's critical consciousness is constrained by the limits of their knowledge, culture and experience, and also by their personal skills, powers of empathy and political openness to silences and exclusions (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002, p. 119).

During the research, I was conscious that "the researcher's positionality (in terms of race, gender, nationality, age, economic status and sexuality) may influence the data gathered" (Momsen 2011, p. 45; Madge 1993). I used reflexivity to identify power relations, exercises of power and their effects on the research process, which was critical in order to be accountable for the knowledge produced and understand how the way I framed the research and questions may have affected the data gathered (Ramazanoglu & Holland 2002).

Practically, I felt that reflexivity assisted in mitigating dilemmas whilst conducting the research, including subjectivity, bias and framing. Subjectivity and bias are implicit in conducting qualitative interviews, no matter how objective an interviewer may attempt to be (Bryman 2012). Interviews require reflexivity in thinking about and acknowledging how the researcher's own assumptions may affect the research (Bryman 2012). There was a temptation to validate the women's experiences by outwardly agreeing or disagreeing with their understandings of gender in their field, or experiences of discrimination and harassment (or lack thereof). Before and after interviews I would take time to reflect on how I was going to, or did, position the research, as well as how I acknowledged and responded to women's

experiences – a process of 'sense-making' (Bevir & Rhodes 2016). I noticed that over time I became better at concealing my reactions, and felt less temptation to automatically validate an interviewee's perspective. By the end of the interviews, most participants did want to know whether their experiences resonated more broadly, and so I did have an opportunity officially after the interview had finished to share more about the research and its findings, without influencing the women's stories in advance.

The comparative approach and case agency selection

Because the research topic focuses on understanding women's leadership in Australian international affairs, a core issue was to identify appropriate sites for my study. I chose four agencies representing a range of agencies across a spectrum from militaristic, to para-militaristic and bureaucratic structures. I chose a comparative research design to analyse similarities and differences between leading Australian women in international affairs, as well as the agencies within which they work. This is a methodology that has been successfully employed by Corbett and Liki (2015) to study women in political appointments in the Pacific region, and is a common methodology for this field of research analysing governance, international relations, and gender (see, Healy, Bradley & Forson 2011; Corbett & Liki 2015; Spark, Cox & Corbett 2018). Acker proposes that "questions about how intersectionality actually works to produce inequalities are most revealing when done with an ethnographic or case study methodology" (2012, p. 220). Further, Chappell recognises that "[o]ne specific arena that could be advanced through a comparative research agenda is that of gender and political institutions*"* (2010, P. 183). Chappell expands on the contribution such comparative research provides, including a deeper understanding: (1) of the roles and experiences of men and women within political and governance institutions; (2) of the policies, laws and norms that are outcomes of political institutions, recognising their fundamental effect on the gender relations, and; (3) of the relationships between institutions and social actors.

Comparative research is case oriented and allows researchers to assess combinations of conditions in an in-depth, detail-rich and rigorous manner (Ragin 2011). A case study approach is a research strategy that attempts to examine "(a) a contemporary phenomenon in its real-life context, especially when (b) the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (Yin 1981, p. 59). I chose four agencies as case studies, where "the

objective is to capture the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation" (Yin 2009, p. 48; Bryman 2012). While the ideal social scientific comparison is the same structurally as a simple experiment, designing an experiment is not always possible. Rather, comparison can be used, which "involves experiment-like contrasts" (Ragin 1987, p.31). Further, "comparison is a cornerstone of much social and behavioural research" (Guest, Macqueen & Namey 2014, p. 161). The comparative method allows researchers to develop modest generalisations – or plausible conjectures (Rhodes 2017) – about phenomena across cases sensitive to context, and comprehensive of similarities and differences.

The belief that phenomena is the result of a combination of factors('causal complexity') is particularly important in dealing with social and political cases, such as this research, whereby current circumstances are the result of a confluence of historical, political, social, cultural and normative factors. Ragin (1987) states that because there are multiple possible explanations for any given set of cases, there is a relative amount of indeterminacy, one of the limitations of this type of research. However, this can be an answer in itself. It acknowledges the complexity of the world, whilst highlighting factors that may be more relevant to an outcome or set of outcomes. My mixed methods approach to research enabled me to reduce indeterminacy, producing a rich research dialogue and analysis.

I chose the four federal case agencies – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Defence (inclusive of the Department of Defence (DoD and Australian Defence Force (ADF)), the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs), and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) – as the core agencies responsible for maintaining sovereignty and national interest through their respective portfolios. All agencies have high profiles publicly and operate within contentious and fluctuating environments requiring planned foresight for maintaining national interests and the ability to adapt quickly to changing international priorities and circumstances. Agencies were chosen based on:

- size, representing the largest APS and international-facing agencies;
- whether international engagement was part of their core activities, and;
- whether senior executive leaders were part of international deployment and/or representation.

The agencies have been characterised along a militaristic, para-militaristic and bureaucratic continuum in order to enhance comparability and in order to explain key differences in

agency structure and hierarchy. The characterisation of militaristic, para-militaristic and bureaucratic agency structures was informed by the literature and reinforced by the thesis findings. It may have further use for other comparative research on international affairs agencies, representing an original contribution enhancing analysis. Agency structure has specific implications for women leaders, with degree of hierarchy and structure often contributing to instances of sexism and discrimination due to power differentials between individuals (McGlen & Sarkees 1993). More militaristic and para-militaristic agencies have generally been deeply steeped in gendered norms around male physicality and enforcement, with leadership within these agencies characterised by strength, action, authority, and male agentic attributes (Enloe 2014; Tickner 1992). In both the AFP and Defence, recent years have highlighted considerable gender discrimination and sexism that marks these agencies as experiencing specifically embedded gendered challenges. More bureaucratic agencies, on the other hand, are associated with flatter organisational structures and less overt distinctions between hierarchy and rank, in contrast to the uniforms and ranks of military and enforcement agencies.

Bureaucratic-militaristic characterisation is largely determined by the agency's contemporary structure and staffing composition. Bureaucratic agencies remain dominated by professional public servants (civilians), and in the context of international affairs, result in decision-making and negotiation by bureaucratic means[61]. Para-militaristic agencies are characterised by their staffing populations of both professional public servants ('unsworn') and 'sworn' officers, with certain special powers, for instance under the *AFP Act (1979)* and *Australian Border Force (ABF) Act (2015)*, including the ability to be armed. Para-militaristic agencies are further defined by their ability to use military equipment and tactics, in addition to negotiation and operations by other means. Militaristic agencies are defined by their staffing populations of both professional public servants (civilians) and of military personnel, with certain special powers under the Australian Constitution. In the context of international affairs, militaristic and para-militaristic agencies have a wider scope of actions available, including the ability to use or threaten force (subject to certain conditions). Agencies are characterised on a continuum from militaristic (Defence), to para-militaristic (AFP and Home Affairs), to more bureaucratic (DFAT) (see **Figure 4**).

[61] Limited by the APS Act (1999).

Figure 4: Militaristic-bureaucratic continuum

This characterisation assists in understanding differences between agencies in terms of women's representation that are explored later.

Summary

Overall, this chapter has outlined my critical feminist friend approach to conducting the research and the intersectional, feminist research design including both mixed qualitative and quantitative methods. There are a number of key methodological contributions that can be drawn from this thesis's approach, including (but not limited to) the critical feminist friend approach to research, the pilot and background phase of research, and the characterisation of militaristic, para-militaristic and bureaucratic agency structures in international affairs. The comparative case study approach chosen to research DFAT, Defence, Home Affairs and the AFP enables me to triangulate data and understand the critical research question of why women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs. The next chapter provides a brief historical analysis of each of the four case agencies, situating their policy and organisational environments by analysing institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of change – significant factors identified in the Chapter Two.

Chapter Four: Institutional history and cultural relicts

Introduction

> *I think that women have a particular set of skills and perspectives to offer international relations that have been missing for too many years now, and there is no excuse for it anymore (Participant 7, DFAT, October 5 2018).*

Agency history is integral to understanding women's contemporary status in the field, following Cassidy's (2017) research that found that institutional origins relate to the obstacles women continue to face. Given gender inequalities pervade the history of international affairs, it is expected that historical legacies would drive contemporary gender norms and be key to understanding why women leaders remain under-represented in Australian international affairs agencies. Overall, all the agencies studied started out gender unequal (and often, racist, homophobic, and so on), and over time have developed cultures and policies that have resulted in more, or less, equal gender representation, and more, or less, visibility of on-going gendered challenges. Rather than these cultural differences determining substantial differences in women's challenges across the agencies – for instance, whether or not women experience particular instances of discrimination – agency history and culture are more marked in determining whether these challenges are *more visible* or *less visible*. Agency history and culture also determine what enforcement mechanisms are used to maintain a pre-existing gender order. Whilst each agency maintains that their cultures are exceptional and different – particularly DFAT and Defence – in reality, they demonstrate the *same* underlying gendered challenges that may only *manifest differently*.

This chapter begins by setting the context, exploring the Australian historical background. All agencies have male-dominated histories. I canvas each of the agencies with respect to (1) the historical forces at work upon them and (2) their structure and leadership – analysing factors laid out in the theoretical framework, including: institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of change. Through analysing the agencies' histories this chapter argues that since emergence and establishment, gendered institutions that endure, often through fluidity and adaptation, to continue to affect women leaders. Public accounts of some of the agencies' histories are available, with DFAT and Defence previously subject to external review and publications. However, fewer historical accounts of the AFP

and Home Affairs are available[62], and women's narratives remain marginalised across all agencies. This historical analysis therefore provides a core contribution to the literature, and a necessary context prior to delving into who represents Australia internationally, how they got there, and their experiences, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

Setting the context

Australian international affairs agencies emerged at the turn of the 20th century. They were established within a complex web of colonial and post-colonial politics, emerging national identity and gender norms, and international institutions that were in various stages of ascension and failure in the lead up to the world wars. Australian women were the first in the world to gain full political rights[63] and were seen as world leaders and Australia as 'advanced', because of it (Wright 2018). However, women were not always able to exercise these rights, as many norms (and laws) across family, religion, and society clearly delineated roles and responsibilities for women. Their roles as wives and mothers came first (Sawer 1992). At the turn of the 20th Century, Australian women's engagement in international affairs focused on engagement with civil society and reform organisations – largely[64] 'informal' roles removed from the power and prestige of formal positions of engagement (Harris Rimmer 2017). Even as recently as 2013, women's main role in international representation remained as "supportive unpaid spouses" (Conley Tyler 2016, p. 696; Miller 2013).

Few accounts exist of Australian international engagements prior to British colonisation, let alone the gendered dynamics of such relations. As recently as the 16th to 20th century CE Indigenous Australians maintained trade with Makassar Indonesians, and international trading routes likely predate this (Clark & May 2013; Ganter 2005). Despite this history, Australia's place on the world stage was only formalised under British Colonial rule, a rule that at the time was heavily patriarchal and paternalistic. Now, Australia is recognised as a federal constitutional monarchy guided by a parliamentary democracy, the rule of law,

[62] Because they are more recent and because their pre-eminence is contextual. Therefore, analysis also draws on participants' narrations of the institutions in the past, to supplement pre-existing research.
[63] South Australian women became the first in the world to win equal political rights with men in 1894, followed by Western Australia in 1899. The Commonwealth Franchise Act (1902) made Australian women the "freest of the free", able to vote in federal elections, with the rest of the Commonwealth states and territories following in quick succession (Wright 2017, para 18). This same Act removed Aboriginal Australians' citizenship rights which would not be regained until 1967.
[64] Although not exclusively.

guaranteed freedoms, and adherence to international human rights laws and conventions. Australia has a comprehensive workplace anti-discrimination legislative framework, which in theory should make it achievable to attain gender parity in Australian international affairs. Once the subject of the repressive and racist White Australia Policy[65], Australia is now noted as a diverse multicultural society, with over half of Australians born overseas or with a parent born overseas (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017).

Despite this cultural heterogeneity, the APS, and wider society, subscribes to predominantly Western, individualistic values and to a meritocratic understanding of career advancement and leadership (Australian Public Service Commission 2019c; Argy 2006). As in other Western liberal states, particularly those with Westminster systems, "the bureaucracy has developed, over time, a strong underlying commitment to the norm of bureaucratic neutrality," (Chappell 2006, p. 226). Yet, as Chappell notes, "the norm of neutrality is profoundly gendered" (2006, p. 226). Additionally, there is an enduring imbalance in leadership and a prevailing and significant gender pay gap across almost all fields of work (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020). Australia's political climate has been critical of women in the past few years, evidenced, for example, by the high-profile misogyny against former Prime Minister Julia Gillard (Williams 2020, 2017). Further, women have been continually marginalised within Australia's bilateral relationship with the US *–15 white Australian men* were recognised as part of the 100 year anniversary of the US-Australia Alliance 'mateship' campaign in 2018 – and no women (March 2018). Australia is now experiencing a highly changeable political environment for women leaders.

While overt barriers to women's rights, equity, employment, and leadership are largely non-existent (even illegal), latent forms of bias and discrimination are still embedded within organisations and wider society. As Neumann states:

> when a law or set of laws is changed, even if it happens as a result of an erosion of the social and metaphysical grounds upon which it rests, those grounds may still have a lingering presence in discourse and so remain a precondition for action in lieu of legal purchase (2008, p. 676).

Although policy application and practice does diverge, Australian international affairs agencies exist within complex and complementary legal and policy environments. The below

[65] Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

matrix, **Figure 5**, is not exhaustive. However, it maps some of the key legal and policy frameworks within which the agencies studied operate[66]. Each agency is guided at national and international levels whilst also having specific agency policies, some more holistic, detailed and up-to-date than others.

Figure 5: Policy and legal framework

International Legal Framework			
Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)		United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR1325) on Women, Peace & Security	
National Legal Framework			
Sex Discrimination Act (1984)	Workplace Gender Equality Act (2012)	Equal Employment Opportunities Act (1987)	And intersectional acts like: Racial Discrimination Act (1975)
Foreign and Defence Policy Framework			
Australian Foreign Policy White Paper 2017 *"Australia's foreign policy pursues the empowerment of women as a top priority" (Commonwealth of Australia 2017, p. 43).*		Defence White Paper 2016 *"Gender equality and increasing female participation in the Defence workforce and in senior leadership roles is fundamental to achieving Defence capability now and into the future" (Commonwealth of Australia 2016, p. 23)*	
Australian Public Service (APS) Policy Framework			
Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Diversity and Inclusion Strategy	Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2019 *(lapsed)*	Gender Equality Action Plan *(lapsed)*	
Agency Policy Framework and Networks			
DFAT - Women in Leadership Strategy (2015) - Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy (2016) - Cultural and Linguistic Diversity (CALD) Strategy	**Home Affairs** - Gender Equality Action Plan 2017-2020 - Disability Action Plan 2016-2020 in the Australian Border Force (ABF)	**AFP** - Gender Strategy International Operations 2018-2022 - Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officer (GLLO) network - Malunggang Indigenous Officers Network	**Defence** - Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2019 *(lapsed)* - Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2017 *(lapsed)*

[66]Several agency gender targets are measured against the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) criterion for the 'Employer of Choice for Gender Equality' awards and the federal Office for Women government boards targets. The targets include that women represent 50 per cent of positions overall on government boards, and at least 40 per cent on any given government board (Department of Home Affairs 2019). WGEA does not assess government departments.

2018-2021 - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans or Gender Diverse and/or Intersex (LGBTI) Workplace Strategy 2018-2021 - Indigenous Peoples Strategy 2015-2019 *(lapsed)* - Disability Action Strategy 2016-2020		- AFP Ability Advisory Network - National Women's Advisory Network - Cultural and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Network	
Agency Reviews on Gender Discrimination and Harassment			
		- *Cultural Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police* (2016)	- *The Review of Employment Pathways for APS Women in the Department of Defence* (2011) - *Report on the Review into the Treatment of Women at the Australian Defence Force Academy* (Phase 1) (2011) - *Report on the Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force* (Phase 2) (2012) - *Review into the Treatment of Women at the Australian Defence Force Academy (Audit Report)* (Phase 3) (2013) - *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force Audit Report)* (Phase 3) (2014)

From the policy/legal framework highlighted above in **Figure 5**, it is clear that there are significant differences across the agencies in terms of formal institutional rules. The result of this complex matrix is an institutional context that is 'layered' (Waylen 2014) – with new institutions layered on older policies, accreted centuries of Westminster practice, Administrative Arrangements Orders and machinery of government changes. These formal policies are important for understanding how institutions *regulate* behaviour (Lowndes 2014). Yet, neither women's representation in leadership, nor experiences of international

affairs, are neatly tied to the formal policies and strategies that are in place[67].

Defence has been the subject of many reviews and audits[68] (Arklay, Tiernan & White 2011). In fact, between 1995 and 2013 there were a total of 13 inquiries into military culture prompted by scandals (Wadham & Connor 2014). Yet more than one former senior Defence official noted that each subsequent review overrode the recommendations of the prior, resulting in reduced traction[69], which is evident in Defence policy development. Defence's website evidences commitment to diversity and inclusion across gender, cultural and linguistic diversity, sexual diversity and so on, however this is not supported by formalised policy documents publically available. Further, two of the key documents, the *Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2019*[70] and the *Defence Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2012-2017*, have lapsed, which represents a major oversight[71] and policy gap. Each individual service line (Navy, Army, and Air Force) has its own separate policies and practices[72], which highlight localised attempts to address gender inequalities operationally. However, it is likely that these localised attempts have reduced traction without the backing of overarching Defence strategies, given the hierarchical nature of Defence where chain of command matters.

Of the other agencies, the AFP's International Operations (IO) division[73] has its own Gender Strategy separate to any AFP-wide policies – suggesting a developed policy framework for women leaders deployed internationally. Home Affairs until recently had the least number and depth of policies on gender and diversity inclusion, including having a four year gap

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[67] Within these agencies, it is important to remember that "swapping female for male bodies in traditionally masculine arenas" – or indeed implementing 'neutral' or gender equality policy – "does little to disrupt either the symbolism or practices of the gender order," as the gendered dimensions of institutions are more deeply embedded (Hooper in Chappell 2013, p. 601). As one participant noted, agencies often still look for "the right sort of female chap," indicating prevailing gendered biases applied even despite changing agency policies (pers. comm., 4 February 2019).

[68] See: Australian Human Rights Commission 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

[69] Assessing the Moran Review for a concerted and comprehensive public sector, Lindquist notes that:

> anyone who has monitored or lived through reform initiatives knows that there are gaps between rhetoric and what gets accomplished, that announced reforms tend to gather up and move along previous reforms, and that many reforms will take years and perhaps a decade to get implemented and achieve desired results (2010, p. 115).

[70] Focused predominantly on the civilian-side of the Department of Defence (DoD).

[71] Collection of YourSay Survey data was also ceased in 2019, which was designed in part to understand and address why women decide to leave Defence. No reasoning is given for the survey ceasing to exist.

[72] Also inconsistently applied, and at times, with policies lapsed or not renewed.

[73] Which is responsible for overseeing AFP's international affairs.

between reinstating gender equality strategies from 2013 to 2017[74]. Yet it also has the highest percentage of women in international representation, which perhaps indicates the *lack of need* to introduce policies due to informal rules and norms that were already more gender equitable. Finally, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), on surface levels, appears to have the best-developed frameworks for gender and diversity inclusion. However, while it has multiple and specific policies promoting diversity throughout the agency, not all are current.

These policies set the agenda and parameters for action around gender and diversity inclusion. In many cases, they have explicit aims to transform organisational cultures to become 'more supportive' of women. They provide scaffolding, giving women policy-backed support for their representation and participation. Yet, many are largely aspirational and not prescriptive. While the policies suggest a feminist turn in international affairs, in the context of a broader shift in direction across Australian business and public services[75], women's experiences are a far more useful indicator of policy traction. Some agencies, like DFAT, have already attempted to understand women's qualitative experiences through instituting 'think-ins' led by the Women in Leadership Secretariat. However, most of the findings of these 'think-ins' remain inaccessible to the public, which both contributes to a lack of transparency and also obscures the insights gained.

What the Lowy Institute (2019a) makes clear is that gender in Australia's foreign policy apparatus is in the midst of change. The strategic importance of portfolios across international affairs is also changing. Like many ministries of foreign affairs across the world, DFAT has traditionally held the primary role of policy-making within Australian international affairs. Yet similar to McGlen and Sarkees' (1993) findings in the US, recent developments have seen an increase in funding and strategic importance within the 'harder' security and enforcement agencies (Defence and Home Affairs particularly) and a decrease in funding for DFAT (Conley Tyler & Vandewerdt-Holman 2019). This appears indicative of a decline in the strategic importance of DFAT in favour of a more enforcement-based, 'hard'

[74] Its poor human resources management performance in Australian Public Service Commissions (APSC) State of the Service reports reflects this policy gap.

[75] For instance, since 2010 when the Male Champions of Change initiative was established across Australian business and government. The group aims to the individual and collective influence and commitment of male leaders across the private and public sector to ensure the issue of women's representation in leadership is elevated on the national business agenda.

approach to Australian foreign policy[76]. In McGlen and Sarkees' study, they attributed this trend both to politics and the functions of the departments, "with [foreign affairs'] relatively passive role of observation, reporting, negotiation, and advisement," as compared to the military's primary function of action (1993, p. 12).

The rising influence of 'hard' military agencies and decline in funding, and potentially influence, of 'soft' foreign affairs agencies is particularly relevant given that "the public perceives women as better equipped to handle the 'soft' issues in politics and management. . . not the 'hard' issues involving conflict" (McGlen & Sarkees 1993, p. 42; Lee-Koo 2020). In fact, whilst Lee-Koo notes:

> [c]ommitments to the participation of women, enhancing women's leadership, promoting gender equality, and the provisioning of resources to achieve and measure progress toward these goals is evident on a number of fronts … the traditionally masculinist policy areas of bi- and multilateral trade, foreign investment, war fighting, military procurement, and weapons trading remain largely untouched by the move toward pro-gender norms (2020, p.237).

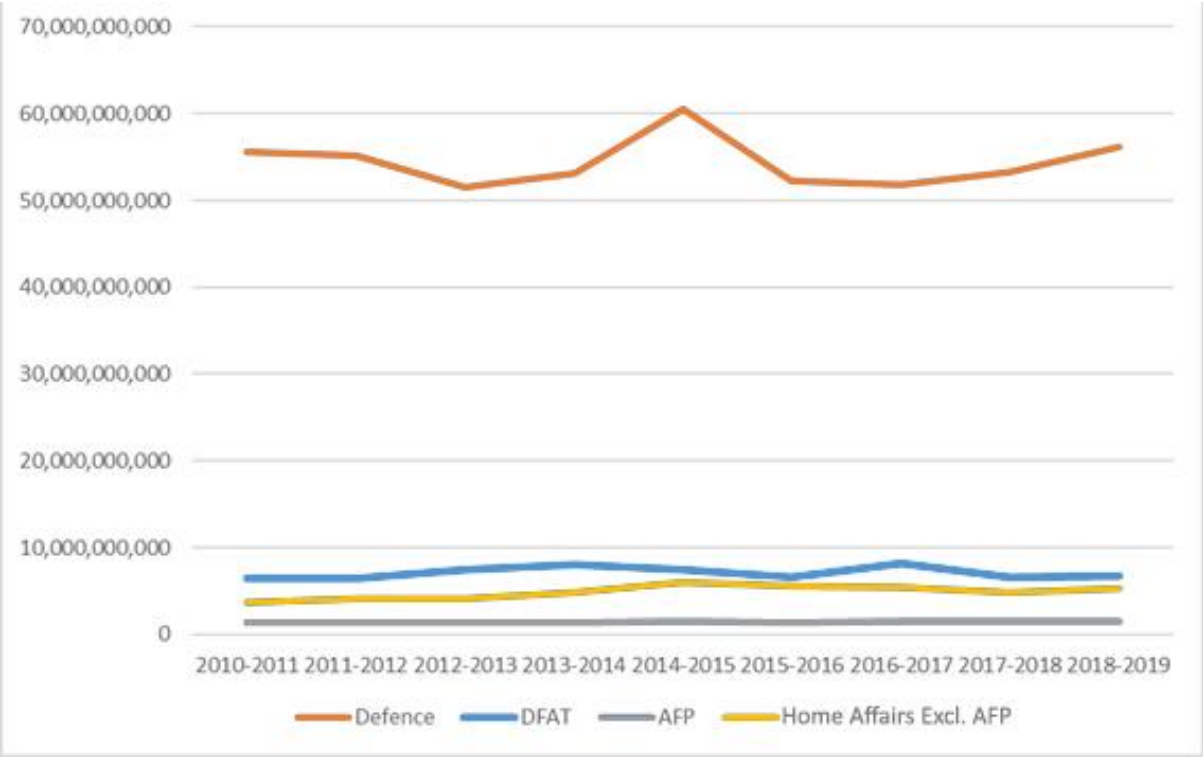
The power shift to 'hard' international affairs agencies is gendered. Whilst this power shift is a side contextual issue to understanding women's under-representation of leadership, the decrease in funding and status of DFAT diplomacy is significant. Regardless of the reasoning behind these moves, women are less represented, particularly in leadership, in the 'harder' agencies. Defence is one of the most masculine and male-dominated portfolios within Australian government service. Further, even though Home Affairs has the highest percentage of women in leadership of the agencies studied, this is largely because of the high proportion of women in Immigration (traditionally the 'softer', humanitarian side of the department). It is also not representative of where the majority of funding is flowing, which is primarily to intelligence and security agencies within Home Affairs, and portfolio agencies like the Australian Border Force (ABF), which has the lowest representation of women in leadership within the divisions of Home Affairs studied. Additionally, women's representation in Home Affairs has decreased since 2009, where the agency[77] stopped short of reaching parity at 49 per cent before falling to 39.9 per cent almost 10 years later in

[76] For instance, led by military leaders both in Defence, and ex-military or AFP employees who have sought employment within Home Affairs as part of the new super department (Lowy 2019a)
[77] Specifically, its historical predecessor.

2018[78].

These power and funding shifts, as well as the personality and direction of senior leadership, have a reinforcing effect on gendered norms within the field. They also have real implications on women's career paths and opportunities, with women remaining least represented overall in more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies. Hence, prior to analysing each of the agency's histories, it is helpful explore the status of these different international affairs agencies as reflected in the allocation of resources in the Federal Budget (see **Graph 2**).

Graph 2: Federal budget agency resourcing, 2010-2019



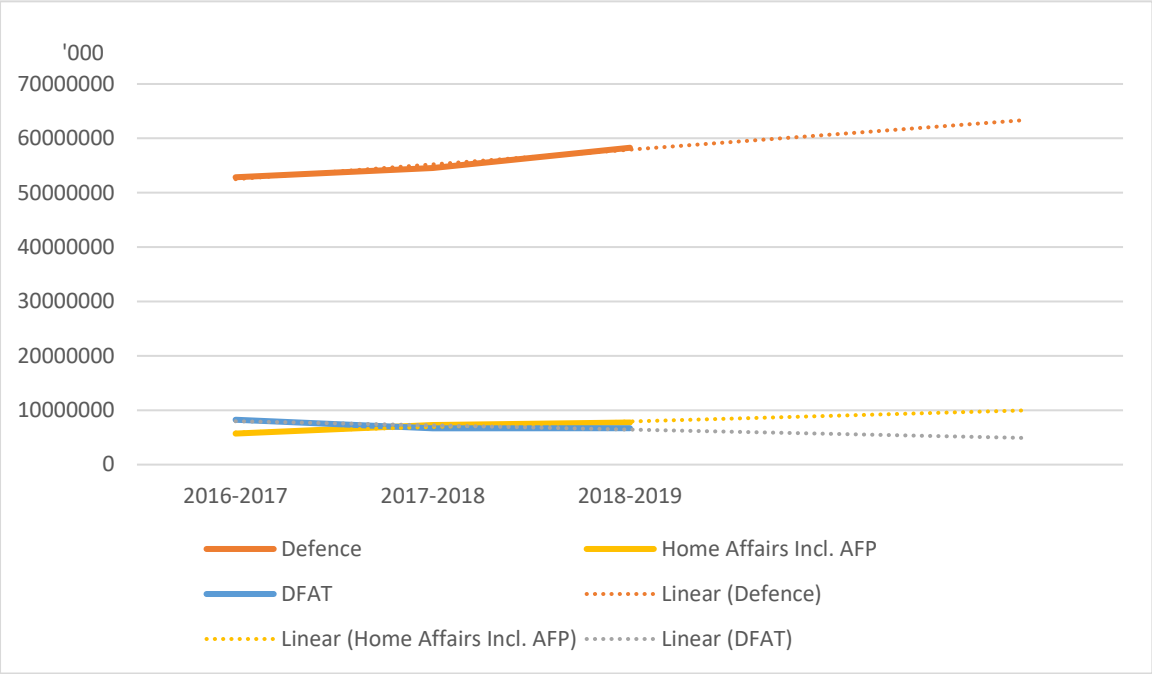
Data source: Federal Budget (Commonwealth of Australia 2010-2019).

Analysing the Federal Budget estimated actual resourcing from 2010-2019 in **Graph 2**, funding across the agencies fluctuates. The fluctuations reflect not just shifts in government priorities, but staffing increases and decreases over time, and a context that has seen an increasing Defence, border-protection and counter-terrorism orientation to domestic

[78] As noted later in the chapter in **Graph 5.** The latest data available from the APS Employee Database (APSED).

politics[79]. Yet, since 2016, one key finding is particularly striking, shown in **Graph 3.**

Graph 3: Federal budget agency resourcing, 2016-2019



Data source: Federal Budget (Commonwealth of Australia 2010-2019).

In the last four years – the same timeframe in which these key gender strategies were introduced, resulting in an exponential boost to women leaders in traditional foreign affairs[80] – Defence and Home Affairs funding has increased (by 10.3 per cent and 35.6 per cent respectively), while DFAT funding has decreased (by 18.6 per cent). Despite being the premiere agency for foreign affairs, out of all the agencies studied, DFAT has the least funding. As the Lowy Institute states:

> since 2009, the Lowy Institute has consistently argued that Australia's Department of

[79]In 2010, Australia was still in a period of recovery after the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) of 2008 and experienced a hung parliament under the leadership of Australia's first female Prime Minister, Julia Gillard. Tony Abbott became Prime Minister in 2013, committing to raise Defence expenditure to 2 per cent of GDP by 2023/24. 'Stopping the boats' (refugee and asylum seeker boat arrivals) became a cornerstone of government policy which saw Australia take an increasingly 'hard' and enforcement-based approach to border protection. Australia's plan to host the 2018 G20 saw countering terror threats become a top priority, particularly after the 2014 Sydney hostage crisis in which lone gunman held hostage 10 customers and eight staff of the Martin Place Lindt Cafe in Sydney.

[80] DFAT introduced the Women in Leadership Strategy (2015), Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy (2016) and Foreign Policy White Paper (2017), all launched with specific focuses on improving gender relations both internally to DFAT and more broadly in Australian international affairs. Further, Julie Bishop was Foreign Minister at the time, and despite the Liberal Party denying gender discrimination, faced considerable gendered challenges in the Party, as well as challenges with those who had influence over funding, including Tony Abbott, Joe Hockey, and Peta Credlin.

> Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has been under-resourced over a period of several decades. As a result, its overseas network has thinned out significantly (2019a, para 10).

The Lowy Institute further note that between 1995 and 2013, DFAT's allocation was reduced by more than a third[81]. This shift in funding is akin to "male-dominated political elites (shifting) the locus of power . . . to different institutional arenas" (Mackay, Kenny & Chappell 2010, p.583). Australia as a whole has taken on an increasingly militaristic stance on international affairs post September 11, 2001. These more militaristic institutional arenas are pockets of gender resistance, where women remain least represented overall, in leadership, and in international representation.

Corresponding with the increased strategic influence of Defence and enforcement agencies is a decline in the strategic influence of DFAT and an increased professionalisation of the service. Once more elite and prestigious, the agency has increasingly pushed for careers to be more 'Canberra-based'. In fact, the Lowy Institute (2019a) identified the shrinking of DFAT's overseas network by over 30 per cent between 1987 and 2013. They note, "although the government sector as a whole flourished, growing nearly 60 per cent between 1997 and 2013, DFAT staffing remained virtually unchanged," resulting from a combination of the efficiency dividend[82] and the Average Staffing Level (ASL) Cap[83], as well as shifting government priorities (Lowy Institute 2019a, para 11).

The context is therefore complex. Just as women are beginning to gain traction in the traditional diplomatic side of international affairs, DFAT is losing strategic power to militaristic agencies, and withdrawing from maintaining a presence in the world. One participant commented on the beginning of this trend in the late 1990s:

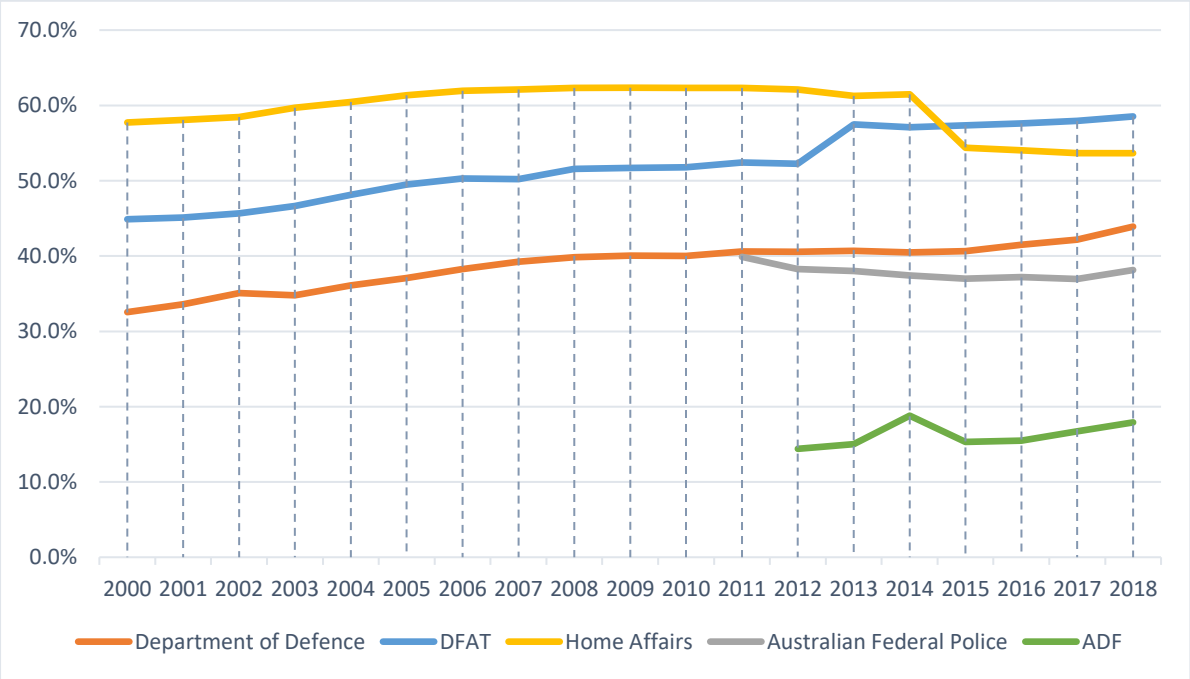
> the Liberal government came in and there was a real freeze on public service positions and movements. So, this was the start of DFAT starting to get very little funding and very little emphasis. A lot of funding was going into security agencies and not much into diplomacy. You can make a gender story out of that if you wanted to, I think it's actually very significant (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2018).

Prior to delving into each of the agencies in the next section of the chapter, it is noted that

[81] As a proportion of total government expenditure.
[82] The annual funding reduction in Commonwealth (federal) government agencies, in place since 1987, with the aim of increasing agency efficiencies through budget controls.
[83] A headcount cap on the number of staff at any given level of government service.

departmental change through Australia's machinery of government occurs frequently, particularly following an election (Harris 2002). Therefore, the exact name and makeup of a department represents a glimpse into history only at a certain point in time. For instance, when this research commenced in 2017, Home Affairs did not yet exist as an agency. Yet, within the Australian Public Service Commission's (APSC) own Statistical Yearbook, previous departmental structures have been subsumed under their contemporary titles – for instance, all previous Immigration and Customs data is now condensed under the 'Home Affairs' category. Within the context of new departments being made, old departments being disbanded, and departments often merging, the institutions (rules, norms and practices) guiding these departments are often in a state of change, and the policies layered. This highlights even more so the importance of tracing agency history in order to better understand organisational culture and gender relations. Women's representation in the agencies studied is in a constant state of evolution, as noted in **Graph 4**.

Graph 4: Representation of women in overall employment, 2000-2018



Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data[84]. Defence data is separated here (as the ADF and DoD), because the Women in the ADF Reports do not contain overall numbers of women, only percentages, which would not have accurately reflected women's overall proportion if combined.

[84] Earlier AFP data was not fully digitised as a collection and so access was unavailable at the time of this research. ADF data is only available from 2012, when Defence began supplementary Women in the ADF Reports.

Graph 4 demonstrates that women's overall employment in the agencies studied has remained relatively consistent over the last twenty years, with women generally highest represented in Home Affairs (yellow) and lowest represented in the AFP (grey) and Defence (orange and green). There are a few fluctuations at key points in the agencies' histories. The first occurs for DFAT (blue) when the functions and much of the staff of AusAID were subsumed within DFAT in 2013/2014 after AusAID was abolished. This resulted in a 5.2 percentage point increase in the proportion of women in DFAT, which went from 52.3 per cent of the agency to 57.5 per cent in one year, as AusAID had a high proportion of women in overall employment.

The second fluctuation occurs for Defence – the ADF – reflecting the year the Phase 2 *Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force* recommendations were released (2012). It was also two years after *Women in the ADF Reports* were instituted requiring Defence to account for gender data in annual reports. Women went from representing only 15.0 per cent of the ADF in 2013 to 18.3 per cent in 2014. However, these gains were almost completely reversed by the following year, when women represented only 15.3 per cent of the ADF. No reasoning is given in the annual reports for this decrease in representation, however the 2014 ADF *Audit Report* released by the Australian Commission for Human Rights urged the service lines to "be vigilant against a backlash directed at women as a result of the cultural change process" (2014, p. 2).

The *Audit Report* provides clues as to why a reversal may have occurred, including that the gender reforms were seen as giving women 'special treatment', 'lowering standards' on an exclusive force, or 'undermining merit' in the selection process. All of the above hints to a cultural context reluctant to change despite (or because of) increasing numbers of women. Additionally, it is possible that highlighting the gendered challenges in the agency gave some individuals pause to reflect – that the act of documenting challenges highlighted how gendered and sexist these 'normalised norms' really were. This theme arose throughout the interviews, with women reconsidering their career options particularly after reports were released highlighting gendered issues. Further, as previously mentioned, the frequency of reports and audits on Defence seems to have lowered the traction made on gender equality. It is likely that this enabled the agency to make only partial change – well-designed policy implemented with no intention of truly being fulfilled. During periods of instability such as

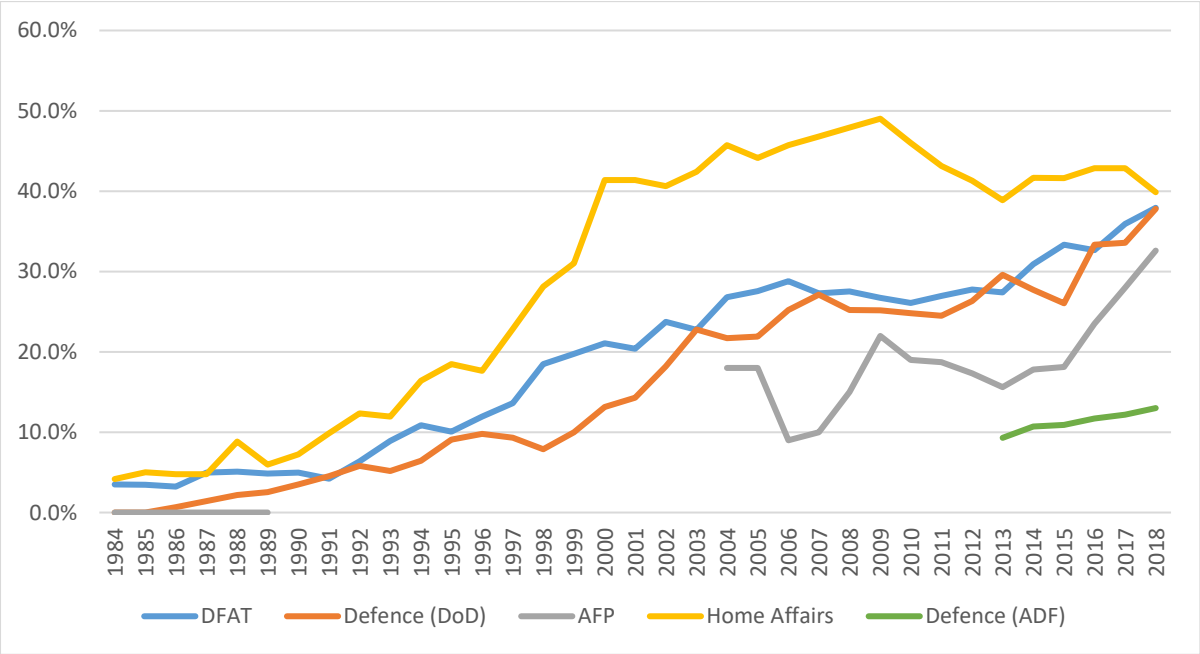
these, Mackay (2014) finds agencies more likely to revert to old practices and norms[85].

There is one final jump in the data to be noted in **Graph 4**, between 2014-2015 in Home Affairs, when women's proportional representation dropped by 7.1 per cent. This period coincides with the merger of the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service and the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, and the creation of the ABF. Participant 3 comments on the changed gender balance, particularly in the enforcement side of the agency and since the merger into Home Affairs. She noted:

> I don't think it's jobs for the boys here, what I think is, it is jobs for Defence and jobs for AFP. Let's bring in anyone with that kind of background, they're going to fix things (Participant 3, Home Affairs, 14 December 2018).

However, on reflection, she noted that "to a certain extent, it is jobs for the boys," given the male domination in Defence and the masculinised values of those departments. This is also reflected in statistics on women's representation in SES roles since 1984 (see **Graph 5**).

Graph 5: Representation of women in SES positions, 1984-2018



Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data[86].

In analysing the data in **Graph 5**, over the last three decades all agencies have made

[85] A combined effect resulting from resistance to both 'newness' and 'gender'.
[86] AFP data points from 1990-2003 were not able to be found by the AFP when the Freedom of Information division conducted their search. Defence data points prior to 2013 are unavailable, as 2013 marks the first Women in the ADF Report – the first time this type of gender data is publicly available.

significant gains for women in the highest echelons of leadership. For instance, up until 1984, only men occupied the highest division of employment (Division 1) within the APS, and *women were not even included as a category for analysis* within Division 1 positions in tables in the APS Statistical Yearbook. Within Second Division employment (now the SES), in 1984 women were severely under-represented across the portfolios of Defence (0 per cent), Foreign Affairs (3.8 per cent), Immigration and Ethnic Affairs (8.6 per cent), and Trade (2.3 per cent). In real numbers, Second Division leadership comprised no women in Defence, only two women in Foreign Affairs, two women in Immigration and Ethnic Affairs, and one woman in Trade. In light of the Marriage Bar[87], many Australian government agencies developed distinctly masculine identities, with leadership compositions that were almost entirely male, as evident from early data (1984-1989 in particular) in the gender breakdown in **Graph 5**. This stands in vast contrast with women's contemporary representation in all of the agencies studied.

To what degree does the gendered leadership structures of the past continue to affect the agencies? There is now a much greater gender balance across all of the agencies than there was in 1984, indicating substantial progress. Home Affairs was quickest to gain greater gender equality, almost reaching parity in leadership in 2009 (when women represented 49 per cent of the agency's workforce).Yet, all agencies are now on an upwards trajectory for women in SES *except for Home Affairs* – why? It is clear that each agency is layered with formal policies aimed at gendered change and that change is occurring. However, there is an enduring under-representation of women and stubbornly persistent gendered challenges remain. The next section will briefly analyse each agency's history, structure and leadership to trace how gendered institutions in international affairs have evolved.

"Eliteness Eroded": DFAT

Historical forces

DFAT is Australia's core diplomatic and foreign policy agency, guiding much of the policy landscape and priorities adopted across the other agencies in international affairs. Recognised

[87] Canvassed in Chapter Two, banning women from government employment after marriage and often severely limiting their career prospects.

as a Male Champion of Change[88] for his leadership in instituting the *Women in Leadership Strategy* and *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, former secretary of DFAT, Peter Varghese, identified gender diversity as one of five issues challenging Australia's diplomatic effectiveness internationally (Byrne, Conley Tyler & Harris Rimmer 2016). Yet, the focus on gender has been relatively new in the agency's long history, with many old norms and international institutions remaining to influence the Department.

Australia established its first diplomatic missions to foreign countries in 1940[89], yet the Department of Trade and Customs and Department of External Affairs were amongst the first of seven Commonwealth Departments established at Federation. In 1987, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Trade (Trade) merged into a single department, currently recognised as the modern-day DFAT. Prior to the merger of DFA and Trade, DFA was criticised as not matching the change in Australian society with regards to staffing (Harris 2002). Amongst criticisms were what Harris argues was an assumed dominance of staffing from private schools, noting that the service was seen as becoming "increasingly out of touch with technological, social and other changes" (2002, p. 230). This fits within international diplomatic studies that characterise the field as high prestige, but also out of touch with changes across wider society, and in part explains the increasing focus on professionalisation[90] that has since dominated the department and wider APS.

Yet, gender appeared not to be a relevant enough category of analysis to mention, with Harris's (2002) study of the agency failing to make any gendered analysis nor mentioning the heavily male staffing composition in leadership.. In reality, the historical Marriage Bar had done much to restrict women's access to diplomatic careers, particularly in terms of progression. Australian High Commissioner to Cyprus, Trevor Peacock, noted in 2012 that:

> [t]he marriage bar reflected the views that a married woman should be supported by her husband, and that married women took men's jobs. It was also argued that recruiting women was an inefficient use of resources – why employ women when

[88] The Male Champions of Change initiative supports influential males to redefine men's roles and take action on gender inequality in organisations and communities (Male Champions of Change 2020).

[89] When ministers were accredited to the United States and Japan (1940) and China (1941) (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2020c).

[90] This trend to professionalization and departmental reform was largely initiated under Arthur Tange who sought to establish a professional foreign office and diplomatic service in the Department of External Affairs (pre-DFAT). Tange instituted a wide range of major and minor reforms "which were remarkable largely for their previous absence – systems of appointments and promotions, performance appraisal, records of conversations, financial management and so on" for the diplomatic and foreign affairs corps (Edwards 2015, p. 238).

> they would marry sooner or later and have to resign? The resistance to appointing married women rested on claims that there would be no place for a male spouse at an overseas mission and that it would be socially inappropriate – if not scandalous – to post a married woman without her husband (2012, para 8).

Peacock's assessment of the time period is reinforced when he quotes a Trade Official of the time:

> women could not mix nearly as freely with businessmen as men do; they could not withstand the fairly severe strains and stresses, mental and physical, of the trade commissioner's life, and "a spinster lady can, and often does, turn into something of a battleaxe with the passing years – whereas a man usually mellows". Tellingly, the [Trade Official's] greatest concern was that women recruits "would take the place of a man and preclude us from giving experience to a male officer" (2012, para 9).

While Australia was the first nation to lift the Marriage Bar in 1966, the change in policy did not result in an automatic change in attitudes, and it was nearly two decades before women began entering DFAT as graduates in equal or greater numbers[91] (Dee & Volk 2007). Barriers included negative attitudes about the professionalism of women officers and the predominance of a 'male culture' and male domination within the organisation that inhibited women's abilities to operate freely (Dee & Volk 2007). In 1971, the first woman head of mission (HOM) was appointed, Dame Annabelle Rankin, a political appointee, to the Australian High Commission in New Zealand. In 1974, Ruth Dobson became the first career diplomat female HOM, appointed as the Australian Ambassador to Denmark just over 30 years after first joining the service.

In 1984, a survey of officers found that over half felt that being a woman had affected their career, institutional barriers to promotion and postings affected their career progression, and negative assumptions about their ability to manage family and their career were common (Peacock 2012). One former Ambassador and former Governor of the State of Queensland recalls being told at that time that she needed to choose "whether she was a mother or an officer, reflecting a then prevalent view that it was not possible for women to be both" (Peacock 2012, para 12). At this same time, only two women (out of 52 overall roles – three per cent) were employed in the Second Division (now SES) in Foreign Affairs, while women represented 44.5 per cent of overall employment (APSED RFI 763).

[91] Elements of the *Immigration Restriction Act* (1901)[91] were still in place, so the abolition of the Marriage Bar was limited in its effects to the predominantly middle and upper class white women who had access to government employment at the time.

Following the 1984 passing of the *Sex Discrimination Act*, in 1985 DFA introduced an equal employment opportunity (EEO) program. Amongst some of the first aims of the program was *reducing* the number of posts unsuitable for women officers – which is striking in that its initial aims were not *eliminating* the number of posts deemed unsuitable for women officers, as is the case now. Initial attempts at EEO were not truly equal. By the time of the 1987 merger, one of the hallmarks of diplomacy – its prestige – was starting to shift with the abolition of separate career structures for diplomatic policy staff and administrative staff[92]. This abolished the "perception of an exclusive caste" (Harris 2002, p. 230). As the department has become more professionalised and bureaucratised, it has also developed as a Canberra-based public service career. This is a distinctive shift from diplomacy of the past, in which 65 per cent of positions were based internationally in 1984, compared to 2018 in which only 24.9 per cent of positions are based overseas (Australian Public Service Commission 2019b; Bureau of Public Service 1984).

In 1996, the Department's first childcare centre in Canberra was introduced, viewed as a way to address long work hours and a lack of work-life balance that characterised employment in the agency. The introduction of the centre followed a 1994 follow-up survey, in which male spouses accompanying women internationally were raised as a challenge in terms of: finding work for the spouse; financial income losses; social expectations that the man of the house should work; and the 'double burden' placed on women to manage the post and the house (Peacock 2012; Dee & Volk 2007). Spousal challenges remain a core issue today. Positive findings of this survey included that women diplomats believed they were more ethical, more consultative, and better managers of their staff. They also felt they had wider access to contacts in their host countries by virtue of being female[93], akin to Morin's (1994) findings.

2013 heralded a significant change for DFAT, in which the incoming Abbott Government restructured Australia's overseas aid and development initiatives, abolishing the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and merging many of the previous AusAID staff with DFAT. The absorption of the Department of Trade (in 1987), and AusAID (in 2013), to make modern-day DFAT represent two of the greatest cultural shifts the agency has

[92] Divisions between diplomatic and consular staff had been introduced under one of Arthur Tange's departmental reforms (Edwards 2015).

[93] Not only could they maintain the formalised, professional relationships required by their position, but they could also network and consult with women were still influential despite not having the same political or economic visibility (and therefore access to male HOMs).

seen (Corbett 2017; Harris 2002). Each of the three parts – foreign affairs, trade, and aid – had specific organisational cultures, norms, and practices. Participants still refer to staff from these different departmental mergers as 'tradies' (those from Trade), 'foreign affairies' (those from DFA),'wasAiders' (those who were part of AusAID) and 'preFATers' (those from DFAT prior to the AusAID merger). Participant 1 noted:

> there was a lot of 'us and them' in DFAT for years. The trade people used to call them the 'foreign affairies' and they would look down on the 'tradies' . . . for a long time there was a sort of delineation of jobs you might get overseas . . . if you're a tradie, then you'll only get trade jobs anywhere, go to Washington as head of the trade section, but you won't go somewhere as ambassador (Participant 1, DFAT, 21 June 2018)

Prestige and status were bound up in participant descriptions, in which the 'foreign affairies' were named "purists", versus 'tradies' who dealt with "the smutty, commercial part of a relationship" between states (Participant 1, DFAT, 21 June 2018). Not only did 'tradies' have classist connotations as working class and not as skilled in the 'art' of diplomacy, names like 'wasAiders' were generally used derogatorily. As a microcosm of intradepartmental relations, nicknames are employed partly in jest, and partly as a method of maintaining the overarching order of divisions in which one's background pre-determined status within the Department. The merger of Trade and DFA also had specific gendered effects. Overall, Trade was described by participants as more masculinist, and men represented 61 per cent of Trade's total workforce in 1985, as opposed to 55 per cent of Foreign Affair's total workforce at the same time[94] (Public Service Bureau 1985). The 2013 AusAID merger had the effect of rapidly increasing the proportion of women in the Department, and concerns flourished that these AusAID staff were unskilled (in the art of diplomacy), reaching high-level diplomatic postings overseas before it was merited.

Participant 4 describes the prestige associated with the traditional Foreign Affairs portfolio, noting that one of the things that drew her to the work was "the prestige factor, or at least there was at the time. Now that the walls have sort of opened up a bit that has lessened" (Participant 4, DFAT, 18 June 2018). Pure foreign affairs was the bastion of prestige, whereas the humanitarian side of international affairs was 'soft' and has "lessened" the exclusivity of the organisation. This is also interesting to note considering that the 'soft'

[94] Further, the leader of the National Party often held the trade portfolio ministerial role – a role in which women have never yet held.

policy areas around humanitarian topics have traditionally had greater representation of women, reinforcing that the prestige and exclusivity of DFAT diplomacy was a *gendered exclusion*. In fact, during backgrounding discussions, one participant recalled the day AusAID employees merged with DFAT and staff walked into their new offices in the RG Casey building in Barton. She noted that some DFAT employees stood on the towering platforms above the entrance and shot imaginary machine guns at the new arrivals and mimicked tipping buckets of water over their heads. If nothing else, this demonstrates a workplace culture that was sometimes exclusive, competitive and protective, if not outright aggressive.

During the mergers, in reconciling policy differences, DFAT took the "lowest common denominator" approach on a number of critical issues (Participant 4, DFAT, 18 June 2018). For instance, some fertility provisions that were guaranteed under the AusAID structure were removed under the DFAT structure. One participant described how AusAID provisions covered women returning to Australia for fertility treatment. In contrast, DFAT "never had that, and so they've now caught up to the lowest common denominator" (Participant 4, DFAT, 18 June 2018). Attempts to regain policy support were met with misunderstanding (deliberate or otherwise). Participant 4 stated that:

> what [the women] were asking for was support for at least what was covered under the APS here [in Australia] . . . where the executive landed on it was to say that any woman who wants to come back from posting early in order to have children or for fertility reasons won't have their careers negatively impacted, which wasn't what women were asking for . . . [women were] saying women are career oriented, they want the opportunity for posting, it's important to their career, *of course* their career should not be negatively impacted when coming home early, that was a given . . . so it's a situation where [the Department effectively said] "dear women, if you want to do this sort of thing which we say we do want you to do, leave these hard-fought career opportunities early" [ignoring the requests for support made] (Participant 4, DFAT, 18 June 2018).

This example highlights the impact of dominant cultures during machinery of government changes, demonstrating that 'good' policies on gender may drift or be completely removed during departmental shifts.

Now, not only are there growing numbers of women overall and in leadership, but there is also an overall professionalisation of DFAT as 'one of many agencies' within the

professionalised APS – its 'eliteness' is being eroded. There is also a lower chance of international work (meaning a more Canberra-based career), and a rhetorical shift away from some of the prestige factors of the past: private school educated, connected, upper-class, white, and male. The mergers of both Trade and AusAID were gendered – not only did they alter the gender makeup of the organisation, but the fact that women continued to represent both a majority of overall employment and a minority of senior leadership is significant. In fact, it was not until the introduction of specifically gender-targeted initiatives (formal policies) that the balance began to shift.

The *Women in Leadership Strategy* (2015) included the establishment of the Women in Leadership Secretariat within DFAT. The Secretariat sits within the executive branch, directly below the Secretary, suggesting that it has the commensurate power (symbolically, if not substantively) needed to enforce the strategy and guarantee accountability. So far, the *Women in Leadership Strategy* has had marked success in achieving its short-term targets of 40 per cent by the end of 2018 for SES band 1. The Strategy, and *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*[95], build on previous policy commitments by DFAT including the creation of the Ambassador for Women and Girls (in 2011), changed in 2020 to the Ambassador for Gender Equality, which is currently held by DFAT's first indigenous woman ambassador, Julie-Ann Guivarra.

These recent developments suggest that formal institutions with measurable and time-limited objectives, that are enforceable by a body with the requisite power to implement policies, have been successful at increasing women's representation in leadership. Additionally, critical actors[96] have reinforced women's leadership at the highest levels. As mentioned in Chapter 1, when analysing women deployed internationally in senior leadership[97] at the start of 2017 and again at the start of 2018, women's representation increased by 14.6 per cent

[95] The *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy*, released in February 2016, is DFAT's premiere policy for a) "enhancing women's voice in decision-making, leadership and peacebuilding", b) "promoting women's economic empowerment", and c) "ending violence against women and girls" (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2016a). It is both a foreign policy strategy and kind of EEO policy, with elements of both external and internal commitments. Internally comes the promise that:

> we will lead by example and promote gender equality in our corporate and human resource policies and practices, recognising the importance of consistency between our departmental policy and broader work (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2016a, p. 5).

[96] Under the leadership of DFAT's secretary, formerly Peter Varghese, a Male Champion of Change, and currently Frances Adamson, as well as the leadership first of Julie Bishop and then Marise Payne.

[97] Those listed on DFAT's Australian Ambassadors and other representatives web page.

representation (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017b, 2018). This, and DFAT's ability to achieve its initial targets, highlight institutional success in some key areas.

Yet, despite this, one of the most notable features of modern DFAT gender relations is their fluidity. In fact, as explored later in the thesis, the progress made by the agency obscures persistent gender inequalities that remain. Participant's contemporary experiences highlight covert or 'genteel' forms of toxic masculinity that have altered, but not reduced, the inequalities experienced. Participant 12 noted that gendered challenges are:

> increasingly pushed underground and subdued. There will be some people you can never change and they might just not say it out loud but they are still secretly saying these things (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).

Participants highlighted a shift to 'underground', more covert forms of discrimination and 'toxic' forms of workplace masculinity. Whilst toxic masculinity is more commonly associated with militaries[98], 'genteel' forms of toxic masculinity recurred in more bureaucratic agencies, seeming just as pervasive, only more difficult to identify (Webster 2019). Participants recounted that the average (male) colleague knew exactly what to say, and how to say it, which meant that gendered behaviours were often harder to spot (and therefore harder to believe). Despite the policies that now exist, participants still reported keeping lists of predatory men in the department to avoid, and while male 'champions' within the department could be seen to do the right thing, they persisted in gendered treatment. The progress made in the department in cases resulted in it being harder to have the inequalities that endured recognised. These enduring forms of covert, 'genteel' gendered behaviour will be returned to throughout the thesis and summarised in Chapter Seven.

Structure and leadership

Additional to the history of DFAT canvassed above, contemporary agency structure and leadership informs women's experiences and under-representation in international affairs. The degree and centralisation of decision-making, level of hierarchy and structure of leadership, impact on the 'gender ethos' of an organisation (McGlen & Sarkees 1993). This ethos or context frames gendered institutions – rules, norms, and practices – that affect women leaders. McGlen and Sarkees highlight how "some types of decision-making structures are more conducive to women's power than others," mapping out four key

[98] Referring to hegemonic forms of masculinity that subordinate women and others who do not fit the archetype.

structures that aid women in foreign and defence affairs leadership (1993, p. 78). Decision structures that produce a more favourable gender ethos include those that:

(1) have non-rigid procedures that downplay rightful participation based on position and include individuals expertise;
(2) tend to de-emphasise and personalise the power of the secretary;
(3) are least centralised and hierarchical; and
(4) have more women involved in communication surrounding decisions (McGlen & Sarkees 1993, p. 78).

McGlen and Sarkees propose that the more linear and rigid organisational charts are, such as those of all the case agencies, the more hierarchical an agency. They also note that rigid and hierarchical structures tend to favour more male dominated departments. These centralised decision-making structures generally benefit women only when women are within the decision-making positions (McGlen & Sarkees 1993).

DFAT is a hierarchical organisation, with the hierarchy becoming steeper towards the top (see **Image 1**, Appendix 1, p. 290). Canberra, state and international offices all have specific chains of command. Consistent with the rest of the APS, staff in DFAT, whether posted internationally or not, have clear ranks. Unlike some of the more militaristic or para-militaristic agencies however, these ranks are not physically visible on employees (in the form of a uniform, for instance), which may reduce hierarchy and rank friction – allowing for a 'flatter' structure in practice. APS ranks 1-6 form a majority of the workforce, followed by those in the leadership pipeline in EL Bands 1 and 2, and SES Bands 1, 2 and 3.

The current Secretary of DFAT[99], Frances Adamson, has prioritised gender equality and taken a 'leadership by example' approach. Not only is she the first woman Secretary of the department, but she instituted a female majority of Deputy Secretaries for the first time in the department's history. Her position as Secretary, the presence of her Deputies, and a female Minister for Foreign Affairs in Julie Bishop and later Marise Payne, is significant. In the US, the Olmsted report concluded that "(t)he single most important factor in achieving equal employment opportunity in the Department of State is the commitment demonstrated by the Secretary of State and the Under Secretary for management" (in McGlen & Sarkees 1993, p. 84). As Australia's former Foreign Affairs Minister Julie Bishop notes:

I always think that when a women is the first to fill a position, she has the

[99] At the time of submission.

> responsibility to make sure that it's easier for other women to follow, not harder. So, I'm particularly pleased that my successor is a woman, Marise Payne. Australia now has the second female foreign minister, so it's not such a novelty. I think that is a responsibility that all women have. Once you have that position – a position that has not been held by a woman – you must try and make it easier for the next woman to achieve it (Julie Bishop, pers. comm., 3 April 2019).

The actions of critical actors have been important at each of the significant gender milestones achieved by the department. On viewing the success of Treasury's gender strategy, DFAT undertook the task of implementing the *Women in Leadership Strategy*. Yet, the agency had been characterised by a lack of action on women's representation in the preceding years. It took the steadfast working of individuals – mostly women – within the department to lobby and push the executive into action. In at least one case recorded by this research, it involved the threat of loss of a key woman in order to get some required uptake. This fits with Acker's (2006) findings of the most successful gender change initiatives, which often require *coercion or the threat of loss*, as well as support internally within the department as well as externally within society. Participant 9 detailed what this process looked like from the inside:

> we had adopted a little girl in November . . . and [the Department] called me and said, I want to promote you into this job but you have to come back [to Australia]. I said, I didn't want to come back because I had this arrangement, I'd uprooted my family . . . I was on mandated adoption leave at the time in any event, so legally . . . I was protected. Anyway, I did have a pretty open conversation . . . about, this is why you don't have many women in leadership roles in the organisation, because it becomes very difficult when you have to make these choices . . . there wasn't an organisational fix, it was a personal fix, which then led me when I went back to think that we needed to do something about improving women in leadership credentials . . . All of that research pointed to one absolutely critical factor for success, and that was that any initiative like this *had to be led from the top* (Participant 9, DFAT, 18 October 2018, emphasis added).

This narrative highlights DFAT hierarchy: changes required top-down instigation. The *Women in Leadership Strategy* is now regarded as one of Varghese's foremost contributions to the Department as Secretary. It took the leadership of Varghese to institute, which reinforces the hierarchical structure of the agency. However, it would not have been possible without the dedicated internal lobbying of individuals within the Department too – internal support that Acker (2006) reinforces as crucial for organisational change.

Varghese was clearly a critical actor in beginning to transform the gendered institutions

within DFAT, launching the *Women in Leadership Strategy* in 2015. Yet *who* he was, was also important. Participant 9 stated:

> the terrific thing, of course, was that it was Peter Varghese that led this. It wasn't Julie Bishop, it was Peter Varghese and he was a bloke. Not only was he a bloke, but he was a very well-regarded, clever thinker bloke. The fact that he was doing this management stuff on women sends a really strong message. The fact that Frances was able to come in and ramp it up . . . that's powerful . . . I think it will be very hard to undo after Frances, I really do. It's better, in my mind, that it started under Peter then continued with Frances. That was a better sequencing. Because if Frances had started it and some man had come in and said, "oh, *that's women's business"* . . . the fact that she came in behind Peter and said, I know where you're going, I see what we're doing and I'm going to take it up a notch and get it done . . . you couldn't get better than that (Participant 9, DFAT, 18 October 2018, emphasis added).

Perceptions of not being 'a woman who only cares about women' recurred throughout the research as being important to the legitimacy of leadership in the Department. Likewise, having a male critical actor introduce the Strategy lent weight and a perceived 'gender neutrality' to the issue that was needed to see its uptake within the still male-dominated DFAT leadership. This demonstrates the perceived weight of women's voices versus men's within the Department, highlighting that for this policy to 'work' within DFAT, it needed to come from the epitome of what it meant to *be* DFAT – male.

As outlined in the previous chapter, DFAT's structure is characterised as bureaucratic on a continuum from militaristic, to para-militaristic, and then bureaucratic – with all of its staff professional public servants and its structure guided solely by the *APS Act* (1999) (refer to **Figure 4**, p. 88)**.** Overall, DFAT's structure and leadership reveals a hierarchical organisation. Critical actors have been essential to implementing gendered change in institutions. The gender of critical actors, and sequencing (male instigated, followed by female leadership) has been crucial to ensuring specifically gendered policy is naturalised, neutralised, and normalised within the agency. The implication is that while women cannot introduce gender-specific policy without being perceived as a 'woman who only cares about women' (therefore weakening the long-term embeddedness of the policy), they have an important role in ensuring its on-going implementation.

More than a "golden handshake": Defence

Historical forces

McGlen and Sarkees note that "the right to participate in the making of a country's foreign policy has been conditioned by the ability to fight in a country's wars" (1993, p. 36). Smith states that, "(f)or thousands of years, war has been the preserve of males" (1990, p. 126). The premise underlying Australia's military is therefore heavily gendered. Broadly regarded as one organisation known as 'Defence', the Australian Defence Force (ADF – the military body with Army, Navy and Air Force service lines) and the Department of Defence (DoD – civilian, public sector department) are a diarchy[100], part of a long standing, strong tradition as one of the most masculine portfolios of the state.

Until recently, women could not serve in combat roles, and, generally, were employed only within 'soft' staffing and administrative areas or gender-segregated service lines. Defence is a key and growing portfolio for Australia, with many reviews and inquiries identifying Defence as one of the most critical contributors to the delivery of Government capabilities, particularly around protecting and advancing Australia's national and strategic interest[101] (Department of Defence 2015b; Commonwealth of Australia 2016). The inclusion of women is therefore a growing priority for the agency, which is not only under pressure to deliver gender equality on moral grounds, but strategic too. The Australian Human Rights Commission notes that the ADF:

> must address the problem of a shrinking talent pool, the significant cost of unwanted departures, the lack of diversity at leadership level and its desire to be a first class employer with a first class reputation (2012, p. 15).

Women's greater inclusion in Defence has been made possible by two significant changes over the past few decades: the changing technology and characteristics of war, and; changing social and cultural norms, attitudes and institutions (Smith 1990; Wadham, et al 2016). Technological advancements in the defence industry, as well as the changing nature of warfare along chemical, cyber, and nuclear lines, have reduced barriers raised by physiological differences. In contemporary combat, operation of weapons is less about sheer

[100] The Defence diarchy refers to the restructuring of the ADF around the Minister, the Chief (ADF) and the Secretary (Department of Defence) of Defence in 1975 (Wadham, et al 2016).

[101] These are roles that have been further substantiated following Australia's 2019/2020 summer of bushfires and COVID-19 response, which has drawn Defence into a wider scope of traditional and emerging security threats.

muscle power than about technical skill and training. These changes have resulted in a reduction in physicality as a barrier to combat roles, and therefore, progression to more senior leadership. For instance, the Australian Air Force has always maintained a larger technological and administrative corps than actual combatants. Correspondingly, the Air Force has historically recruited more women than other service lines and opened a greater range of positions for their employment (Smith 1990). On the other hand, tasks with greater technical and specialised skills, as well as operational planning roles, have largely excluded women and continue to do so, if not by design, then by unconscious bias and gender stereotyping that maintains men as the most skilled in operational planning areas.

Responding to these technological changes (as well as social), since 2011, the Australian Government endorsed Defence's plans for women to serve in combat roles[102]. However, the historic combat ban has had an effect on women's pathways to leadership. As Bridge notes, it "placed a ceiling on promotion . . . barring women from prestigious and elite positions by restricting leadership positions – especially where combat experience is a prerequisite" (2005, p. 29). The exclusion of women from combat, and largely, the wider activities of Defence has therefore been predicated on a) physicality, b) social and cultural institutions, and c), by virtue of the first two points, gender. The art of fighting wars, the brute strength required to wield weapons, and even the 'band of brothers' mentality have all worked to create military spaces as spaces of exclusion of women (Mackenzie 2015). Smith notes, "differences in physicalities – whether real or perceived – have thus helped to make the military calling an essentially male preserve" (Smith 1990, p.127). This trend continues in the modern Australian military, reflective of persistent and stubborn informal norms that continue to equate the military with the male.

Social and cultural institutions have also prescribed Defence as the antithesis of what it means to be woman. Many social and cultural institutions globally, as well as within Australia specifically, have foregrounded women's roles as mothers, daughters, nurturers and carers (Connell 2009). Their many virtues are extolled as being peacemakers and creators – "*women* are not supposed to be violent" (Sjoberg & Gentry 2007, p. 2, emphasis in original).

[102] With the caveat that it be implemented within five years (Department of Defence 2012b). The decision to allow women to serve in direct combat duties was the recommendation of a 2000 ADF Personnel Study and successive pushes, after findings demonstrated that women's combat exclusion served no operation purpose and limited the career prospects of women, contributing to structural inequalities (Smith 1990; Wadham, et al 2016). Women's combat restrictions were removed in 2016 (Orme & Kehoe 2018).

They are positioned as oppositional to the warring aggression and patriarchal strength needed to ensure the protection of Australian national interest and way of life (Bridges 2005). The many objections raised against women joining the armed forces[103] in the first place were heavily based around "the popular image of woman as the passive, nurturing mother of the race [which] does not easily mesh with the combat soldier, an aggressive, killer male" (Bomford 2001, p. 1). Opponents "have expressed fears that women's lack of capacity (physical and psychological) for combat roles will reduce the effectiveness of military operations, will distract men, will incite public outrage and disrupt male bonding" (Bridges 2014). Throughout this research, narratives of the 'killer' and also the 'protector', the 'patriarch' and the 'powerful', continued to permeate Defence norms and ideologies, reinforcing role segregations that have continued to see women predominate in caring roles within the agency – health, human resources and support (Department of Defence 2019b). As Elshtain identifies, while women have "beautiful souls", men make wars (1983, p. 341).

The physicality associated with Defence activity, and the social and cultural institutions that surround it, are gendered. Yet, Smith finds that only *particular groups* of men can undertake the functions of Defence. Smith states:

> (y)oung men are selected and trained to be warriors, sometimes from a very early age. In addition to learning military skills, they are imbued with the ethic and values of the warrior: loyalty, courage, self sacrifice and a sense of *esprit de corps*. The last-mentioned, in particular, creates a sense of difference from the rest of society, a belief that those in the military are members of an elite responsible for vital roles in that society. A central part of this military ethic is the belief that war and soldiering are the business of men. In the military class customs, traditions and taboos emerged to reinforce this attitude. It became unthinkable to have women in combat: at best this would be distracting, at worst subversive of discipline and *esprit de corps*. The place of women was to provide support, comfort or diversion for those in uniform (1990, p. 127, emphasis in original).

Women's presence was viewed as fundamentally reducing the capabilities of the military at this time – a subversion of the basis of military hierarchy and command, discipline, as well as being sexually distracting (Bridges 2014). Notions of eliteness are consistent across DFAT and Defence despite their different masculine archetypes. Eliteness connotes exclusion that furthers the denial of access to women. While access to these military spaces of exclusion

[103] See Agostino, 1998a, 1998b, Bomford, 2001; Bridges 2005; Bridges 2014.

may be historical, the notion of exclusion has persisted due to the enduring *and* fluid nature of institutions, and their role in forming agency culture, norms, expectations and rules from the start.

Historical gendered institutions have a compounding impact in Defence, for which identity, actions and beliefs are strongly tied to tradition and history. For instance, each year, Australian public holidays recognise war and military personnel. Remembrance is a key theme of Anzac[104] Day, a day that broadly commemorates Australians and New Zealanders who died in all wars, conflicts, and peacekeeping operations. History and tradition underpin the annual Anzac Day observances and days like it, reinforcing lines of continuity in terms of identity, culture and behaviour (Holbrook 2014; Morrison in Australian Human Rights Commission 2014b). The actual acts of past wars, as well as the acts of remembrance were, and continue to be, gendered, with Dwyer noting that fiction and narrative surrounding the Wars have "been used to promote exemplars, to marginalise and exclude alternative versions of masculinity, and to subordinate the feminine" (2013, p. 226). Women, indigenous people and people with non-Anglo-Celtic backgrounds who fought (and died) in wars remain under-recognised, and accounts of war 'heroes' are mostly accounts of "the manly Anzac," with men portrayed as "ungendered representatives of humanity … [with] the 'ungendered norm' equated with male experience" (Dwyer 2013, p. 226; Johnson 1997). The sacred and hallowed nature of days like Anzac Day, and the re-enactment of war tragedies and stories of bravery and strength, add a further layer to Defence's history. Remembrance strengthens 'old' military narratives and ideals that continue to influence women's place and treatment within Defence as marginalised, separate, subordinate and inferior. As will be explored later in this section, challenging these old norms is viewed as 'sacrilege' and can result in these norms embedding deeper.

Women's participation in Defence is tied to the rise of the World Wars and the need for nursing and support across clerical, administrative, transport and communication tasks (Smith 1990; Bridges 2014; McWatters 2005). In the build up to the Second World War, auxiliary units were established, enshrining women in segregated portfolios and women's roles as

[104] ANZAC stands for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, formed in Egypt in 1915 and operational in the battle of Gallipoli.

different[105]. Even though many women were given considerable duties and rank during the War[106], with women "found employed in practically every job for which they were physically capable", this was quickly reversed in the post-war period, highlighting women's roles as largely temporary and exceptional[107] (Fowler in McWatters 2005, p. 37). They were not embedded in the cultural make-up of the agency and service lines, but rather were neat appendages that could be discharged when no longer required (Bridges 2014). Women could occupy some roles throughout the military, but it was never at the exclusion of men doing so (Bomford 2001; Hancock 1993). This 'separateness' of women within Defence was actively supported. Bomford notes that:

> (w)omen entering a profession traditionally associated with the image of man the aggressor and armed protector were only acceptable within the institution itself, and to the broader community in Western society in general, if they maintained their stereotypical gender role, which in the 1950s was to support men by performing the sedentary, routine 'housekeeping' tasks in the army (2001, p. 27).

There were clear and strict rules around what women could or could not do. They could join the corps, so long as they were "plum," and not poor quality applicants "dissatisfied with their lives" and for whom the service offered "higher social status, greater economic security, companionship, even … a substitute family" (Bomford 2001, p. 55). They could be drivers, so long as they had "the right temperament" (Bomford 2001, p. 27). Women could be re-engaged in the service, so long as they were not overweight, with some participants recalling being called too 'podgy' for Defence service. When women signed up to join army rifle clubs, it was found not "appropriate or necessary" for women to learn to shoot, with any memberships or access to resources immediately withdrawn (Bomford 2001, p. 27).

The reliance on stereotypical roles and duties also flowed into stereotypical looks, with women encouraged to emphasise their femininity through dress and comportment. While men were selected for traditional masculinised strength and physicality, women were selected based on their pleasant, womanly and feminine appearance – delineating very different roles for very different physical attributes (Bomford 2001). Although the military tended to attract

[105] It is noted that there was not a long history of the professional organisation of Australian Defence at this point, post-federation.

[106] At least compared to prior to the Wars. Indigenous women also served within these auxiliary units, yet frequently received little pay and little recognition for their work (Riseman 2016).

[107] Even so, Aboriginal women's participation in the armed forces during the 1940s-1960s provided "possible escape from their limited options in civilian life and contributed to future leadership roles at the community, state and national level (Riseman 2014).

women who were more 'masculine' in discourse and appearance (Sasson-Levy 2003), some participants' recalled being asked to dress and behave more 'womanly' so that they were not mistaken as lesbians. A number of participants recalled their male colleagues seeking women out as sexual 'conquests'[108], with any women who refused to sleep with them perceived as 'uncontrollable', or queer. Participants reported that those who were homosexual were often removed from the service[109], and so heterosexual women would often help to cover for gay and lesbian women whom were closely watched and often under intense scrutiny. Those who were perceived as 'uncontrollable'[110] reported being given longer hours and more demanding work, often in administrative or organisational roles away from the operation duties of the ADF. These mechanisms at multiple levels of appearance, comportment and behaviour were used to maintain the existing gender order, as consistent with other studies (see: Bridges 2014; Sasson-Levy 2003, 2017).

Bomford notes that, since the 1950s, women have been criticised for being "less useful because they did not serve as long as men and could not fulfil the same range of duties as men" (Bomford 2001, p. 124). This criticism is inconsistent and fails to recognise the overt discrimination and formal and informal restrictions on what roles women could fulfil. In the 1960s and 1970s, the male dominance within the military slowly began to shift, much like other areas of society. Major social changes regarding the equality of the sexes, including substantial legal gains around equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination, had begun to shift attitudes and employment in Defence[111]. Changes in broader society are important causes of institutional change, not just within Defence, but also across all of the agencies studied. Although Defence has been slow to take up many of these wider societal shifts due to some of the abovementioned engrained institutions and an inherent conservativism, the agency is not immune to change. The nature of the work ensures that the agency requires large numbers of new recruits, as well as their retention under challenging and exceptional workplace circumstances. Demographic pressures over the past few decades have therefore

[108] Additional to the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011, 2012) reviews into sexual harassment and discrimination, sexual harassment has been variable covered prior, see for example: Faust (1995), Habiba (2017), Wadham (2016).
[109] Depending on the timing, homosexuality was illegal in Australia up until 1994. Note that this mainly applied to men under sodomy laws.
[110] Often they lived off campus, or refused to have sexual relations with their colleagues.
[111] Particularly with the growing stature of second-wave feminism, the anti-Vietnam War movement, gay liberation, indigenous rights, and various worker movements (Wadham, et al 2016).

opened new opportunities for women[112], as agency growth and turnover require broader recruitment than past all-male conscription or volunteering (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012; Deloitte 2011).

At this point, it is worth briefly exploring the historical circumstances that inform the current operation of the three service lines[113] – the Army, Air Force, and Navy. Each service line is distinct from the others, which reinforces the fact that generalisations about Defence must be undertaken with care, and nuances explained[114]. Chain of command and military structuring ensures that overarching ADF principles guide each of the services. Yet, each service also has its own organisational structures, policies and practices, highlighting the 'layered' institutional context and complexity of Defence.

Of the three, the Army has the lowest overall representation of women, with women currently representing only 14.6 per cent of personnel (Department of Defence 2019b)[115]. Women were historically segregated in the Army, as part of the Women's Royal Australian Army Corps (WRAAC) from 1951-1984. When the WRAAC was established, Bomford notes that "a women's corps was the only way women would be accepted in the army," with women's integration into the Army defined by constant negotiation for ideological and professional space (2001, p. 1). Women were only permitted to go on deployments from 1992. Prior to that, women were deployed at 'home' only, and there were no women in operative units. However, time in combat remains to be the most important element to career progression. Because women were only permitted in combat recently, there is still a lag and roles continue to be recruited based off ideal forms of hegemonic masculine physicality, with informal gendered norms guiding career appointments and deployments (Bridges 2005; Wadham, et al 2016).

The Air Force, on the other hand, has the highest representation of women, representing 23.5

[112] In 1982, Cynthia Enloe noted that "military personnel planners have pushed for greater use of women not so much because they have 'seen the light' and are on the verge of giving up patriarchy, but because they are worried about manpower shortages" (1982, p. 331).
[113] Although this section cannot exhaustively outline the workplace cultures and practices of each of the service lines, it explores some of the core differences and similarities.
[114] Particularly given that prior to restructuring under Tange in the 1970s, service lines operated as separate entities, and it was controversial to have them merged.
[115] Defence has a target of increasing women's participation to 15 per cent of the Army's overall population by 2023 – considerably lower than any other service line or portfolio of government. Navy and the Air Force have targets of increasing women's participation to 25 per cent by 2023 (Department of Defence 2019b).

per cent of personnel[116] (Department of Defence 2019b). However, leadership remains elusive for women – out of the 53 generalist star ranked officers in 2012, there was only one woman (1.9 per cent) (Broderick 2012). The initial gender-segregated unit was the Women's Auxiliary Australian Air Force (WAAAF)[117], followed by the Women's Royal Australian Air Force (WRAAF) established from 1950-1977. WRAAF was earliest segregated unit to be disbanded out of the three service lines. Disbanding these gender-segregated units has been an important marker of progress, as prior units were temporary, limited in their operations and opportunities, and inferior to the men's equivalent[118] – a result of not being the part of the 'real' work of the mainstream service lines (Riseman 2014). Yet, similar to the other service lines, the conditions of service were heavily gendered, with unequal pay formalised in policy and combat bans for women similarly applied as in the Army (Bridges 2014). Time in operations – piloting planes – count most towards career advancement. Because members are trained through ADFA before commencing down their own service lines, many of the gendered norms and cultures in the wider ADF are also found in the Air Force.

In the Navy, Women represent 21.8 per cent of personnel (Department of Defence 2019b). Women were only sent to sea from 1984 onwards, as a result of the Women's Royal Australian Naval Service (WRANS) regulations being repealed on incorporation into the Permanent Naval Forces (Argirides n.d.). However, the core component to career progression in the Navy is in operations – with the aim to deploy at sea captaining warships. Women's historical exclusion from deploying at sea has considerably restricted women's progression to leadership, resulting in a significant lag for women attaining these roles. Additionally, when ships are not engaged in actual warfare, a critical issue reported by participants[119] was keeping members safe from themselves[120] on ships – pastoral duties. Drugs and alcohol present key problems for warships, particularly in periods after docking at port for supplies. Given the majority male workforce and the entrenched gendered nature of the Navy, issues

[116] The Air Force's better reputation when it comes to women's treatment and opportunities is largely the result of the different norms around physicality and the duties required to be an Air Force pilot (Smith 1990). While combat roles in the Army often relied heavily on close physical contact, Air Force combat roles are ultimately facilitated by planes.

[117]The WAAAF was founded a decade earlier than the WRAAC, in 1941, after considerable lobbying by women. The WAAAF was short-lived, disbanded after World War II in 1947.

[118] Women were generally paid between two thirds to three quarters of the male pay rate, although equal pay for officers was introduced in 1978 (Riseman 2014).

[119] And reinforced during background discussions.

[120] In terms of mental and physical health. Including for instance excessive drinking, drug use, and so on.

with drugs and alcohol likely increase instances of sexual harassment and assault[121]. The isolated nature of ships present clear challenges for women negotiating a male-dominated work environment, under the pressure of war-readiness, and in circumstances that are physically bounded at sea.

The final division to be discussed is the culture and work environment of the Department of Defence (DoD). Unlike the three military service lines, those who work in the departmental side are largely (although not exclusively[122]) civilian staff, with a greater degree of lateral recruits from other APS agencies and a bureaucratic structure that more closely matches the rest of federal government (and some of the other agencies studied). The Department is more gender equal, with women representing 44 per cent of overall employment and 32.6 per cent of SES positions (Department of Defence 2018). Even so, military norms and identities still permeate the departmental side of Defence. The most senior positions are predominantly occupied by men with military experience, or high levels of experience and networks in DFAT, the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, or the Defence Minister's office[123].

The opportunities for leadership and new challenges in the ADF and the DoD are extensive, with myriad options for different roles and duties. Strong bonds and tight 'family' units are a large part of each of the three service lines and Defence in general (Department of Defence n.d.), with participants' identities more closely entwined with their workplace and career. This has the result of both facilitating relationships that are robust, loyal and tight-knit, and by that same nature, places individuals at the mercy of their colleagues to a higher degree than a standard, non-Defence job might do – particularly for those in the ADF, those deployed internationally, or on operations. The three service lines do not tend to cross over, however there are opportunities to work across the agency in Joint Operations Command (JOC) positions, in staff colleges, or in divisions such as the International Policy Division (IPD), where personnel and civilian staff work together prior to overseas deployment as

[121] See: ABC News SA 2016; Knaus 2016; Martin 2018; Goyne 2017; Broderick 2012. In the US, out of any military installation, sexual assault was most likely on a Navy ship (Morral, et al 2018).

[122] Carter notes that the military control by civilians was promoted by Samuel Huntington in the 1950s, under the notion that the "military force of a liberal democracy answers to the people through its subordination to government" (2019, para 3). Australia has seen more ex-ADF officers join the DoD in recent years, which has caused some tension as to whether there has been the appearance of an ADF "takeover" of the civilian department (2018, para 11).

[123] Since Prime Ministers and leaders cannot personally be in negotiation and bargaining with other actors whose political resources they need to ensure an outcome, they "require the assistance of agents who will act in their name" – a form of personalisation of the senior executive (Tiernan 2006, p. 311).

attachés and staff.

In Defence, as a matter of policy and practice, careers are managed within the three service lines of Navy, Army and Air Force, with entire tomes written on particular career trajectories, and substantial resourcing and staff to help oversee career development[124]. This has obvious benefits for both men and women in the service. However, career managers and supervisors are not free of bias, with the Australian Human Rights Commission (2012) finding a tendency for career managers to not select women for operational planning roles, which has affected women's career progression. Poor communication between individuals and career managers adversely affected women and often slowed their career trajectory by a number of years. This was the case with participants in this research, some of whom reported missing out on key professional development opportunities as they were 'about the right age' to get married or have children.

Defence has also had a number of high-profile cases of sexual assault and rape. For instance, the 2011 Skype sex scandal perpetrated by a male Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA) cadet against a female cadet, or the 2013 'Jedi Council'[125], involving a number of male Army officers distributing explicit emails denigrating women, highlight on-going cultural issues (Bridges 2014; Wadham, et al 2018; Wadham 2016). After analysing hundreds of articles, military expert Megan Mackenzie found that military sexual violence is consistently justified by the Australian media and military leaders as a result of "young soldiers' uncontrollable natures," indicating worryingly pervasive and damaging gendered norms that remain despite recent reviews and cultural change initiatives (2019, para 14).

In response to the scandals, the Australian Human Rights Commission launched two reviews into both the DoD and the ADF (Australian Human Rights Commission 2011, 2012). Canvassing discrimination, bias and harassment, the reviewers found: the lack of a critical mass of women, stemming from recruitment and retention issues; rigid career trajectories; difficulties combining work and family; and "a culture still marked, on occasion, by poor leadership and unacceptable behaviour including exclusion, sexual harassment and sexual

[124] While APS departments do have similar career development mechanisms, like the Integrated Leadership System (ILS), they appear not as well integrated or followed, as will be discussed in Chapter Five when assessing statistics on women's representation.

[125] A group of 171 male Army personnel were identified for sharing over the Defence communications systema range of sexist and predatory emails about women they had had, or were planning to have, sex with (WaHome Affairsm 2016).

abuse" (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012, p. 17; Bridges 2014). Gendered differences in experiences are evident: while 88.9 per cent of men in starred ranks have children, only 22.2 per cent of women do. Furthermore, ADF workplaces are "highly sexualised environments," with a high tolerance for "sexual and sexist jokes and sexually suggestive banter, emails or SMS messages, inappropriate comments or sexual advances" (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012, p. 39). This produces a workplace environment that evidences considerable forms of 'toxic' masculinity – defined as "an extreme expression of hegemonic masculinity, which promotes masculine supremacy, strict gender roles, and devalues women" (Webster 2019, p. VI; Bridges 2014).

While culture change recommendations like those in the Phase 1 and Phase 2 Reviews (covered in **Figure 5**, p. 93) aim to tackle these and other issues, inconsistency across policies and service lines, and distinct service line identities, hamper the ability of these formal institutions to produce lasting change. Following the *Phase 2* review, Defence has instituted a yearly *Women in the ADF Report*[126] coinciding with the release of each Annual Report. Yet, historical gender segregation, horizontally and vertically, continues to effect women, siloing their opportunities[127] (Department of Defence 2019b; Australian Human Rights Commission 2012). Additionally, women's enlistment rates are falling.

As the primary international-facing envoys for Defence, Defence Attachés (DA) and staff form the cohesive unit primarily analysed for this research. DAs are recognised as "diplomatic representatives who build military-to-military relationships between nations and facilitate Defence policy objectives overseas" (Department of Defence 2018, p. 24). DAs and their staff form a distinct, comparable group to understand women's experiences and representation in Australian international affairs, leading diplomatic work and negotiation from the Defence portfolio. However, unlike within DFAT, these diplomatic postings have not been high prestige or high status roles important on the path to career advancement. While both civilian and military staff can form the staff of DA offices, only military staff are

[126] Much of the data in these reports is not numerical data, but rather relies on graphs and figures that make it difficult to determine and compare actual progress or regression made.

[127] In the most recent *Women in the ADF Report* 2018-2019, women's participation was found to be gradually increasing across all three service lines, but women remain over-represented in health, logistics, administration, and support roles, and under-represented in engineering, technical, security and combat roles. Women continue to be deployed at lower levels than their overall proportion across all occupational groups: aviation; combat and security; communications, intelligence and surveillance; engineering, technical and construction, and; health, logistics, administration and support.

deployed as the top representative – the DA – meaning that the unique cultures and histories of the service lines (canvassed above) are integral to understanding women's opportunities to be a DA.

As noted, ADF staff generally have clear pathways to leadership, with transparent career trajectories and ranks. This is not the case with attaché positions, as Participant 1 noted:

> with the breakdown of forces, you'd expect 50 per cent to be Army, 25 per cent Navy, 25 per cent Air Force, that would be a reasonable breakdown. That's not always how it looks. That's because there is no set path for Defence Attachés. There's so no set path for international representation in other agencies either but there's definitely no set path for Defence. So previously, there's been a lot of chance involved, oh you're the right person, at just the right time, you vaguely understand this or whatever (Participant 1, Defence, 19 February 2019).

Until recently DA positions were colloquially known as the "golden handshake," a position traditionally given to individuals transitioning out of the ADF and into retirement (Participant 12, Defence, 12 April 2019). Following greater prioritisation under the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) Angus Campbell, the role of the DA has grown in importance. Participant 10 explained that:

> [now] we're trying to tell people that taking a Defence Attaché role is excellent and we want good quality Defence Attachés … [but] you've got to remember, Defence didn't value Defence Attaché roles. We used to give it to our retirees, because the problem with the Defence Attaché role is that they were they were out of mind, out of sight. You weren't working for the generals who were making the promotion decisions, so we weren't getting good quality people wanting to be DAs because you didn't get picked up [for promotion] if you were a Defence Attaché (Participant 10, Defence, 4 March 2019).

There are therefore several factors behind the current gender imbalances in DA roles, in which women represent just 17.2 per cent of all positions[128] in 2019, down from 18.8 per cent in 2017 (Department of Defence 2019b). These include that a majority of roles may have traditionally gone to Army personnel, the service line in which women are least represented, and these were not always high prestige roles on the path to career advancement. In reality, women often did not have the opportunity to reach the top positions from which DAs would be appointed prior to retirement. Participants noted that even if women were at the right rank (generally at the Colonel equivalent rank), with the opportunity to apply for DA roles, if

[128] As reported in the 2018-2019 *Women in the ADF Report* (Department of Defence 2019).

women did want to progress their careers then the DA role may not have been a help, but a hindrance. Participant 10 went on to explain:

> the Defence Attaché job was seen as a sidewards move and your career would cease right? … I don't think the job has ever not been attractive to women, but I think it comes back to [the fact that] we didn't have enough women to apply for the role, [and] that's why there weren't a lot of women. Now more and more women are becoming Colonels, you're seeing the percentage of women asking for Defence Attachés roles increasing, I would like to think. And like I said, now they've changed the dynamic that it's not an end to career … we are now valuing people (Participant 10, Defence, 4 March 2019).

Subsequent chapters will delve further into the experiences of DAs and staff, who form the participants of this study as the international face of Australian Defence.

While not exhaustive, this section has provided a brief historical backdrop of the DoD as an APS department and the three service lines as military bodies of the ADF to give context to women's under-representation in leadership, and generally throughout the agency. It is clear that Defence identities are steeped in a heavily gendered history. As well as remaining the agency with the lowest representation of women, Defence (particularly the ADF) exhibits worrying instances of overt toxic masculinity. With new technological advances that make the taking and sharing of images and video particularly easy, some instances of sexual harassment and abuse have intensified (Mackenzie 2019). Formal institutional shifts stipulating recommendations to improve gender relations appear to be limited in their effect so far – largely due to inconsistent and lapsed policies that allow deeply embedded sexism and misogyny to flourish under a lack of enforcement. Yet, given the hierarchical and top-down chain of command structure of Defence, could the 'right' policy be all that is needed to bring about gender equality? Or, is institutional change in the agency more complicated? The next section will cover agency structure and hierarchy to demonstrate significant limitations on the power of critical actors in Defence to enforce gender equitable policies and practices.

Structure and leadership

Defence has one of the most complex and hierarchical structures studied (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012), noted in **Image 2**. Analysis of their organisational chart highlights a multilayered organisational structure with multiple chains of command. Defence has chains of command according to location (localised chains of command where staff are deployed or

posted), different civilian and military chains of command (which sometimes overlap), different chains of command for the service lines (Army, Air Force and Navy) and for those posted off-shore, external chains of command to DFAT heads of mission (HOM) or heads of post (HOP).

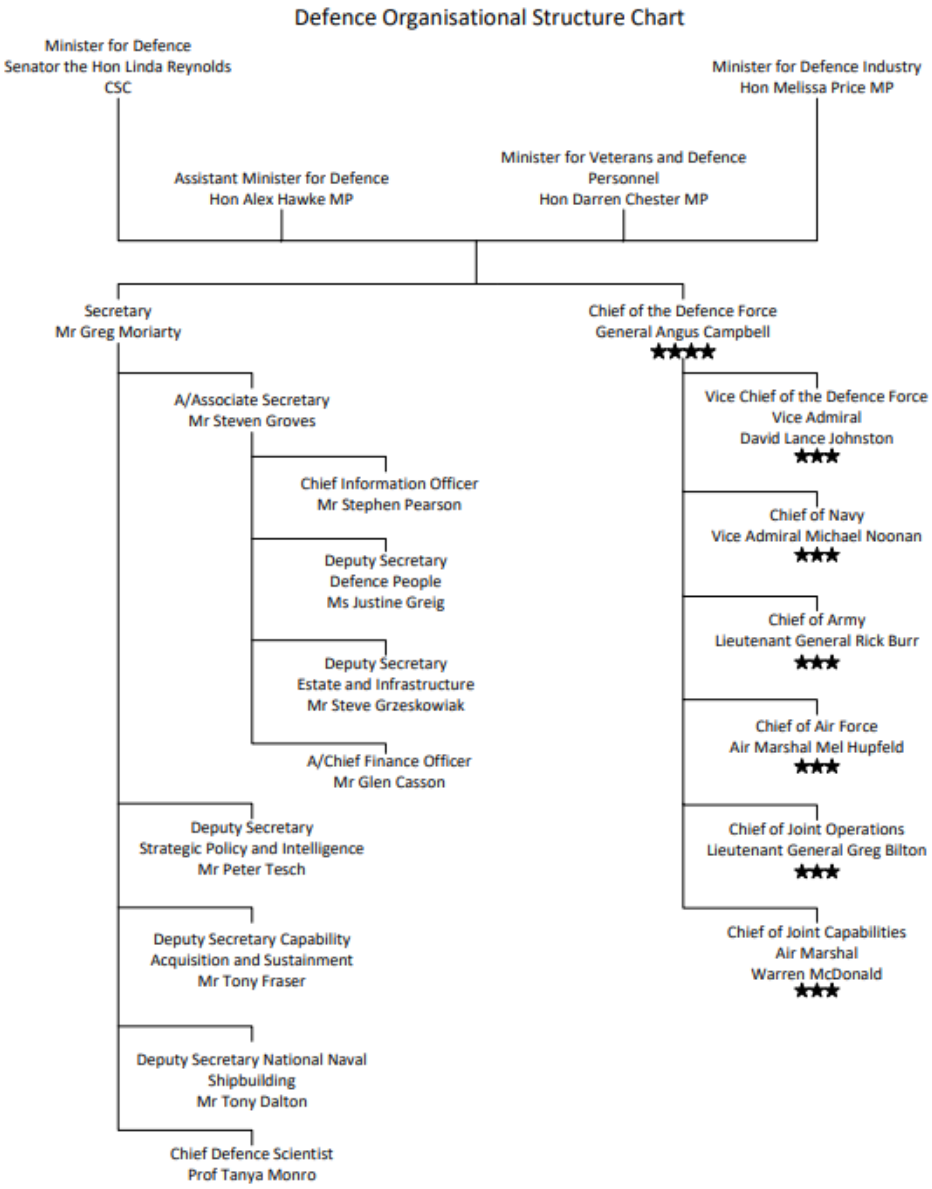


Image 2: Organisational structure of Defence, 2020

Source: Department of Defence 2020b.

The APS side of the DoD follows the same structure as DFAT in terms of ranking APS, EL and SES-level ranks. The ADF operates under a second ranking system, as follows in **Table 3.**

Table 3: ADF ranks

Rank	Leadership	Army	Navy	Air Force
O9	SES Band 3			
O8	SES Band 2	Major General	Rear Admiral	Air Vice Marshal
O7	SES Band 1	Brigadier	Commodore	Air Commodore
O6	EL Band 2 or leadership pipeline	Colonel	Captain	Group Captain
O5	EL Band 1 or leadership pipeline	Lieutenant Colonel	Commander	Wing Commander
O4	-	Major	Lieutenant Commander	Squadron Leader
E9	-	Warrant Officer Class 1	Warrant Officer	Warrant Officer
E8	-	Warrant Officer Class 2	Chief Petty Officer	Flight Sergeant

Source: SES and EL or leadership pipeline ranks outlined in Defence Annual Reports (Department of Defence 2019b).

Formally, each military rank has an equivalent and equal civilian rank. However, practically, rank is not equal across military and civilian sides of Defence. In Defence, further to the usual intersectionalities found in any organisation, whereby gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and disability can all effect opportunities for leadership, employees are further divided by their civilian or military status. One participant from McGlen and Sarkees note that:

> (t)he military themselves have discrimination against civilians, whether they're male or female, because most civilians have not been in operation. So there is a bias or perception that civilians don't know what they're talking about. Then when you put the women on top of that, it makes it even a little worse (cited in 1993, p. 104).

McGlen and Sarkees (1993) describe this civilian/military status as an individual's 'surface credibility'. Military members have a surface credibility that civilian employees lack. This hierarchy of credibility underpins access to power and resources and highlights deeply

gendered lines of segregation across the agency. Given that women are more represented in the civilian DoD (43.9 per cent), rather than the military ADF (16.9 per cent), a lack of surface credibility has compounding effects on gender. Participant 2 elaborated on being part of the DA staffing corps as a civilian:

> you're always going to be the one civilian in a room full of military, maybe sometimes two of you. If you have a commander who supports you and your role, your life is significantly easier. You become acutely aware of how military hierarchy works. When the commander says, "I like this person, work with him or her" – it happens. If you have a commander who's like, "I kind of think you're a bit of a waste of time. I don't like civilians, and, you know, I feel like you're here to monitor me" – then the job becomes very painful (Participant 2, Defence, 19 February 2019).

Participant 9, also a civilian, further commented on the inequality of rank across the two sides of Defence:

> for my work I was dealing with our Special Forces area who are entirely all male-dominated. It's the, you know, kind of the maleness of the maleness in the ADF. I would have conversations with them and hang up the phone, and the Chief of Staff at the time [who was ADF] would look at me and she was like "so, are they going to do what you've just asked them to do?" and I said "probably not." So, she would then ring them up and because she was the rank higher than them, there was an automatic "ah man!" [response indicating that they have to follow her orders]. So that was an interesting [thing]. You know, I don't think it has anything to do with the fact that I was female, although they probably [just thought] I'm a civilian, I don't do operations, what am I talking about? Stop bothering me (Participant 9, Defence, 26 February 2019).

This example highlights the importance of being able to 'pull rank' in international environments. Rank gave women traction that otherwise could not be gained. However, one of the core issues in this example is that the participant was employed at the highest APS rank that can be sent overseas. In other words, without the help of the military Chief of Staff to ensure that her requests got through to Special Forces, this participant would not have been able to do her job as she was required. Civilian status evidently matters, as the participant recognised, however gender is also likely to have played into her experience. It suggests that women can only gain the respect and authority needed to lead if they are (1) military personnel and (2) more senior than those they are trying to direct. Women face challenges on both of these fronts.

On the topic of rank, critical actors are particularly significant in Defence, where rank equals

the power to make change, and leadership is rigidly top-down. Former Chief of Army David Morrison demonstrated the considerable effect of critical actors in changing gendered institutions. In 2013, in response to the revelation that dozens of men had been involved in hundreds of explicit emails denigrating women, Morrison filmed a powerful three-minute long address to "sexist soldiers" calling upon personnel to "respect women or get out" (Morrison 2013; ABC News Online 2013). Morrison's video was one of the most public and acclaimed attempts at establishing new gender norms and cultures of respect in Defence. The action sent waves through the Defence community and onlookers internationally, eventually leading to Morrison winning the 2016 Australian of the Year Award for his commitment to gender equality, diversity and inclusion. Because of Morrison's role as the Chief of Army, he was in the unique position to send a strong message around gender in a way that had not been done before (or since). However, despite Morrison's acclaim and his success at prompting a review of norms and practices, the public stance taken through the video and later the Awards ceremony has not been repeated with other leaders[129]. In fact, Morrison drew considerable criticism over the whole scenario: from the fact that Catherine McGregor, Australia's highest profile transgender woman in Defence[130], wrote his speech; to the petitions calling for his resignation and condemnation after speaking about gender equality (and not veterans' welfare) at the Awards ceremony; or for his insistence on the use of non-gendered language in Defence workplaces (seemingly incompatible with the informal values critical to Defence)[131].

Critical actors are important in Defence, and rank is important to ensuring that critical actors are heard and have the power to implement change. However, Morrison's case demonstrated that critical actors were *as limited or constrained* as any other rank within the agency when it came to advocating strongly for gendered change. These constraints do not seem to be usual for such an "authoritarian institution" in which chain of command matters and top-down leadership sets the agenda and parameters for action (Wadham 2016). Yet, according to former Deputy Secretary of Defence for Strategy and Intelligence, Hugh White, the ADF can be "a bit out of touch and bit inclined to believe they should not be in touch with current values" around gender equality (in Wadham 2016, p. 560). The issue of gender equality

[129] Dennis Richardson, Secretary of the DoD, did deliver a rebuke to critics of Morrison, however this was largely overlooked by the media in comparison to Morisson's critics (see: Wroe 2016).
[130] And also a contender for Australian of the Year Awards in the same year as Morrison.
[131] See: Greene 2016a, 2016b; Devine 2016; Aubusson 2016.

appears anathema to Defence identity, with Morrison's public pro-gender equality actions at times almost sacrilegious.

Morrison's case demonstrated that there were ramifications to being 'too public' or to pushing things 'too far' when it came to advocating for gender equality. In fact, it seems that the negative backlash that Morrison drew after his very public stances on gender has served as a warning for any leaders coming after him[132]. Morrison 'broke' the rule by publicly condemning ADF treatment of women and broke it again by prioritising gender over other topics – like veterans' affairs[133]. Waylen finds that sanctions and enforcement for broken rules include "shunning, social ostracism or even violence," to which I would add invalidation and discrediting (Waylen 2017, p. 5). Morrison's example demonstrates that informal rules continue to have immense power over Defence, and despite any rhetorical or policy commitments to equality, gendered divisions endure (Department of Defence 2019b). Additionally, the power to enforce rules relating to gender within the agency is not just limited to those in the agency – current serving members or staff – but also includes those external to the agency – veterans and the public. The example illustrates the (in)ability to change norms and introduce new forms of thought within the agency. When the actions of the highest ranked (and male) member of the Army are 'policed', then it suggests a damning narrative for lower ranked (and female) members to drive institutional change.

Related to the complex chains of command and authority, women's place and power within Defence is restricted by the types of positions and specialities that they hold. As noted, the staffing group that is the focus for this research, DA's and staff, are charged with Defence diplomacy and negotiation. In contrast to those engaged in warfare, strategy, and operations, this group represents Defence staff tasked with applying Australia's foreign policy objectives within a Defence environment. These policy-makers and Defence 'diplomats' are drawn from both civilian and military pools, yet all of the most senior roles, including DA roles, are military roles and generally SES or equivalent positions.

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[132] Defence remains to have systemic issues with sexism and harassment. As of 2016, around 3500 cases of abuse had been investigated, with over $65 million provided in compensation to over 1800 victims. A Royal Commission was recommended to investigate abuse in the ADF, yet was later quashed (Wadham 2016).

[133] While little public reflections have been made by David Morrison of this time, one year after the Australian of the Year Award he did note that there were "tumultuous aspects" to his treatment, "(b)ut if they're made for the right ethical reasons, then those difficult decisions need to be stood by" (Morrison in Dziedzic 2017, par a39).

One *civilian* participant explained her role as a support staff to a DA:

> we were tasked with supporting the commander to do any international engagement activities, as well as managing the equities and reputation of Defence in the region, sort of as Defence rather than as the ADF – so the broader organisational stuff. We had this quirky management arrangement in that we were force-assigned and thus technically subject to military discipline and the command of the commander. But we also had a boss [in Canberra], actually in International Policy Division . . . when things were happening in theatre that we didn't think were entirely kosher, we could raise it in theatre and say, "this is not in line with what government wants you to do." If that didn't get us any traction, we could exercise the judgment to come back [to Canberra], and elevate the issue and say "you guys need to be aware that this is happening. You need to reach in, and we need to step away. And you guys need to come in over the top and see what's going on." . . . So there's this inherent tension between a military understanding that we can have an effect if you just let them go and do something, and what is often the burden on the civilian part of the organisation, which is "yes, but it's not worth it." . . . You advise on often fairly common sense stuff to us, but you have to translate it into the language and mindset of an operator who sees a military objective and the way to achieve that objective – which is often, "send those people with those guns to that thing to take that hill, and then they can do that. What's the problem right?" So you [establish the] context [in which the military can operate in alignment with government objectives] (Participant 2, Defence, 19 February 2019).

For one *military* participant, DA, structure and chains of command looked different:

> I find as a Defence Attaché here, you're given a budget, you're given strategic guidance, and it's probably the most autonomous role I've ever had . . . and don't get me wrong I still have to get guidance from back in Australia, but you get to implement a program and see change. And, in 20 years time I can go, that's the program that I started. [It's] essentially having an idea and creating it. And everyone goes "that's what Colonel's are for." Yeah, but in Army headquarters in Canberra, as a Colonel, you actually have to have 5, 10, 20 people sign off on, "I want to travel to Canberra tomorrow." You know what I mean? So it is different. (Participant 10, Defence, 4 March 2019).

Interviews therefore demonstrated that even though Defence's organisational chart formally recognises the civilian Department equally to the military ADF, only military personnel occupy the most senior DA roles[134], and that power tensions exist between civilian and military personnel. The two women's experiences set out above are very different, clearly demonstrating the level of authority and power military versus civilian employees are able to

[134] DAs must come from one of the three military service lines (Department of Defence 2019b).

wield internationally. For civilians, opportunities for leadership are reduced – more so internationally than at home, where civilians can continue to rise to the rank of Secretary[135]. Because of women's low representation in the military, the most senior, prestigious and powerful international roles in Defence continue to largely exclude women.

In fact, a commonly circulated poster within the department is the 'International Faces of Defence' – a pictographic A3 poster of all the Australian DAs across the world depicting on average three women in a sea of 45 mostly white older men. Participant 11 discussed it:

> I would like to think that naturally, based on merit, we would have a 50% [balance] . . . and it really annoys me because there's what, I don't know, three women on there? (Participant 11, Defence, 20 March 2019).

It is clear that the overall structuring, traditions and culture[136] of Defence creates a military ethos, even in the civilian side of the DoD. It is clear that military values, norms and behaviours 'travel' and extend to the civilian DoD – enforcing a culture more associated with the military and masculine ideals, than a more bureaucratic approach across the agency. One of the final implications of this hierarchical structuring and chain of command is that this structuring has gendered effects. More hierarchical organisations are associated with greater instances of sexual harassment and discrimination, resulting from power differentials. As McGlen and Sarkees find:

> (i)n most instances hierarchical organisations are seen as impacting negatively upon women, for a number of reasons: because women generally are not a part of the elite group that dominates these hierarchies; [and] because women are not seen as having the characteristics necessary to sit at the top of the pyramid (1993, p.78).

Overall, Defence is characterised as the most militaristic agency studied on the continuum – (refer to **Figure 4,** p. 88)**.**

This section has reinforced the conclusion that the gendered institutions in Defence are enduring. There appears a lack of formal enforcement of gendered change programs, such as recent cultural change recommendations that are superseded before any substantive action can be implemented and enforced[137]. Yet, strong informal enforcement of 'old' norms and ideals appears to have a powerful effect in discouraging women (and men) from speaking out

[135] Although, no women have ever done this, as yet.
[136] Handed down and derived from international equivalents too.
[137] There also appears a lack of accountability for knowing who would enforce gendered change programs – with no similar Women in Leadership Secretariat as in DFAT.

and making gender dynamics public. Power differences between civilian and military staff amplify gender hierarchies, resulting in women being systematically under-represented and underpowered. As constraining as structure appears to be, it is the case agency with the best-developed career progression delineated for staff. This seems to indicate that, in principle, women may have better career advancement prospects than other departments – provided they can outlast sexual harassment and abuse that is amplified in military organisations (McGlen & Sarkees 1993; Australian Human Rights Commission 2011-2014; Enloe 1989, 2014). This will be discussed further in Chapter Five.

The "dark side": Home Affairs

Historical Forces

The Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) has a wide geographic spread, operating both in Australia and through 69 international offices (Australian Public Service Commission 2016b). Home Affairs diplomacy involves supporting the aims and objectives of 'team Australia'[138] and the government of the day. Home Affairs staff often form the second largest contingent in embassies across the world[139]. They support the operations of DFAT and the AFP, as well as facilitate relationships and negotiations between host and home governments. Out of the agencies studied, Home Affairs (its component parts and predecessors) have endured the most machinery of government changes. This has resulted in an organisational environment that is semi-regularly re-assessed to integrate disparate policies and rules from departmental mergers. The bulk of the functions of the Department – which now includes national security, law enforcement, cyber security, aviation and maritime security, transnational and serious organised crime, crisis coordination, immigration, customs and border protection – were the roles of several departments in the past[140].

The modern Home Affairs did not exist at the start of this research, as it was only established on the 20th of December 2017, adding a slate of security and intelligence agencies to its

[138] A branding effort that has arisen particularly in the context of the creation of the Department of Home Affairs and response to crises, such as COVID-19, which refers to a coordinated, centralised approach to securing national interest and security (Kelly 2020).
[139] Second to DFAT.
[140] While a department of the same name was one of the seven founding departments at the federation of Australia, its functions, roles and responsibilities have changed considerably over time and the federation department is not necessarily reflective of the modern make-up of the agency.

existing Immigration, Customs and Border Force portfolios. It is the newest addition to the research[141]. Since the merger, Home Affairs now has a number of portfolio agencies under its departmental structure, most of which are new. These new portfolio agencies include: the Australian Border Force (ABF), Australian Criminal Intelligence Commission (ACIC), the Australian Security and Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), and the Australian Federal Police (AFP). These portfolio agencies fall under the over-arching command of the Department, but are also statutory agencies in their own right, with their own chains of command and operational policies, practices and culture. For the purposes of this research, study of Home Affairs has remained focused on the core three portfolios of Immigration, Customs and the ABF, as these provide better insight into the enduring institutions and experiences of those in the agency. These three divisions represent the most on-going, essential and long-standing make-up of the Department in recent years. The AFP will be studied separately as a new addition to the agency only in late 2017. Over time, the component portfolios of Home Affairs have developed an increasingly international focus[142]. The agency has also transformed from being a largely bureaucratic agency, to one that is more enforcement-based. Elements of the agency now have significant 'sworn' (uniformed, ranked) populations, such as the ABF and the AFP.

The core element of the modern day Home Affairs is its most recent predecessor, the Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP)[143]. Tracing the history of DIBP is significant, not just for understanding the gendered impact of institutions, but racialised impact. In fact, Department of Immigration was established in 1945 under conditions that were overtly racialised – being at the forefront of negotiating race and what it meant to be Australian. The Department was in charge of developing, implementing and enforcing policy in alignment with the government of the day's priorities (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015). The history of the department is therefore closely entwined with Australia's national identity, given its role in stipulating the laws and conditions migration: *who* has the opportunity to *be Australian*. Coinciding with the Federation of Australia in 1901 was also the introduction of the *Immigration Restriction Act* (1901), later known as the White Australia Policy, enforcing strict language and other tests on whom could enter Australia. In

[141] The Australian Labor Party considered and ultimately rejected creating such a department in 2007-2008.
[142] A product of globalisation, and one that has been controversial, particularly given the previous history of the agency as a nation-building agency.
[143] One of the original agencies chosen for this research.

combination with later policies, such as the *Naturalisation Act* (1903), the Department was at the centre of restricting migration and citizenship from anywhere essentially non-European, specifically banning those of Asian, Pacific Islander and African descent. Combined with Australia's colonial history that claimed Australia as 'terra nullius'[144], Australia's national identity and the history of the Department is one that has largely sanctioned racialised (and racist) policies and attitudes[145]. These racialised institutions were co-constitutive, both responding to wider social sentiments amongst the largely European colonial population, and stipulating a maintenance of that status quo generally, and in prestigious (exclusionary) government service of the time (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015).

The Department's history is also one with a similar early relationship to gender as Defence had (Powell & Macintyre 2015), with the staffing population initially largely ex-military:

> (i)n the first years, the great majority of officers who joined the Department of Immigration were returned soldiers, sailors and airmen. It was often called 'an ex-servicemen's department' (Ernst in Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015, p. 27).

Settling and helping new arrivals assimilate became a large part of the department's work, yet all of the leaders and most of the workforce at the time were male. Jordens' (1997) book *Alien to Citizen* notes how women were mostly employed in providing assistance services to migrants. They were employed specifically in the Social Welfare section of the department and were noted for representing the "compassionate face" of the department (Jordens in Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015, p. 31). In fact, the agency's own summary of the history of migration, notes that:

> '(t)he Department of Immigration reflected the culture of the society from which its officers were drawn' . . . Power within the Department resided with men in positions with responsibility for implementing government policy – the migration planners and selectors (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015, p. 31).

This highlights early horizontal (across different portfolios) and vertical (across different ranks) segregation throughout the department, in part by accident and in part by conscious design.

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[144] Classified as unoccupied or uninhibited, despite a rich 60,000+ year old history of indigenous Australian occupation.

[145] Inversely, at much later times, at the forefront of advocating for multiculturalism, making this a particularly complex department.

By 1975 the Department had grown[146] to over 1500 staff, with 197 staff posted in 34 overseas offices. Of this time, one worker based overseas stated:

> (t)his work is not glamourous but necessary. Public opinion is rarely kind to the Department. Those with intentions to migrate who are not approved see us as frustrating and heartless bureaucrats (in Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015, p. 52).

Overseas representational work at this time was described in the Department's history as uncomfortable and often dangerous (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015). Although a gender breakdown of representatives from this time is unavailable, based off the experiences of women posted overseas in government at this time[147], it is likely to have been a difficult working environment for women[148] (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015). Elements of this continue, with one participant highlighting how:

> (i)t's a high-risk role to be in because it's highly visible. So, if you do it poorly everyone is going to notice, and the impact, risk, and the effects of the risk of that are high. So, if you don't do well, everybody notices, and it can become an issue across government (Participant 1, Home Affairs, 2 May 2018).

Even so, in the Department's (2015) publication *A History of the Department of Immigration: Managing Migration to Australia*, women posted internationally in the early period are the only voices quoted on their experience as posted officers. This suggests that women were not uncommon in deployed posts, and their voices had a good chance of being recorded and heard[149]. After machinery of government changes in the 1970s, the institutions within the Department began to shift, both relating to gender and race. The firsthand experience of migration to Australia became increasingly important to the Department, and by 1978 nearly a third of staff came from a migrant background (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015). During this time, a "respect for cultural diversity" became formal policy (Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2015, p. 53; Hocking 2014).

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[146] In 1966 Prime Minister Harold Holt introduced measures marking the first steps to ending the White Australia Policy, and by 1973 Prime Minister Gough Whitlam definitively renounced the Policy (National Museum of Australia 2020). In its place, the government pursued a policy of a multicultural Australian society (Whitlam Institute 2020.).

[147] Based off experiences reported in Department of Immigration and Border Protection (2015), Strachan (2010), and experiences of DFAT internationally-deployed women.

[148] Unease existed over the "proper" role of women in the workforce, and gender segregation remained an enduring feature (Strachan 2010, p. 120).

[149] Particularly given that public service at the time was vertical, hierarchical and impersonal by design (Yeatman 1987).

In the 1990s, further structural changes[150] gave the Department and customs officers enforcement powers. From this time, enforcement and protection became more important – a key shift in the agency. Enforcement and protection are duties traditionally associated with male agentic attributes and forms of hegemonic masculinity that are aggressive, use excessive force, involve abuses of power, and are threatening and hostile (Herbert 2011; Prenzler, Fleming and King 2010). One participant noted of this time:

> I'd been teaching for three years, and then joined the public service. I thought I'd gone back to – I don't know what, I had no idea the culture, the service in 1985 was so bad. Just the intimidation . . . it's just a blokey law enforcement environment. But I ended up, after being trained for a year, [being] thrown into this workplace where it was [an] open floor office. When you walked in it was mainly men and you would get wolf whistled or commented at about what you're wearing so you had nowhere to hide. And then [you had to] sit with the blokes in the open office, at a desk opposite some bloke who was smoking. In those days there was office smoking in there. So, it was just really hostile, really hostile. Then I eventually one day got the slap on the bum from some guy, so, it's like they're just physically threatening environments . . . I never forgot that … that's been with me the whole way through. I don't know, it gives you a bit of determination, self-assertiveness to deal with difficult situations. It's like nothing is going to be as bad as that (Participant 1, Home Affairs, 2 May 2018).

The organisational culture at the time was heavily and overtly gendered, often sexist, and an uncomfortable environment for those participants who experienced it. Women's place in the department, hierarchical structuring and social norms of the day reinforced considerable instances of sexism and harassment[151], which participants noted resulted in a culture and power dynamics often exclusionary to women.

As a humanitarian-based 'soft' portfolio area[152], Immigration was reportedly considerably more gender equal than many APS government departments at the time[153]. The Department tended to attract more women and retain more women to higher levels of leadership. In fact, the first female federal secretary of a department was Helen Williams, Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs from 1996 to 1999[154]. As the first

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[150] Under the *Border Protection and Legislation Amendment Act* 1999. Additional structural changes were happening at the time, including major APS-wide structural changes in 1987 which enlarged the ministry, established a two-tier ministry (Nethercote 1999).
[151] Wider departmental reporting capabilities for sexism and harassment remains inconsistent.
[152] At least historically.
[153] This is reinforced by APSED *Yearbook Statistics* data.
[154] At the time, then-Treasury secretary asked Williams to "play mother" (Dingwell 2019, para 1). For 17 years she was the only female departmental secretary.

federal department to promote a woman to its highest rank, this does indicate that the agency had enough female representation normalise women's leadership, and had the pathways to make career progression possible. This has not yet been achieved in Defence or the AFP, and was only recently achieved in DFAT. Unlike many other federal departments, Immigration has not to this day developed the same level of gender equality policies and strategies. However, it appears that there was *less need to* – women were adequately represented, even if they continued to face gendered challenges. This is a key point that I will return to later in the thesis. Women's experiences indicate enduring gendered institutions that manifest differently and perhaps less visibly for periods of the Department's history, yet remain today, enduring through fluidly adapting over time.

By the early 2000s, the department was increasingly weaponised as part of Prime Minister John Howard's pitch to win elections, both under mandates of stopping 'illegal' migration[155] and countering terrorism. By 2005, the Department became the subject of intense scrutiny and criticism, resulting in two key reports: the Palmer Report and the Comrie Report[156]. Criticisms included that the agency had developed rigid and narrow thinking, as well as a culture of denial and self-justification at the heart of several key mishandlings of cases. Intense scrutiny and low public attitudes have been a legacy of the Department which handles some of Australia's core questions around national identity and who has the right to seek asylum, *be Australian*, and represent Australia and its values (Marr & Wilkinson 2004). Gradually, successive recent governments have shifted the primarily concern of the Department from nation building to border protection and enforcement, often marked by fear mongering and fear of the 'other'[157].

The 2012 *Australian Public Service Commission Capability Review into the Department of*

[155] The Tampa affair and Children Overboard affair were both politicised incidents involving asylum seekers arriving to Australia by boat, the subject of a campaign of misrepresentative reporting and political 'spin' that generated significant anti-immigration sentiment (Rose 2016).

[156] The Palmer Inquiry was led by former AFP commissioner Michael Palmer into the unlawful detention of Cornelia Rau, an Australian citizen suspected of being an illegal immigrant – finding that there were considerable shortcomings in Departmental processes of arrest and detention. The Comrie Report, Inquiry into the Circumstances of the Vivian Alvarez Matter, followed shortly after and was critical of the catastrophic way in which the Department handled the identification of Vivian as an Australian citizen, and not, as they presumed, an illegal immigrant and sex slave (Department of Home Affairs 2020c).

[157] Under Operation Sovereign Borders, Australia was found by the United Nations to be engaging in illegally turning back boats of asylum seekers and refugees. The Department has been at the centre of a number of high profile cases involving border protection, with a hallmark initiative of the Department – offshore processing of asylum seekers – deemed a "cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment" and unlawful under international law (Doherty 2020, para one).

Immigration and Citizenship (predecessor to Home Affairs) found significant gaps in the support for EL and SES managers. It found that, like DFAT, the Department had trouble with HR management, induction, training and on-going mentoring and support. A high proportion of staff (33 per cent) did not believe recruitment decisions were based on merit (compared to 25 per cent in the wider Australian public service), which is worrying given the pervasiveness of unconscious bias and gender discrimination in workplace appointments generally (Australian Public Service Commission 2012)[158].

Additional to what was happening with Immigration, Customs' history is also entwined with DFAT[159] (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2013). It retains many similarities in terms of early historical forces canvassed above in DFAT's history, such as a heavy male domination within the workforce and horizontal and vertical segregation[160]. For a brief period, Customs was also covered under the Department of Police and Customs, and many masculine norms of law enforcement are also present its contemporary structure. Participant 1 talks of her experiences on joining Customs in the 1980s:

> traditionally it was quite a blokey work environment … I joined as a customs officer because they were recruiting and changing their profile. So, I started in an environment where it was a male dominated policing kind of environment. Women worked in the public service in the typing pool. It was a 20-year journey of creating credibility of women being able to do other jobs, which was a bit of a hard slog (Participant 1, Home Affairs, 2 May 2018).

Similar to Defence, building credibility was a key part of women's narratives amongst participants. There were assumptions around who could do what work, with some roles and portfolios understood as inherently more suited to men than women, and vice versa. Considering that women retain the lowest representation in the most masculine, enforcement-based division of the Department – the ABF – building credibility, particularly in 'hard' portfolios, continues to affect women.

Formally created in 2015, ABF represents the youngest section of Home Affairs, and its

[158] As of 2012, the Department maintained heavy internal recruitment for senior executive roles, with 79 per cent of SES band 1 roles and 100 per cent of SES band 2 recruited internally. With the recent amalgamation of agencies under Home Affairs, the agency has seen an increase in ex-military and AFP staff (Strategic Research & Communications Division 2018, 2019).

[159] As the Department of Customs and Trade was one of the original seven departments established at federation.

[160] See APSED *Yearbook Statistics*. This history is also informed by its combative culture derived from National Party leaders, like John "Black Jack" McEwen (Lloyd 2000).

founding reflects the most recent a major change in the Department, from a past more bureaucratic agency structure, to one that has become increasingly para-militaristic. Unlike Immigration, Customs and ABF have more in common in terms of departmental culture and experiences. Like early Immigration culture, ABF culture is informed by AFP and Defence cultures, with a large proportion of staff from enforcement and Defence backgrounds. Participants commented frequently about the Minister and Secretary's preference for ex-AFP and ex-ADF staff[161], noting that the ABF often accepted those who had been 'kicked out' of their former departments because of behavioural issues. The cultures of ABF and Customs is therefore closely related to the departmental cultures of Defence and the AFP – on occasion marked by overt hostility, aggression and 'bolshie' male-dominated cultures. While ABF was reportedly established with a gender equal leadership team, five years later women only represent on average a third of those posted internationally[162]. In 2019, Home Affairs returned the lowest levels of staff engagement and satisfaction of any agency in the APS[163] (Australian Public Service Commission 2019d; Doran 2019).

This is particularly troubling. While Home Affairs has the highest representation of women in leadership overall and amongst those posted internationally, the youngest division of the Department, ABF – which was initially gender-equal – now has the lowest representation of women internationally. Informal gendered norms and rules of enforcement-style agencies – as well as leadership in the form of Ministers and the Secretary, and cultural relicts from the AFP and Defence enforced by ex-AFP and Defence staff – have eroded initial attempts at gender equality. Even though women and men may have been equal in leadership, masculinist norms and behaviours 'won' – they have prevailed over alternative, gender equal or more feminine norms. The equilibrium of para-militaristic, enforcement agencies remains gender inequality.

As leadership tensions and a leadership spill threatened in federal politics, Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull announced the government would create the 'super ministry' Department of Home Affairs, appointing Peter Dutton as Minister (Massola & Wroe 2017). Though the

[161] Which reflects a significant change in the way public service recruitment and career development happens – personalised, and to a degree, politicised. The APS Review identified a number of challenges, including staffing caps resulting in a reliance on consultants, with issues such as cronyism increasing as the numbers of contractors and consultants increase (McIlroy & Tadros 2018; Independent Review of the APS 2018).
[162] The agency has the lowest representation of women across the divisions of Home Affairs analysed.
[163] Only 39 per cent of employees answered positively to "I would recommend my agency as a good place to work" – 26 per cent lower than the APS average (Australian Public Service Commission 2019).

remodelling of the department was widely questioned[164], the decision to combine portfolios had been raised as a possibility since September 11, 2001, with the changing nature of terrorism beyond a purely law enforcement issue, to one of national security requiring the joint operation of multiple actors. According to its first Secretary, Pezzullo, the agency is therefore the "third force of security" in foreign affairs, alongside DFAT and Defence – an ambition that demonstrates the Department's size and contemporary ambitions as much as that of its leader, who has taken a proactive approach to departmental growth (2017, para 29). As of the 2017/2018 amalgamation, the agency has become increasingly 'hard': enforcement, intelligence and security focused – "dark side of the department" as one participant named it (Participant 14, Home Affairs, 9 May 2019).

The effects on women in the department are significant. For those in the ABF and Customs side of the department, the merger was experienced as overwhelmingly positively. Apart from the usual difficulties in reconciling different agency cultures and chains of command, participants reported being largely satisfied and happy with the new departmental make-up as it offered new opportunities and was a pro-active and positive workforce to join. Participant 10 notes that, coming from the Customs side, the merger was experienced as "a bit more of a blip than sort of a big deal" (Participant 10, Home Affairs, 1 February 2019).

The experiences of Immigration staff (the 'soft', humanitarian side[165] of the Department) were starkly different. Many reported the merger as marking a mass exodus for some of the most senior and qualified women in the Department[166]. Even more worryingly, some participants reported a rise in mental illness[167] because of the merger and the culture shift within the agency. They even discussed colleagues who had suicided. Participant 2 explained:

> (w)hen we were merged, it was just horrendous. I'm just surprised more people didn't commit suicide. It was shocking. I had people dropping left, right and centre. The way I was treated by, now, people who are ex-departmental people, was absolutely shocking, was terrible . . . [the Home Affairs merger was] like any other takeover.

[164] And criticised (Button 2018).
[165] At least, historically.
[166] Button comments that a "near wholesale departure of the senior executives" took place, with a number of executives he spoke to commenting that "he [Pezullo] had needlessly insulted their work and that of the department" (2018, para 120). One person Button interviewed commented that Pezullo "made life intolerable for a lot of senior people. He came prejudiced; he had already made up his mind the place was incompetent" (2018, para 121).
[167] Depression, anxiety and suicidal thoughts.

> There are winners and there are losers. People would say I was a winner out of all of that, but I've got the scars to prove it, and . . . I think, Secretary down, everybody's got the scars to prove it. It was a pretty traumatic process (Participant 2, Home Affairs, 11 December 2018).

There was a significant gendered price that came with the merger. Immigration was women-dominated and Customs and ABF were male-dominated. For Customs and ABF women interviewed, the merger was difficult, but generally not experienced as more than a 'blip', and the pros far outweighed the cons. For the Immigration women interviewed, they left the Department, or remained, 'scarred', or, in some instances, reported their colleagues' (male and female) suicides[168]. While Home Affairs now has the highest representation of women in leadership and in international representation across all of the agencies studied, these statistics mask significant differences in women's experiences depending on which part of the department they are from. These nuances will be further investigated in the following chapters. They reinforce that each agency does not represent a monolith of a single experience or pathway. Rather, there are significant nuances within the agencies, as well as across them.

Overall, Home Affairs highlights considerable similarities with the other agencies in terms of its male-dominated history. Women have never been equally represented in the SES in the Department, despite women representing, at a peak, over two thirds of the Department in 1996 and coming close – 49 per cent – in 2009 prior to a continuing decline in representation ever since. Gendered institutions appear to have always been there, despite the Department's higher representation of women. Perhaps more subtly and invisibly, gendered challenges have endured through fluidity and adaptation. The establishment of new portfolios like the ABF appear not to have embedded gender equality in international representation, despite a more gender-equal start. Further, the agency is becoming increasingly enforcement-oriented[169] – signalling the potential for greater, not fewer, gendered challenges to come.

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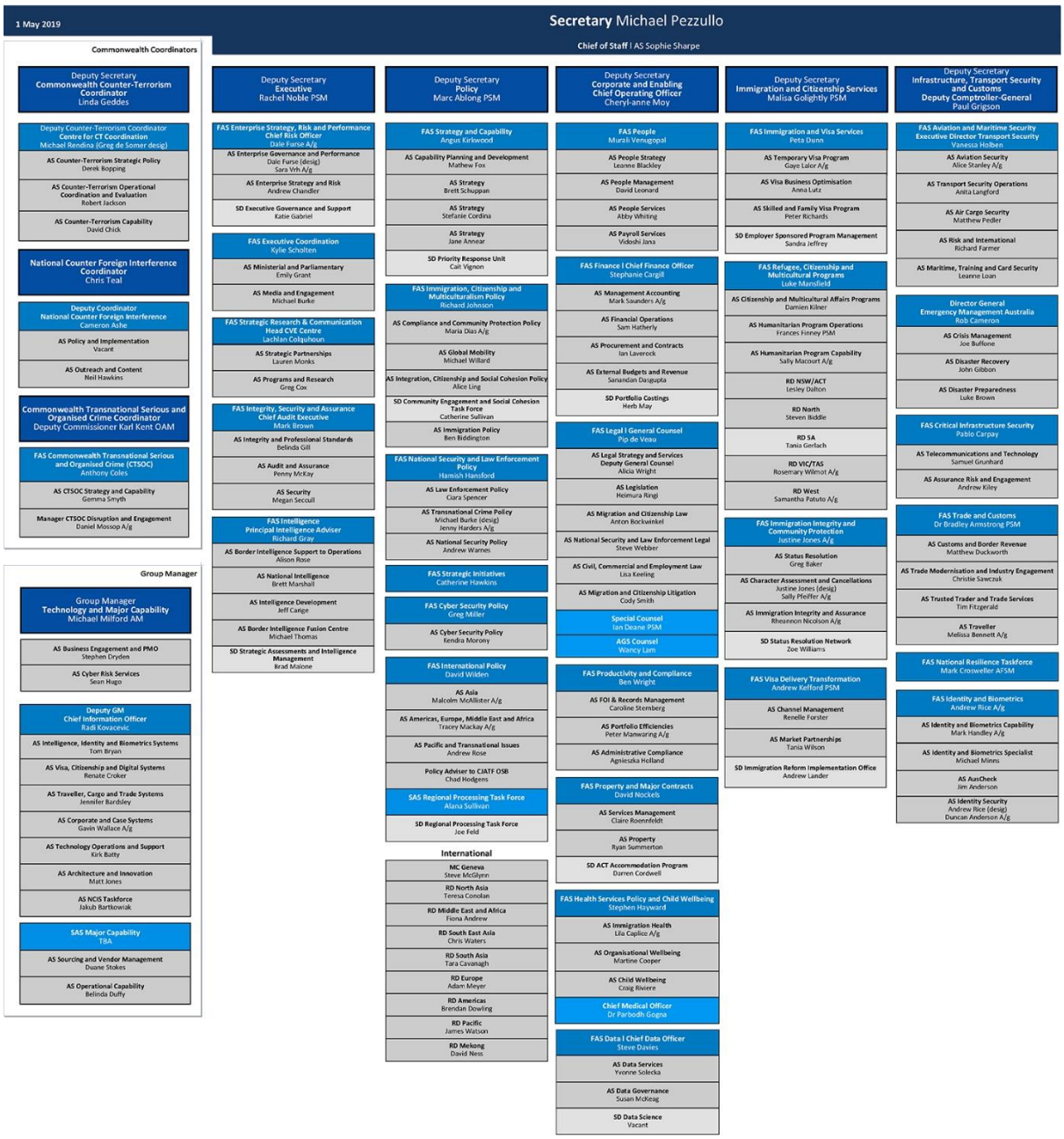
[168] Both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age uncovered a "troubling culture" inside ABF, marked by bullying and harassment, mental illness, and a "string of suicides"(Hasham 2019, para 4, 5; Hasham 2018b). In fact, an investigation by The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age found that leaked ABF files show that one in five staff have been bullied of harassed (Hasham 2018a).

[169] This is a more recent phenomenon, coinciding with a seeming reversal in some of the gender progressiveness of the Department.

Structure and leadership

The complexity of Home Affairs' structure, culture and leadership, combined with growing militarism and a relative lack of formal institutions (until recently) promoting gender equality, has allowed hegemonic forms of masculinity to flourish and informal norms of enforcement to predominate agency culture. The agency's contemporary structure is complex (see **Image 3**), with tiered chains of command spanning an immense department and mix of organisational structures and hierarchies within. Hierarchy is important to the agency, with sections of the department falling under 'sworn' populations that are ranked and uniformed, and other sections conforming more to generic public service – un-uniformed with standard APS rankings.

Image 3: Organisational structure of Home Affairs, 2020



Source: Department of Home Affairs 2020b.

The complex and interlayered nature of the Department both disperses power across portfolios and centralises it[170]. While the super-ministry includes many agencies that have largely retained their own statutory independence, the power of the current Secretary, Michael Pezzullo[171], and Minister, Peter Dutton[172], has increased as they maintain the

[170] The centralisation of power in Home Affairs has been widely criticised, with even cabinet ministers reportedly questioning "whether national security imperatives warranted the centralisation of so much power under one minister" (Button 2018).

[171] Pezullo is described by Button as "military-minded former Defence bureaucrat" who was responsible for overseeing the Operation Sovereign Borders taskforce that over four years turned back 31 boats carrying 771

authority figures across multiple new agencies in a ‘united front’.

Given that critical actors can play an important role in both instituting progressive gender policy, and, resisting or stymieing gendered changes, the positioning of the Secretary and Minister is important. Like Varghese in DFAT, Pezzullo is a ‘Male Champion of Change’. In fact, in a key speech to women leaders within the department, Pezzullo called for an “insurgency and revolution” to disrupt the history of male dominance in senior positions (in Belot 2016, para 1). The way in which he speaks about women’s leadership is revealing for his rhetorical support:

> (s)ome people need to employ different tactics to own a room or an issue. You don't have to have the loudest voice. You don't need to put ego into every sentence … You need to disrupt the very system itself by creating new solutions to problems that largely men – because most of the senior leadership positions are still owned by men – are charged with (cited in Belot 2016, para 3, 5).

Participants noted that Pezullo’s leadership was important and they felt safe and respected as leaders[173]. However, wide discontent was recorded amongst the participants, particularly for those who had not made it during the merger and reported extreme difficulty operating in a bullying and a toxic workplace environment. The Department has a patchy history regarding institutionalising gender equality strategies too, with large periods of absence in formal policies. In the context of APSC commitments to gender equality, as well as women’s overall domination in the Department (but not in leadership), this appears to be a critical oversight. Inconsistency hampers the ability of the Department to enforce policies on gender equality. Because of the centralisation of many portfolio agencies’ power under Home Affairs, the stance that Home Affairs takes on gender equality is also important more broadly for sending a message to a range of critical intelligence and security agencies – many of which who do not have the same level of women’s representation.

Gender equality is not the only subject of the Secretary’s rhetoric, however. Defence and the

people, cementing the shift in the department’s role from “starting new lives … [to] stopping the boats” (Button 2018, para 7-8)

[172] A former Queensland police officer. In his autobiography, Malcolm Turnbull labelled Dutton a narcissist and deficient in character (Turnbull 2020). Similar to Pezullo, Dutton’s tenure has been widely accredited with taking a hard line on immigration and border protection, and has received criticism both nationally and internationally (Button 2018). Even the Australian Human Rights Commission lobbied against expanding the Minister’s and Department’s powers (Karp 2018).

[173] Interestingly however, colloquially, Pezullo’s female deputies are referred to as ‘Charlie’s Angels’ in the Department.

focus on maintaining a 'hard' security-focused departmental orientation is also glorified. Talking about what it takes to get leadership roles in the Department, Participant 3 noted that:

> the Secretary has set that tone at the top, glorified someone who's worked at defence, because he thinks that's the pinnacle. They do have some great qualities, but like I said before, not everyone. It's just, if you've worked in Defence, it's this assumption that, oh, you're brilliant. You'll be able to do this, this, and this. It's like, 'oh, come on, give your own guys a go' (Participant 3, Home Affairs, 14 December 2018).

In terms of 'setting the tone' for the background and attributes valued in Home Affairs to reach leadership, there are evidently gendered effects of the privileging of individuals from Defence and AFP backgrounds, and the move from "planning the nation's future to policing its frontier" (Button 2018, para 7). One participant noted that because of these cultural shifts, there are "a few more controls and restrictions around what we do," with Pezullo claiming that "the department of immigration (sic) of our collective memory and imagination will be no more" (Participant 10, Home Affairs, 1 February 2019; Pezullo 2015, para 38).

Increasingly, the agency is seen as para-militaristic, with higher power and priorities placed on security, intelligence and border protection than past nation-building exercises (refer to **Figure 4**, p. 88). Leadership is increasingly characterised and valued according to norms of authority, discipline and command common in law enforcement and military agencies. This has gendered effects on women, for whom representation in the Department is falling. Immigration women in particular were affected by the 2017 merger, with many key women in the pipeline leaving the agency and those who remain reporting worrying concerns of mental illness, 'scarring' and suicide amongst themselves and/or their colleagues.

"Police-led diplomacy": AFP

Historical forces

Following the bombing of the Hilton Hotel in Sydney in 1979 during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)[174], the AFP was established by combining the

[174] On February 13th 1978, a bomb exploded in a garbage bin outside the Hilton Hotel, the venue for CHOGM, killing three people and injuring others. Without clear legal or constitutional authority, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser and New South Wales Premier Neville Wran deployed nearly 2000 heavily-armed troops. Over the following 18 months, Fraser used the Hilton Hotel as a pretext to expand the powers and resources of the police and security apparatus. Head notes that:

> the Hilton experience demonstrates how a single incident can be used to carry through an unprecedented restructuring and strengthening of the powers of the police and intelligence and military

Commonwealth Police, the ACT Police and the Narcotics Bureau. In its current form, the agency is critical to addressing transnational crime, cybersecurity, narcotics and trafficking. Substantial numbers of AFP employees are engaged in United Nations mission work, and the AFP engages in 'police-led diplomacy'[175] both embedded within international governments and embassy posts[176].

Initial leadership of the AFP was military-influenced, with the first two Commissioners[177] from an army background, and the agency described as distinctly masculine. One participant stated:

> over that period of time [in the last 30 years] there has been significant challenges. (1) as a female in the workforce but (2) the challenges that every individual has reconciling their own personality types and the way that they operate against a culture that exists in what is a quasi-military style organisation . . . when I came in, it was highly male centric in everything from the way that we operate to the culture at that low level that you see in any organisation – but a very, very male centric environment (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018).

The AFP was also uniquely structured. It was established by the *Australian Federal Police (AFP) Act* 1979, quite separate to the *APS Act* – the Act that continues to guide the other three agencies' civilian divisions as well as AFP staff who merged from the Narcotics Bureau.

To date, only men have occupied the role of Commissioner, yet, in 1982, only three years into operation, women formed the majority of recruits in an AFP training course, where there were 16 women and only seven men part of the intake (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). Women formed 25 per cent of all police recruits who graduated in 1983-84, which increased their overall population to 2.7 per cent of sworn police – evidencing critically low retention

agencies at the expense of legal and democratic rights (2008, p. 97).

No genuine inquiry was ever made, "despite evidence pointing to the possibility that the crime was committed by the security agencies themselves" (Head 2008, p. 97).

[175] Former AFP Commissioner Andrew Colvin noted that:

> [police-led diplomacy] utilises law enforcement links more broadly to build upon, and find common bilateral and diplomatic ground when more traditional exchanges present barriers … what country doesn't want to cooperate on combating terrorism, organised crime, child sex tourism, cybercrime and the like? (cited in Hess 2015, p. 17).

[176] International work in the AFP is recent, and has grown post- September 11, 2001, responding to both geo-politics and globalisation.

[177] Sir Colin Woods and Ronald Grey.

of women. At this time multiculturalism was also beginning to enter the force, with 6 per cent of recruits born overseas and 13 per cent of recruits with parents born overseas.

The AFP is a substantially younger organisation than the other agencies[178]. The AFP was created in a time when social justice and issues of equity and equality were being implemented across government service, and some of the AFP's initiatives clearly reflect that[179]. The 1990s highlighted gendered issues that had been simmering within the agency and were increasingly constraining women. Carmel Niland and Associates (1995) completed an audit of the agency's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Program to find that it was an excellent policy in theory supporting an equal workforce. However, despite this, the agency's ability to meet the objectives were poor – the enforcement mechanisms were weak. This is a very clear case of how formal policies were strong and supportive of women, and yet failed in application due to informal norms and behaviour within the agency. The report found that AFP's culture produced "a climate conducive to sexual and racial harassment," and the legal obligation to eliminate workplace discrimination and harassment to be poorly understood (Commonwealth of Australia 2009, p. 41). Given that *law enforcement* was the guiding mandate of the agency, the fact that enforcement *of internal gender policies* was weak indicates a significant inconsistency in the agency. The lack of enforcement of progressive institutions around gender equality appears indicative of will, rather than ability, to enforce.

The agency culture at this time, and since the establishment of the AFP, was distinctly bullying, sexist, and overtly discriminatory towards women. One participant who had been in the agency almost since foundation and promoted only once in that time period, recalled being berated in the first few years of her service for putting her hand up for promotion. On placing her paperwork on her (male) boss's desk, her boss walked up to her in a line-up of staff, ripped her application up in front of her face and said "you can't apply for this, you've

[178] Even though, as in all organisations, the AFP does have a pre-history evidenced by its initial component parts.

[179] In 1989 the AFP held an inaugural Women's Forum in Canberra to discuss part-time work, job-sharing and two to four hour creches for shift-workers' children. By the 1990s the AFP hosted the Women, Police and Management Conference, Commissioner Palmer ordered an Equity and Performance and Cultural Assessment audit, and he also oversaw the development of an Aboriginal Recruitment and Employment Strategy. Equity and women's networks were part of the organisation through each region (state or territory) of operation at this time, providing one representative member with a direct conduit to the Commissioner and access to sit on the National Management Team.

got a fucking vagina" (Participant 11, AFP, 1 February 2019). Another participant commented how the early days "was all like bravado and swearing all the time and that sort of thing," with humiliation, harassment and discrimination embedded in the psyche of the agency (Participant 6, AFP, 4 October 2019). The overt hostility witnessed by participants demonstrates extremely gendered informal institutions and a culture marked by visible, tangible and physical exclusion. Social attitudes and the greater emancipation of women was a mainstay of wider society by the end of the century, yet the AFP remained marked by considerable gendered challenges[180].

September 11, 2001[181] marked a critical juncture for the agency, with the largely domestic-facing agency shifting to its contemporary orientation[182]. In fact, from the very first year of the AFP's establishment, Commissioner Woods noted that:

> (a)ccepting the increasing complexity of crime and the threat imposed by international criminals, it may not be unrealistic to foresee a day when Legal (Police) Attachés may be seen as a necessary adjunct to all overseas Missions (in Commonwealth of Australia 2009, p.6).

Legal (Police) Attachés formed part of Australia's overseas embassies from establishment, although the role of the AFP in Australia's international relations and foreign policy was still evolving. In 1999, women represented six out of 62 overseas-posted staff (sworn and unsworn), filling 9.6 per cent of roles (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). It was not until the early 2000s that the AFP's international footprint grew rapidly and began to reflect the international affairs role that the agency has today. Key events post- September 2001 led to large numbers of AFP staff deploying internationally, from the placement of 100 AFP members in Indonesia at the peak of the response to the Bali bombings, to the creation of the International Deployment Group (IDG) in 2003-04 to deal with the joint operation of Army and AFP personnel in Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI). At this time, the International Network also expanded offices to 32 posts across 26 countries. By

[180] By 1999, the largest recruitment round commenced at the AFP College, with the majority of male and female recruits both with a tertiary degree and secondary language – for the first time in the agency's history. This is reflective of a more professionalised and skilled workforce, increasingly essential for greater international engagement in the years to come. However, even so, women continued to have lower representation in 'sworn' police populations, facing considerable vertical and horizontal segregation (Commonwealth of Australia 2009).

[181] And, to a lesser degree, AFP peacekeeping operations in the Pacific, including in East Timor in 1999 (Australian Federal Police n.d.).

[182] The contemporary agency provides crucial strategic policy advice on issues relating to national security, law enforcement and international matters affecting the Commonwealth, with international engagement permeating all aspects of AFP operations (Australian Federal Police 2017a).

2004-05, up to 500 IDG personnel were in missions across the Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Timor-Leste (Commonwealth of Australia 2009). These two types of international postings form the basis of AFP overseas representation, with mission work comprising largely of multilateral United Nations missions' assignments, and the International Network forming AFP work across embassies and posts.

Within the agency's contemporary context, former Commissioner Andrew Colvin committed to achieving a 50:50 gender balance within the next decade, heralding a range of new strategies to increase women's overall representation and their representation in leadership. Yet even months into the new Commissioner Reece Kershaw's appointment, two of the most senior AFP women have left the agency, leaving senior executive leadership currently devoid of women. Following the 2016 report, *Culture Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police,* the AFP has increasingly sought to reform elements of its culture, presenting the current timing of this research in a critical time of transformation (Elizabeth Broderick & Co 2016). As of 2014/15, IDG released its first Gender Strategy, and the division (now named International Operations or IO) is now on its second iteration, the *International Operations Gender Strategy 2018-2022* (Australian Federal Police 2018d). The fact that the AFP has a specific gender strategy (and is in its second iteration) for its international operations is significant, demonstrating formal commitment to extending gendered change to international affairs, matched only by DFAT's strategies. Further, renewed focus on gendered differences throughout the agency and even the establishment of an all-female recruitment round demonstrate a dedication to institutional change, particularly around gendered cultures, as well as bullying.

Yet, bullying remains one of the most significant reported workplace issues[183], with the agency experiencing six suicides in the last two years, two of which were undertaken in the armoury of the AFP's federal headquarters. Just prior to the most recent suicide, in December 2019, former AFP staffer Julie Woodward sent a 56 page suicide letter[184] to the AFP and Australian news outlet, *news.com.au*, detailing the substantial systemic bullying and physical and sexual harassment she and other colleagues had endured (Palin 2019). A further 100

[183] Analysis of the occurrence of sexual and physical harassment was attempted, but due to a lack of comprehensive and trend data, as well as known issues of survivors under-reporting, analysis for substantial increases or decreases in occurrences of harassment was not possible.
[184] The letter of which has not been made public.

whistleblowers came forward and a petition was launched calling for a federal inquiry into bullying in the AFP – which has not yet been actioned. These incidents indicate a toxic culture within the agency. Given the gendered challenges and entrenched sexism and misogyny within the agency, bullying is likely to have increased effects on women, and was a persistent feature throughout interviews.

The AFP demonstrates considerably more instances of gender discrimination and continued marginalisation within the department than might be expected given its (relatively) recent establishment. In the AFP, gendered institutions associated with policing as a profession[185] appear to be crucial to the exclusionary, bullying and misogynistic norms and behaviours in practice since establishment. These norms, associated with the *profession generally* have informed the individual circumstance of the AFP. Even though it was established in a key period of gendered institutional change in wider society, with the introduction of EEO policies and other measures, the agency appears to be informed by 'old' policing norms rather than changing 'new' social norms. This might explain why the ABF has *regressed* in terms of its gender representation in the five years since its establishment. In these agencies, what it means to be a 'law enforcement agent' or officer of the law appears to be more important than the formal institutions within the agencies or changing social norms in wider society. What it means to be a police or enforcement officer is gendered, based in old 'traditions' around men as the 'defender' and 'enforcer'. To be a police officer is to be male, 'blokey', 'bolshie', aggressive, hierarchical, and authoritative (Broderick & Co 2016; Herbert 2001; Prenzler, Fleming & King 2010). Gendered social and professional norms and institutions are therefore enduring in the AFP.

In some cases, instances of exclusionary behaviour and bullying have intensified, not decreased. Many participants reported that often (male) colleagues viewed the participants' career progression as only the result of targets and being the 'token', and not as a result of their 'merit'. The participants themselves viewed their career progress as the result of a hard, unending battle in which their achievements and 'merit' was infrequently rewarded, and when it was, it was well overdue.

[185] With policing in Australia characterised by "an aggressive patrol style, abuse of power, excessive force and an emphasis on arrest and charge," and typically associated with a male-dominated policing culture (Prenzler, Fleming & King 2010; Herbert 2001).

While participants reported that the agency has markedly improved in terms of transparency as a result of the 2016 report *Culture Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police*, gendered challenges endure. Women continue to be significantly under-represented, as will be explored in the next chapter on demographics. Issues around horizontal and vertical segregation, plus discrimination and harassment, remain, and the ideal police officer continues to be inherently male.

Structure and leadership

Analysis of the AFP's structure and leadership demonstrates an agency guided by hierarchy and rank, which has inherent positives and negatives for women. Highlighted earlier, the structuring between the *AFP Act* and *APS Act* presents one such point of tension, particularly regarding mobility across agencies. Lateral mobility is often key to leadership progression, particularly for women seeking more women-, and family-, friendly employment. While the 'sworn' nature of police officers restrict lateral recruitments at rank from the outside into the AFP, technically it should be easy to transfer to a new department at rank for those wishing to progress their career from the AFP to a new agency. Yet, because the AFP falls under the *AFP Act*, participants highlighted that transferring out to general APS or other work would mean that they would lose portability of superannuation that was provided in their conditions under the Act. This presents a big disincentive for women particularly, given that women receive on average only one third of the superannuation payout of their male colleagues (Australian Human Rights Commission 2020). Legal structure therefore presents challenges around lateral mobility and retention. For women who wish to transfer out of the AFP to a more family-friendly organisation or better work hours, or for whom the nature of the work or gendered challenges in the work become too much, the financial ramifications are significant.

As a para-militaristic uniformed agency, the AFP's structure is both hierarchical and rigid (refer to **Figure 4**, p. 88)**.**

Image 4: Organisational structure of the AFP, 2019

Source: Australian Federal Police 2019. Note: an updated 2020 chart was not yet available.

Like Defence and the ABF canvassed prior, rank is clearly visible, represented by uniform stripes, stars and badges. The overtly physical nature of hierarchy creates a structure in which chains of command are significant and gendered: top-heavy and male-dominated. McGlen and Sarkees note that this kind of structure "can generally advantage women only if women populate the crucial positions" (1993, p. 78). Yet, analysis of the organisational chart highlights a structure that while highly ranked, is simpler than the other agencies. This may be reflective of the agencies' size and its relative scope, which is action and enforcement-oriented. Further, the organisational chart does not refer to the AFP's contemporary location within Home Affairs, which both has a role in guiding policy priorities and as part of the executives' chain of command structure.

Like each of the other agencies, critical actors are also important in the AFP. In the 2016 Elizabeth Broderick and Co., the authors found that "[t]he AFP must capture the breadth of talent and expertise available in the Australian labour market and reflect the diversity of the Australian community" (2016, p. 5). Women's experiences of leadership were found to be different to men's, despite a belief that their experiences were equal. Gendered challenges were found to be amplified in remote work, which suggests that women deployed in international positions face significant and differential treatment. Because of AFP's hierarchical and ranked structuring, and the ingrained nature of gendered cultures,

movements for gender equality have required the leadership of critical actors, particularly the Commissioner. The former Commissioner Andrew Colvin's leadership on gender recurred regularly in the interviews, suggesting that his stance was a lived commitment. One participant noted:

> the AFP is undergoing an incredible reform and I think that our agency is in a really positive place because of the reform agenda that our Commissioner [Andrew Colvin] has currently put in place . . . Andrew commissioned the [Cultural Change] report, he welcomed the outcomes of the report. I don't think for a lot of the senior management at the time there would have been very palatable outcomes because there was and there will always be the existence of harassment and the like within an organisation, or lack of opportunity – but he welcomed it. He put in place [measures], he made commitments, he personally models it and it's about that leadership [by example] (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018).

Increasing women's leadership has been prioritised for its utility as a central part of this reform agenda. Gender equality (1) strengthens capability and operational effectiveness; (2) contributes being a leading law enforcement agency; (3) creates an inclusive culture aligned with the vision of the senior leadership, and; (4) ensures the AFP is able to meet the uncertain challenges of the future (Elizabeth Broderick & Co 2016). The aims of reform and critical actors is not without challenges however.

Similar to the example highlighted earlier with the former Chief of Army David Morrison, it is clear that agency culture also affects the Commissioner's ability to see through the reform efforts. Participant 8 stated:

> (i)t's a difficult cultural change for a policing organisation to go through … we've got these policies in place now that back you up though like the international [gender] strategy, the engagement strategy and that sort of thing. We can say, well, no, this is what the Commissioner wants, so this is why I'm making this decision and this is what is fair for us. So that's kind of it's good to back you up but, look, it's not without its negativity from people basically, their reluctance to change, so it's been challenging (Participant 8, AFP, 17 January 2019).

While hierarchy and rank are important to being able to implement policy decisions in the AFP, across the more militaristic or para-militaristic agencies studied, a core objection to gendered change that was raised during this research was prioritising *operational needs* above gender equality (as if they are mutually exclusive). Operational needs may be well justified in emergency situations, as what is most important is that the agencies are able to act in a timely manner and in the best way possible to ensure government outcomes and

objectives are met. During terror attacks, war, criminal or other operations, at any moment, a situation could turn deadly. The precariousness of the work is not to be under-estimated, and staff put their lives on the line every day to ensure that agency and country objectives are met.

Yet, because of this, tackling 'real problems' – in terms of 'real' cases and immediate operations – is prioritised over dealing with intangible and ephemeral topics, such as gender relations within the agency. Additionally, blind promotions processes, as well as multi-layered interviews and testing, were introduced as a way of curbing bias in promotions. However, the frequency of formal policy changes has impaired the ability to reach the outcomes and targets desired. Participants noted that there was an instability in these gendered change policies in particular, which would change from one year to the next[186]. On viewing these, Participant 10 noted:

> it's not that we need to scrap these initiatives, it's just we need to revisit how they're being delivered. But, like anything, people have kneejerk reactions like, "well, that didn't work." I think there's such a push for change that when the result isn't immediate people are quick to criticise initiatives that, [and change that] … [but,] I think, [it] needs more bedding down (Participant 10, AFP, 31 January 2019).

Frequent change resulted in these policies having less credibility, as well as being more difficult to navigate. Credibility also affects enforcement of gendered change – less credible policies are harder to enforce. Further, it places women in a difficult situation. Not only is it more difficult to navigate career progress, but staff distrust the system used to produce the new results, which also effects women's credibility as the 'right choice' for the role in the eyes of their colleagues. Instability in the rules and processes therefore appear to have disadvantaged women, discredited their achievements and even harmed the credibility of policy-makers, with the effect of eroding the authority of their rank (at least on this issue). This will be revisited in Chapter Six.

Overall, the AFP's history, structure and leadership highlights enduring policing institutions that have normalised a masculine, bullying and in some cases a misogynistic workforce. Recent policy changes are evidently gaining traction across the agency, gradually improving

[186] The effect of this is borne out in Chapter Five, whereby women's representation in the agency overall has only marginally increased.

women's representation and access to opportunities[187]. However, the actual experiences of women are still poorly understood, and history indicates prevailing discrimination and harassment are part of what is already a difficult and stressful job. The former Commissioner Colvin's commitments highlight an agency proactive in changing – whether, and to what degree this progress is continued under the new Commissioner is yet to be seen. Further, it remains to be seen whether these reform efforts will result in a truly equitable force, or not. Gendered inequalities remain to endure by fluidly adapting to new policy environments, evidenced by substantial entrenched cases of harassment and bullying.

The AFP is characterised as para-militaristic – as noted in **Figure 4 (**see p. 88**).** It is guided by the AFP Act which gives sworn police members special powers, and its operational requirements and chains of command are more consistent with a para-militaristic structure, akin to the ABF.

Summary

In this chapter, agency history, structure and leadership have been analysed to demonstrate that across all agencies, gendered institutions remain. Rather than history guiding whether gendered challenges occur, or not, history is important for determining whether gendered challenges *are more or less visible,* and what enforcement mechanisms are used to maintain a pre-existing gender order. More overt and visible gendered rules, norms, and practices are correlated with the more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies studied – in Defence and the AFP in particular although it is noted that Home Affairs is increasingly 'militarised'. In more bureaucratic agencies, entrenched gendered rules remain, although they are increasingly covert and at times obscured by the rapid progress made. The less visible nature of these challenges is a result of a complex APS and APSC environment that has instilled gender equality measures across bureaucratic government service. It is also the result of norms that have reduced the 'acceptableness' of overt sexism and misogyny in bureaucracies, which remain par for the course in more militaristic agencies. In such agencies, gender equality measures are subordinate to (and not mutually a part of) achieving the operational realities of their mandate.

[187] With the exception of the recent loss of two senior women from the executive.

By analysing the rapid increase in women in leadership in DFAT, it is clear that in addition to the presence of formal institutions, layering of institutions, and the support of critical actors, the ability to enforce (or not) 'new' rules is significant to the progress made – a consistency across all agencies. In DFAT, significant enforcement abilities were found, with dedicated funding and power as part of the executive branch. In Defence, the most militaristic agency studied and the agency with the lowest representation of women, it was found: (1) key formal institutions were missing at an overarching level; (2) frequency of reviews and recommendations resulted in reduced traction and 'instable' rules, and; (3) critical actors who had the ability to enforce rules were being enforced themselves and made an example of, which hampered their ability to follow through on implementation. In Home Affairs – the agency with the highest historical representation of women – formal institutions were completely missing until recent years, and for large periods were patchy and inconsistent. Yet even though elements of the agency, like the ABF, were reportedly established with equal representation in leadership, the agency has gradually regressed in terms of its gender representation. Inconsistency and the absence of formal institutions for periods mean that the agency's enforcement ability is hampered, and the regression indicates that the 'equilibrium' of the agency remains gendered. Finally, instability in new rules aimed at gendered change in the AFP has eroded both the credibility of the agency to enforce the rules, as well as the credibility of women in the agency, who are viewed as fulfilling targets and quotas rather than achieving progression through 'merit'.

Historical forces, agency structure and leadership have influenced women's representation, with more militaristic agencies correlated with less women overall, in leadership and in international representation, as will be discussed in the next chapter. However, there remains relative homogeneity in women's experiences, which will be explored in Chapter Six, suggesting that history is more crucially linked to understanding the *visibility* (or lack thereof) gendered challenges that remain. It remains acceptable in more militaristic agencies to be more 'bolshie', masculine and male-dominated, and therefore gendered challenges remain relatively visible, overt and often illuminatingly obvious. On the other hand, despite the fact that bureaucratic government service similarly started as male-dominated and heavily masculine, it was more welcoming to women, with physicality not determining employability and APS agencies under greater institutional pressure to be the gold standard in equal employment opportunity. Rather than witnessing an erosion in the gendered nature of these

institutions however, they appear to endure through fluidity, akin to Mackay, Kenny and Chappell finding that "male-dominated political elites have shifted the locus of power from formal to informal mechanisms and to different institutional arenas" (2010, p.583).

This shift appears to be occurring in two ways. Firstly, by gendered challenges going 'underground' and continuing to exist covertly, influencing women in subtle and less visible ways even in the bureaucratic agencies – what might be seen as 'genteel' toxic masculinities. Secondly, by the increasingly militaristic shift to 'hard' power approaches in Australian international affairs, as found by analysing the decreasing footprint and funding of DFAT and the increasing funding and strategic importance of harder agencies (for instance, the changing role of DAs and the role of Home Affairs as the "third force of security") (Pezullo 2017, para 29).

Overall, it is clear that institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of change all have enormous influence on institutions, shaping many as specifically gendered, both in women's representation as will be explored in the next chapter, Chapter Five, and experiences as will be explored in Chapter Six. But, as will become clear in later chapters, these findings are nuanced, and only go part way to explaining women's continued under-representation in international affairs.

Chapter Five: Who gets to represent Australia overseas?

Introduction

> *I spent a lot of time worrying that I wasn't ambassadorial enough, I wasn't like some of the people I'd seen in DFAT, particularly the men I have to say, because there's more of them to look at (Participant 14, DFAT, 4 February 2019).*

Agency histories discussed in Chapter Four highlight that gendered institutions in international affairs endure through fluidity and adaptation, remaining a legacy across the agencies. This chapter addresses crucial issues around belonging and representation in international affairs, arguing that through a process of exclusion and discrimination, women remain chronically under-represented over time and across portfolios, ranks, and postings. Exclusion and gendered discrimination are further compounded for those women from culturally and linguistically diverse, indigenous, sexually diverse and other backgrounds, reinforcing that whilst women's representation has improved in some spheres, progress for women's representation is mostly limited to well connected, heterosexual, white women.

This chapter firstly analyses statistics on women's representation, revealing differences between militaristic and bureaucratic agencies, particularly regarding women's representation overall, in leadership, and internationally. Additionally, analysing participant demographics unpacks these trends further, to illuminate who is given the opportunity to represent Australia in leadership, and internationally. Understanding this also reveals the gaps: who is *not* given the opportunity to represent Australia, and the gendered, racialised, heteronormative, and other institutions that exist to constrain leaders on the international stage. Lastly, this chapter analyses the gendered 'rules of the game', and the values, norms, and behaviours that are associated with who can represent Australia internationally. It demonstrates that women's voice, value and visibility, in particular, are closely 'policed' across the four key areas that were outlined in the framework in **Figure 1** (see p. 59) – the diplomatic field, host and home society, agency and individual contexts. Further, this has effects distributing power and resources – with the effect that women remain vertically *and* horizontally segregated across posts and portfolios.

Statistics on women's representation

> *I have found myself in meetings in Border Force in Australia and through my career*

in Customs where I have felt like the lone woman in the room. You know, it's confronting (Participant 1, Home Affairs, 2 May 2018).

In Chapter One, I established that women *are* under-represented in Australian international affairs. This section seeks to quantify and detail this under-representation, particularly given the rapid changes that occurred even during the course of this research. The foreign policy think-tank, Lowy Institute (2019c), found that gender diversity in the Australian international affairs field lags significantly behind the Australian Public Service (APS). Overall, women remain under-represented, and more militaristic agencies are generally considered the worst performing – with militarism frequently noted as oppositional and antithetical to feminism (Enloe 1989, 2014; Duncanson and Woodward 2016). However, breaking down data on gender by rank, and comparing it with opportunities for leadership and international representation over time, reveals substantial original findings on women's representation in Australian international affairs – some particularly counter-intuitive and surprising.

In this chapter, statistics on (1) overall representation, (2) SES (and equivalent) leadership, (3) EL (and equivalent) leadership, and (4) international representation are analysed. Data on international postings, unless otherwise stated, remains focused on women in SES and EL positions in order to accurately portray women's *formal leadership* in Australian international affairs. A range of datasets have been accessed[188], over a range of periods, in order to obtain the most accurate account of women's representation across the agencies. In order to reveal the most rigorous and thorough account of gender across the agencies, I have endeavoured to reduce inconsistencies in reporting methods and gaps in the data[189]. However, given some of

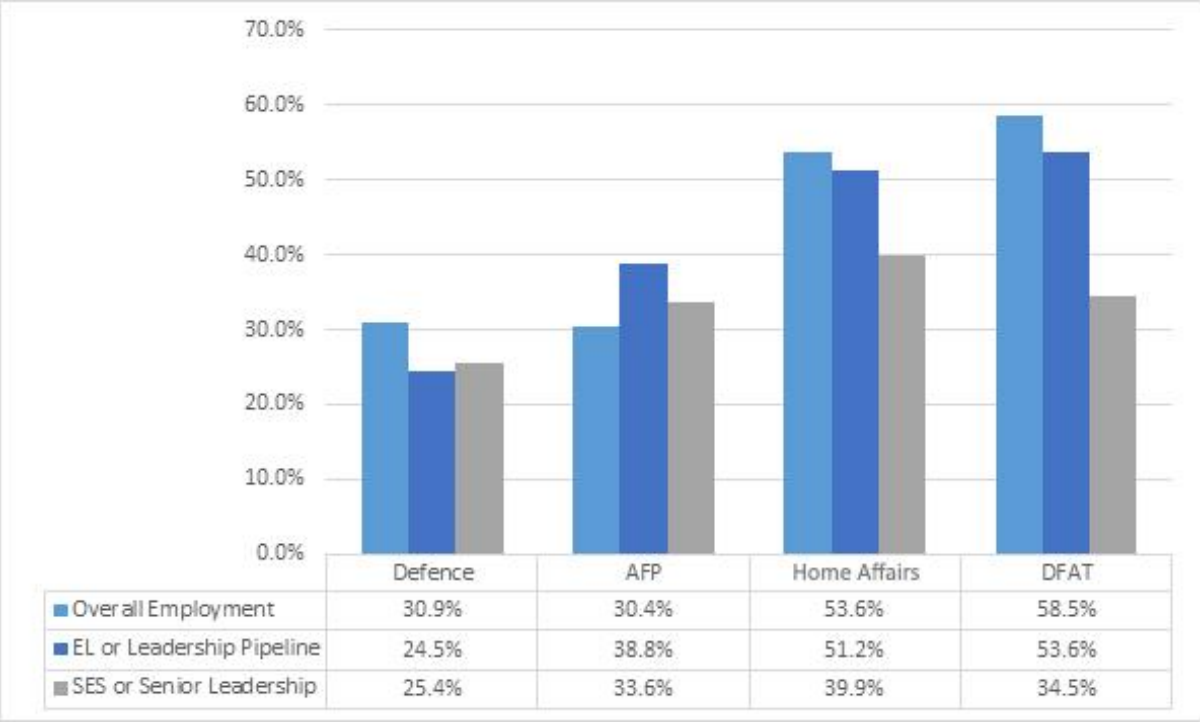
[188] As noted in the section on data collection in Chapter Three.

[189] Since all data in this section comes from a range of dates, dates have been clearly labelled in each graph or table, and each data source. Even within the same year, there are variations in the data depending on which source is used – agency annual reports, or APSED statistics. For ease of comparison, I have chosen to rely on agency annual reports for the most recent data. Agency annual reports generally contain more detailed data on gender and rank/role. For older data that was not available in agency annual reports, I have relied on the APSED statistics – this data has more consistent gender reporting, but less detailed data as far as rank and role is concerned. International deployment data for Defence and Home Affairs was previously unpublished, and therefore this data was requested directly from the agencies. Where data was sourced directly, I have compared it to data on overall representation and leadership in the same year (rather than more recent data), in order to gather the most accurate reflection on women's opportunities within the same year. Due to delays in the release of annual reports, the data gained was the most recently available data at the time. Finally, it should be noted that most data was almost exclusively reported in the gender binary – male and female. Where data beyond this binary was found, the breakdown was male, female and 'indeterminate' – with 'indeterminate' frequently blank. Only Defence included male, female, and 'not disclosed' – however this was because they were in the midst of replacing the person in the role, and did not yet have the gender of the replacement. While the call to collect data beyond the gender binary has been made (Churchill 2019; AIDS Action Council 2017), this was not yet reflected data reporting.

the gaps in knowledge and restricted access to some forms of data, there were considerable difficulties in compiling this dataset. This data represents a significant new contribution to the literature, including analysis of previously unpublished datasets.

Women's representation in the four agencies is shown in **Graph 6**.

Graph 6: Representation of women in the agencies, 2018



Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data. All data is for 2019 except for Defence, which refers to 2018, as no numerical breakdown could be sought for EL and SES ADF leadership for 2019.

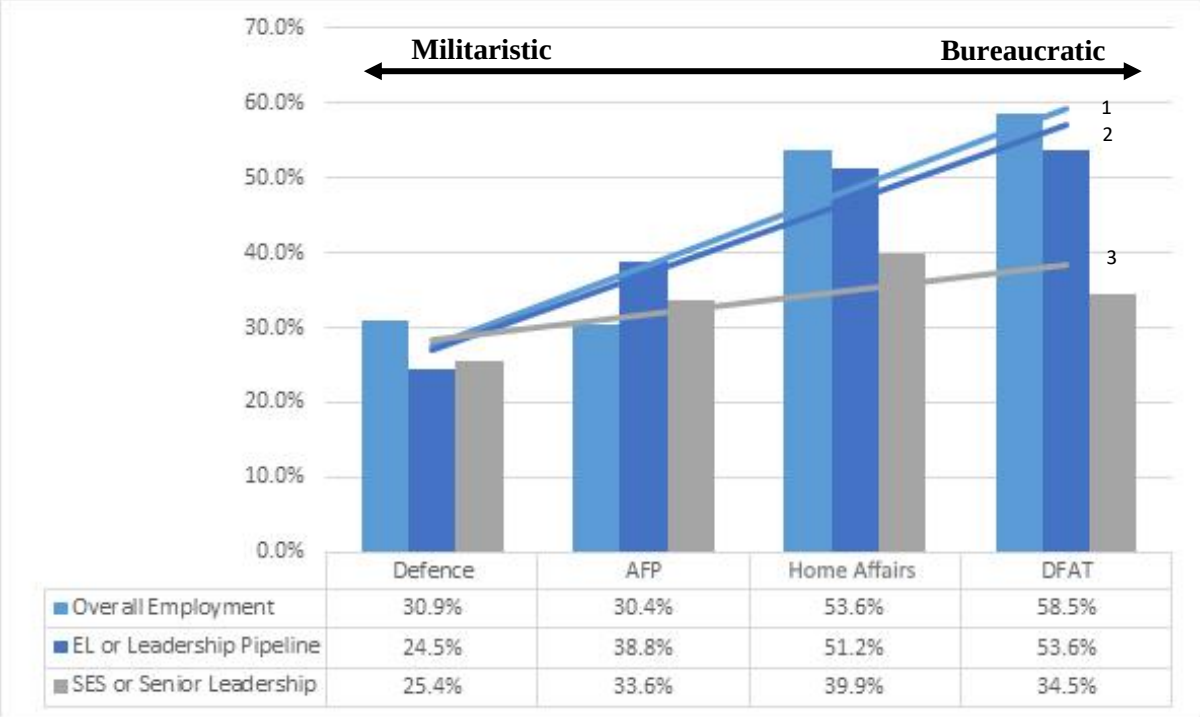
In 2018, 2019 women were least represented overall in the AFP (30.4 per cent), followed by Defence (at 30.9 per cent). However, women formed the majority of overall staff in Home Affairs (53.6 per cent) and DFAT (58.5 per cent). Women also formed the majority of EL leaders in Home Affairs (52.2 per cent) and DFAT (53.6 per cent), yet remain least represented at the SES level in these agencies, representing only 39.9 per cent of SES roles in Home Affairs and 34.5 per cent of SES roles in DFAT[190]. In the AFP and Defence, women were least represented in EL roles, followed by SES roles. Women represented 25.4 per cent of SES roles and 24.5 per cent of EL roles in Defence, and 33.6 per cent of SES roles and

[190] An increase of 5.5 per cent from 2018.

38.8 per cent of EL roles in the AFP.

When we interpret **Graph 6** along the militaristic-bureaucratic characterisation established in the Chapter Three, novel trends regarding representation of women emerge, as shown in **Graph 7**.

Graph 7: Representation of women in the agencies (with trend lines), 2018



Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data.

A linear regression has been applied to **Graph 7** to determine if there is a relationship between overall employment (trend line 1) and EL or equivalent (trend line 2) and SES or equivalent (trend line 3). **Graph 7** demonstrates that the more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies (Defence and AFP in particular) evidence both lower levels of women overall (trend line 1) and in leadership (trend line 2, 3) as compared to more bureaucratic agencies (Home Affairs and DFAT). However, a novel insight emerges when we observe the difference between trend line 1 (overall employment of women) and trend line 3 (women in SES or equivalent position) across the agencies. The gap between overall employment of women and women in SES or equivalent leadership *widens* the more bureaucratic the agency is. Although the literature indicates that women are least represented in militaristic and para-militaristic agencies, women are most proportionally represented in these agencies. Inversely,

whilst women represent a majority of more bureaucratic agencies, women are least proportionally represented in these agencies. This is a significant original finding, counter-intuitive to the established literature.

Given that considerable differences exist *within* agencies regarding their military or sworn populations versus their civilian or unsworn professional populations, the above findings should be reinforced when the agencies are further disaggregated along a militaristic-bureaucratic continuum (see **Figure 6**). Disaggregation reveals findings that aggregated data would obscure, improving the accuracy and rigour of statistical analysis.

Figure 6: Militaristic-bureaucratic continuum (agencies disaggregated)

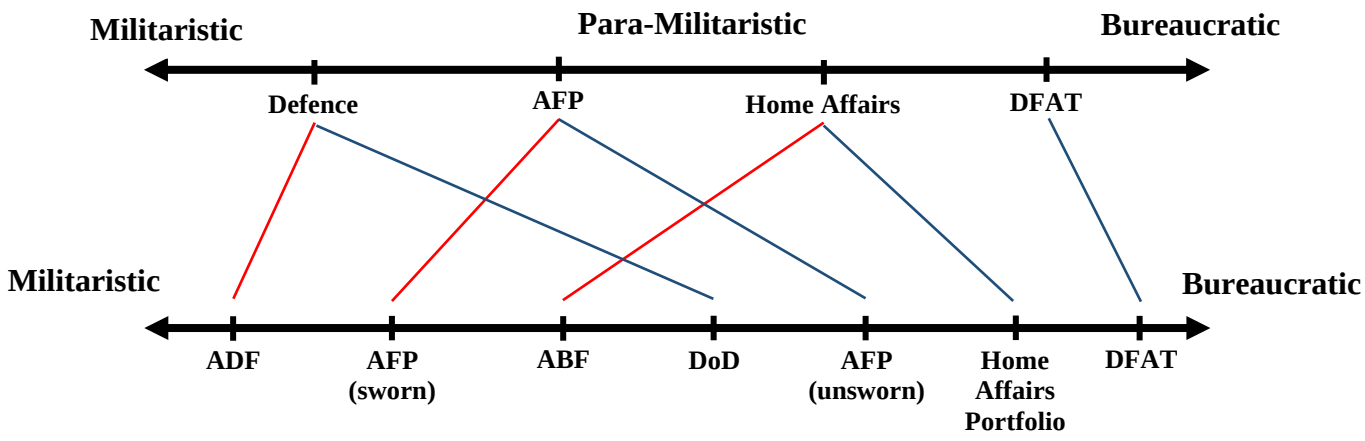


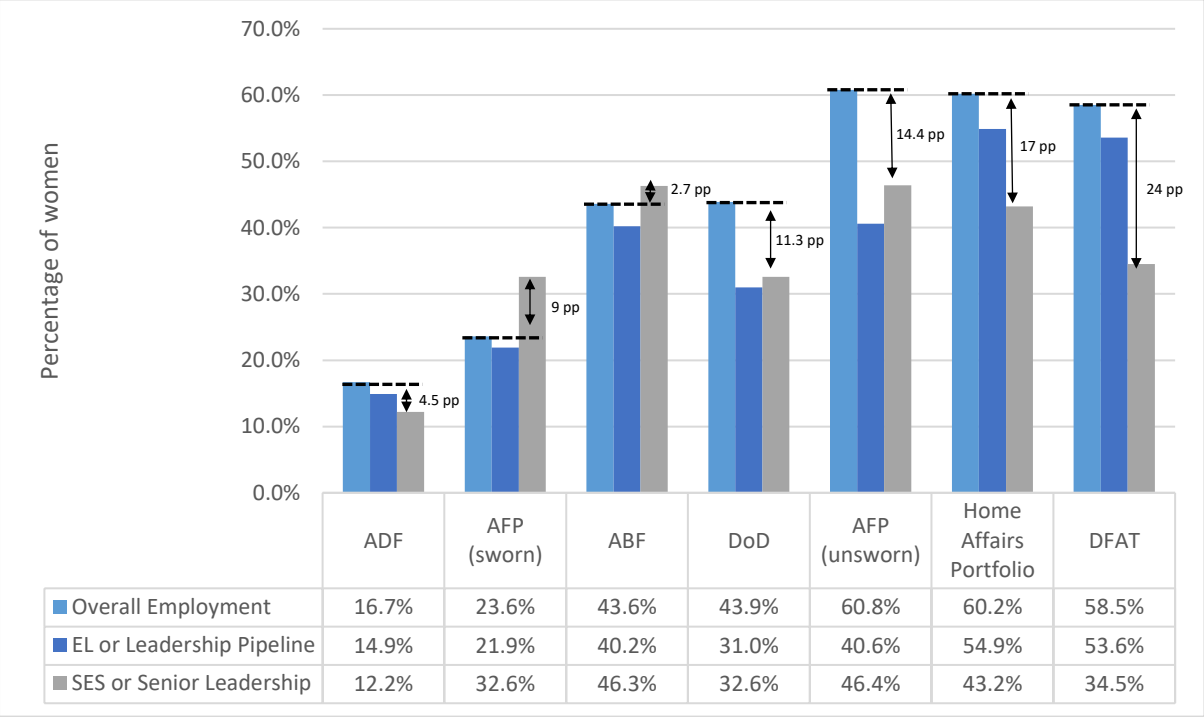
Figure 6 breaks Defence into the ADF (military) and the Department of Defence (DoD – civilian), the AFP into sworn and unsworn populations, Home Affairs into the Australian Border Force (ABF – predominantly sworn) and the Home Affairs Portfolio (predominantly professional, Immigration and Customs), and DFAT remains undivided[191]. Disaggregating the agencies for this section reveals major differences in military and sworn populations versus civilian or unsworn populations. All professional, civilian or unsworn divisions are characterised as more 'bureaucratic' than their relevant military or sworn divisions. The ADF is characterised as most militaristic, followed by the AFP (sworn), the ABF, the Department of Defence, the AFP (unsworn), the Home Affairs Portfolio and lastly, DFAT.

Graph 8 details the percentage of women (1) employed overall in the agencies, (2) employed

[191] These characterisations reflect how each portfolio is divided within their own agency annual reports.

in EL or equivalent roles and (3) employed in SES or equivalent roles along this disaggregated continuum, to test whether these findings remain.

Graph 8: Representation of women in the agencies (disaggregated), 2017, 2018



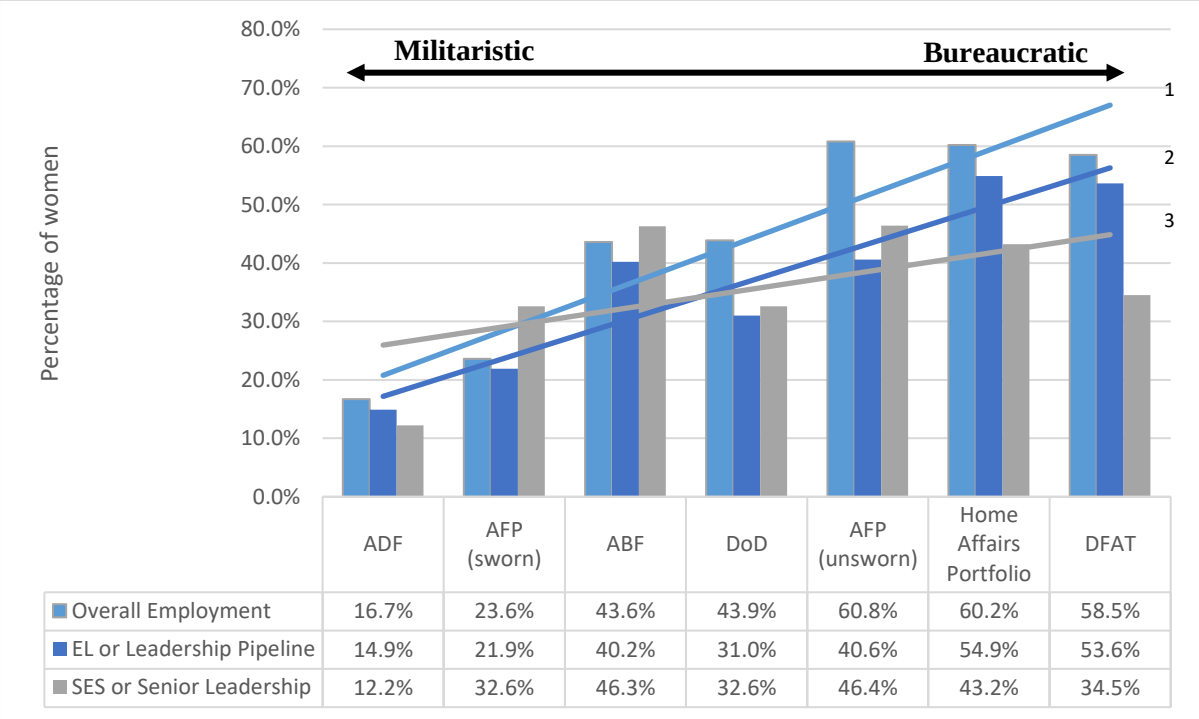
	ADF	AFP (sworn)	ABF	DoD	AFP (unsworn)	Home Affairs Portfolio	DFAT
Overall Employment	16.7%	23.6%	43.6%	43.9%	60.8%	60.2%	58.5%
EL or Leadership Pipeline	14.9%	21.9%	40.2%	31.0%	40.6%	54.9%	53.6%
SES or Senior Leadership	12.2%	32.6%	46.3%	32.6%	46.4%	43.2%	34.5%

Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data. Data compares 2017, 2018 data to reflect the most consistently updated datasets.

Graph 8 shows that in 2017, 2018 women remained the least represented in overall employment in ADF at 16.7 per cent, followed by AFP (sworn) at 23.6 per cent. Women's representation in the ABF is at 43.6 per cent and 43.9 per cent in the DoD, both within the acceptable range for gender parity. Women form the majority of overall employment within the AFP (unsworn) at 60.8 per cent, Home Affairs Portfolio at 60.2 per cent and DFAT at 58.5 per cent. Analysing SES leadership, women in the ADF represent 12.2 per cent of senior leadership, which is 4.5 percentage points lower than their overall representation, and demonstrates that women are least represented in ADF SES equivalent roles out of all of the agencies studied. Yet analysing women's representation in AFP (sworn) and ABF roles, women have *higher* representation in SES roles than their overall employment, with women representing 32.6 per cent of SES roles in the AFP (an increase of 9 percentage points) and women representing 46.3 per cent of SES roles in the ABF (an increase of 2.7 percentage points). From the DoD onwards, the gap between women's representation overall and in the

SES widens. Women in the DoD represent 43.9 per cent overall, and 32.6 per cent of the SES, indicating that women are represented 11.3 percentage points lower in SES leadership. Whilst women represent a majority of overall employment in the AFP (unsworn) (60.8 per cent), the Home Affairs Portfolio (60.2 per cent) and DFAT (58.5 per cent), these agencies have the largest gaps in SES ranks. The more bureaucratic an agency is, the more it evidences a 'glass ceiling' form of gender imbalance, whereby "discrimination actually *increases at the top* of the hierarchy" – in SES roles in particular (Towns & Niklasson 2017, p. 527, emphasis in original). These findings are illustrated in **Graph 9** when trend lines are added**.**

Graph 9: Representation of women in the agencies (disaggregated, with trend lines), 2017, 2018



	ADF	AFP (sworn)	ABF	DoD	AFP (unsworn)	Home Affairs Portfolio	DFAT
Overall Employment	16.7%	23.6%	43.6%	43.9%	60.8%	60.2%	58.5%
EL or Leadership Pipeline	14.9%	21.9%	40.2%	31.0%	40.6%	54.9%	53.6%
SES or Senior Leadership	12.2%	32.6%	46.3%	32.6%	46.4%	43.2%	34.5%

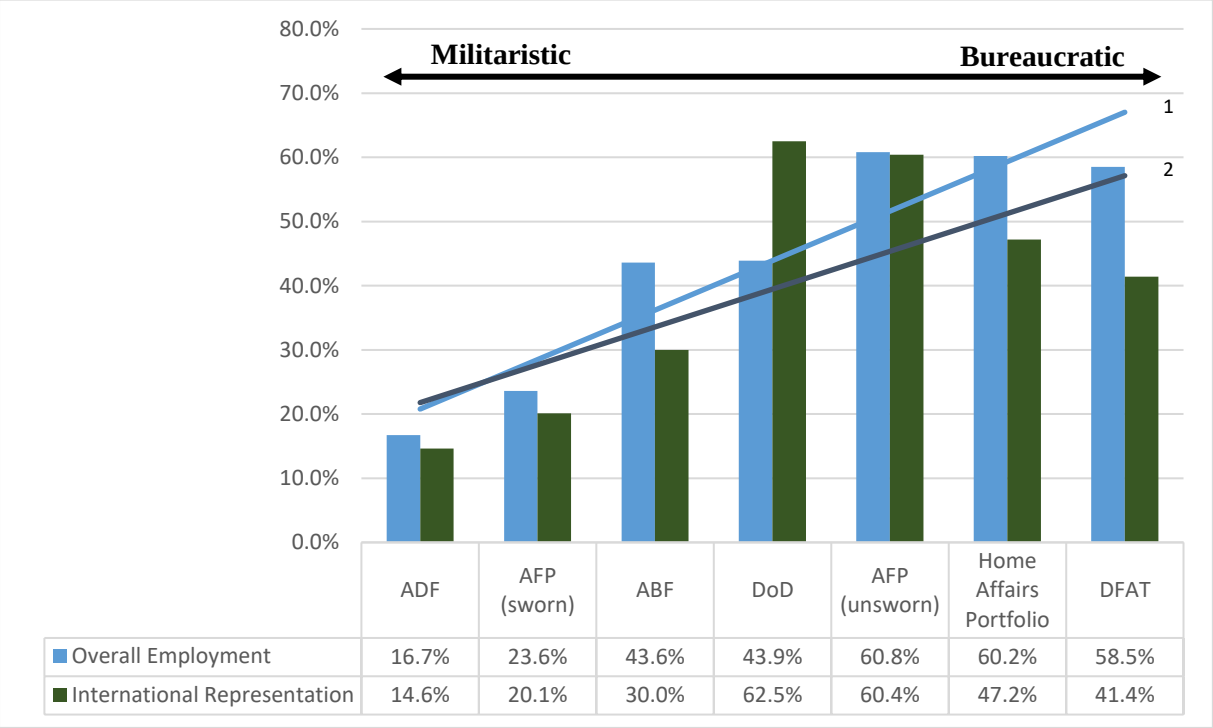
Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data.

Graph 9 shows data arranged according to degree of militarisation or bureaucratisation within each agency or division, with the ADF as most militaristic, and DFAT as most bureaucratic. The data demonstrates that the more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies evidence both lower levels of women overall (trend line 1) and in leadership (trend line 2, 3) as compared to more bureaucratic agencies. However, the original insight illustrated in **Graph 7** again emerges when observing the difference between trend line 1 (overall

employment of women) and trend line 3 (women in SES or equivalent position). As now shown at a disaggregated level by **Graph 9**, the more bureaucratic the agency is, the larger the gap between overall employment of women and women in the highest echelons of leadership (SES or equivalent). This trend also holds when comparing the overall employment of women (trend line 1) and women in EL or equivalent positions (trend line 2). This is a significant finding. Despite women being the least represented in militaristic and para-militaristic agencies, women have the highest chance of reaching leadership.

Women's representation in EL and SES (or equivalent) leadership domestically does not necessarily reflect women's representation internationally. To strengthen these findings, the data must therefore be further substantiated to solely reflect women's representation *internationally*[192] (see **Graph 10**).

Graph 10: International representation of women in the agencies (disaggregated, with trend lines), 2017, 2018



Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data.

Graph 10 demonstrates that women remain the least represented in overall employment and

[192] Where the data in this section refers to 'international representation', it refers only to the cohorts of women in **Figure 3**, page 73.

in international representation for the more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies – ADF (16.7 per cent, 14.6 percent respectively), AFP (sworn) (23.6 per cent, 20.1 percent respectively) and ABF (43.6 per cent and 30 per cent respectively). While woman represent a majority in international representation for DoD (62.5 per cent) and AFP (unsworn) (60.4 per cent), this percentage decreases for the more bureaucratic agencies of Home Affairs Portfolio (47.2 per cent) and DFAT (41.4 per cent). Applying a linear regression to compare trend data across the agencies, the original findings illustrated in **Graph 7** and **Graph 9**, are reinforced in **Graph 10.** Women in the most militaristic and para-militaristic agencies are (a) least represented internationally (trend line 2), but are (b) most proportionally represented. The gap between trend line 1 (overall employment) and trend line 2 (international representation) increases as the agencies move towards a greater bureaucratic structure. The gap, once again, is the largest for DFAT.

There are some important nuances in this data that are captured in **Table 4**. **Table 4** documents the percentage point difference between women in overall employment by the agency, and: women in EL or equivalent; women in SES or equivalent; and women in international representation.

Table 4: Representation of women proportional to overall representation, 2017, 2018

Agency	Overall % of women	% of women in EL or leadership pipeline	% point difference for EL or leadership pipeline	% of women in SES or senior leadership	% point difference for SES or senior leadership	% of women international representatives	% point difference for international representatives
ADF	**16.7%**	14.9%	-1.8%	12.2%	-4.5%	14.6%	-2.1%
AFP (sworn)	**23.6%**	21.9%	-1.7%	32.6%	**+9.0%**	20.1%	-3.5%
ABF	**43.6%**	40.2%	-3.4%	46.3%	**+2.7%**	30.0%	-13.6%
DoD	**43.9%**	31.0%	-12.9%	32.6%	-11.3%	62.5%	**+18.6%**
AFP (unsworn)	**60.8%**	40.6%	-20.2	46.4%	-14.4%	60.4%	-0.4%
Home Affairs Portfolio	**60.2%**	54.9%	-5.3%	43.2%	-17.0%	47.2%	-13.0%
DFAT	**58.5%**	53.6%	-4.9%	34.5%	-24.0%	41.4%	-17.1%

Data source: Agency Annual Reports and APSED RFI 736 data. Militaristic-bureaucratic characterisation in descending order, from most militaristic to most bureaucratic.

Table 4 demonstrates that *in only three occurrences* do women have a higher chance (proportional to women's overall representation) than men (proportional to men's overall representation) of reaching leadership or overseas deployment. In the first occurrence, AFP (sworn) women have a 9 per cent increased chance, proportional to their overall representation, of reaching SES leadership. In the second occurrence, ABF women have a 2.7 per cent increased chance, proportional to their overall representation, of reaching SES leadership. This is a significant finding, highlighting women's increased chances for achieving SES ranks of leadership in the AFP (sworn) and ABF.

The third occurrence is in the DoD, where women have both a higher chance than men of deploying internationally (representing 62.5 per cent of deployments) *and* a higher chance of deploying internationally compared to their overall representation (an increased 18.6 per cent chance from their overall proportion of 43.9 per cent). This indicates very good chances for civilian women to be deployed internationally, compared to men *and* compared to their overall gender ratio in the Department. However, there were only *eight* international posting opportunities available for Defence Attaché (DA) civilian staff in total for that year. Civilian staff continue to have the least prestige, authority and power compared to military staff when posted overseas. Therefore, the area in which women have had the highest initial chance, compared to men, remains largely unfulfilled because of the lack of opportunity and the limitations of civilian status.

There are three further core findings that **Table 4** illustrates. Firstly, women in DFAT – as Australia's primary international affairs agency – are expected to have an easier pathway to international representation, due to the nature of the work. In fact, women form a majority of EL positions (53.6 per cent) in DFAT. However, a stark gap remains between women's overall representation (58.5 per cent) and their representation internationally (41.4 per cent), with women having a 17.1 percentage point decreased chance of international representation compared to their overall representation. Women in DFAT experience the *lowest* chances of gaining international representation (proportional to overall representation) out of all of the agencies studied. An even bigger gap remains for women who seek SES leadership (representing a decreased chance by 24 percentage points). This means that women in DFAT have both the lowest chance of gaining international leadership and the lowest chance of

gaining SES representation (proportional to women's overall representation) out of any of the agencies studied[193].

Secondly, while agencies that are more bureaucratic may be more female-dominated in terms of pure numbers, this evidently does not prescribe nor proscribe leadership and/or international opportunity. In Chapter Four, **Graph 5** (see p. 103) explored trend data on women's representation in SES roles across the agencies from 1984 to 2018, demonstrating that women's representation in leadership is generally increasing (with the exception of Home Affairs in recent years). But the data explored in this section demonstrates that while women in the Home Affairs Portfolio and DFAT are not the minority (at 60.2 per cent and 58.4 per cent respectively), they form part of a consistently marginalised majority. In those agencies, women's representation lags considerably behind in SES, and international roles in particular.

Thirdly, this table reinforces findings made earlier in **Graph 7** and **Graph 9** that the most militaristic and para-militaristic agencies more proportionally represent women internationally and in leadership. This trend broadly holds over the entire 1984-2018 period for which data is available (seen in **Table 5**, Appendix 1, p. 289), highlighting that these findings are not simply one-off conclusions, but appear more indicative of a longer-standing trend.

Two themes emerged from the research that explain this. The first is structure, with Defence and AFP generally providing structured opportunities for women to progress from one rank to the next, as discussed in Chapter Four[194]. The second theme that explains these results is the overtness of gendered rules in more militaristic agencies, which provided a kind of visibility or transparency of gendered institutions – a factor that I argue had a significant effect on women. For some women, the overtness of gendered challenges acted as a disincentive for pursuing more militaristic agencies as career choices, evidenced by the lower levels of women overall. For others, the overtness and visibility of these gendered rules

[193] As will be discussed later in this chapter in **Graph 12**, the gap between employment and opportunity for SES and international representation has remained consistent for almost two decades in DFAT, even despite women's increasing leadership.

[194] Additionally, in those agencies, being part of a smaller pool of applicants may give women an increased chance to 'stand out' and be given more opportunities for advancement than they might have had in a larger cohort of women. This was particularly the case for the AFP, where a female-only recruitment round was launched in 2017.

enabled women to navigate the agencies more successfully. In fact, participants in this study commented that they knew what to expect in terms of gendered challenges, and therefore how to work around it, unlike some of their colleagues in more bureaucratic agencies for whom the challenges, and career paths, were more obscured – indicative of more 'genteel' and covert forms of gendered discrimination and bias. Thus, both the structure and visibility of gendered challenges contributed to women's most proportional representation in more militaristic agencies, and least proportional representation in more bureaucratic agencies.

Despite these differences, a Catch-22 remains for women. By numbers alone, more international postings exist in bureaucratic agencies[195] and women have a lower chance of getting them. Less international postings exist in more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies, but women have a higher chance of getting them[196]. Disaggregating the agencies in this section has proved particularly revealing, substantiating earlier findings and uncovering important distinctions in women's representation internationally[197]. It is also important to note that once the agencies are aggregated back into their four core identities – Defence, AFP, Home Affairs and DFAT – in no agency are women represented equally to men internationally (as noted in **Graph 1**, Chapter One, p. 25). The next part of this section will break down women's representation across each of the agencies to understand these nuances more.

DFAT

After approximately three decades of gender parity in recruitments, it was only in 2018, shortly after the *Women in Leadership Strategy* was introduced, that women finally verged on parity in international leadership positions in DFAT. The change has not been a gradual 'fixing' of a leaky pipeline though[198]. An initial analysis might suggest that if gendered

[195]Though this may be decreasing as highlighted for DFAT in the previous chapter.

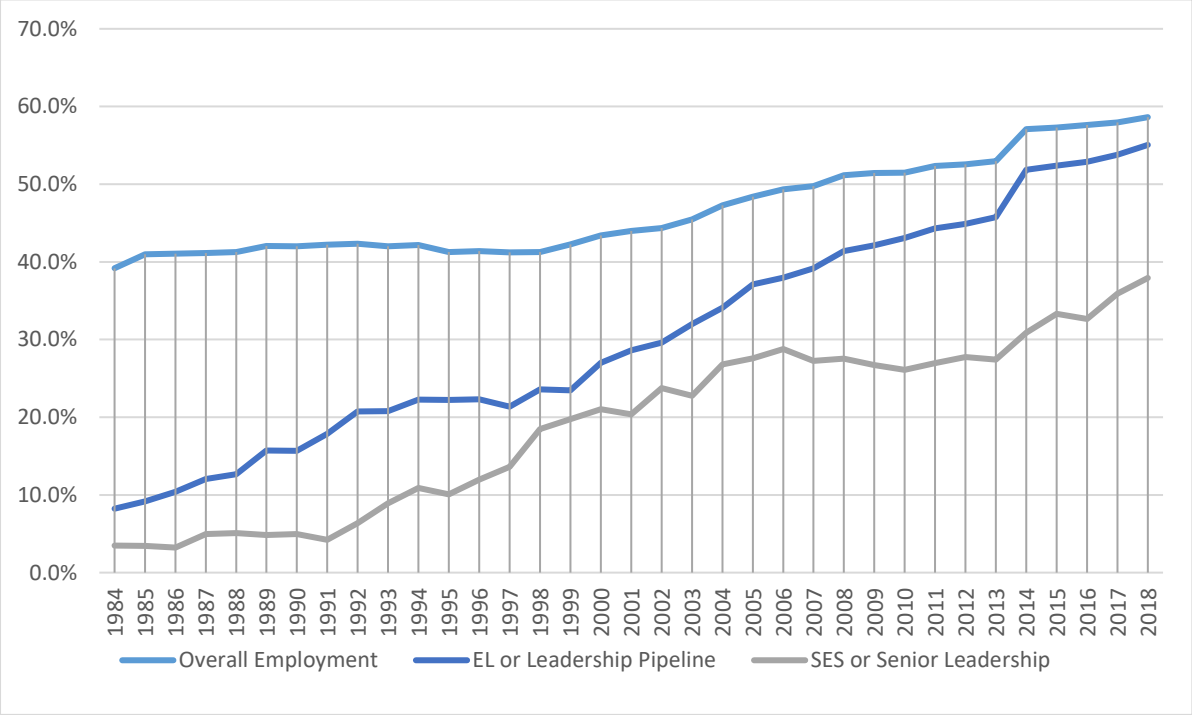
[196] It is also likely that these opportunities will grow with the increased funding and international focus of these agencies.

[197] For instance, while women are the least represented internationally in ADF (at 14.6 per cent of DAs and staff), they are most represented internationally in the DoD (at 62.5 per cent). Without disaggregating the agencies, this finding (and others) would be statistically obscured.

[198] As mentioned in Chapter One, women rapidly increased from 26.8 per cent of overseas representatives in 2017 to over 41.4 per cent within a year (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2017b, 2018). These changes occurred two years after the introduction of the *Women in Leadership Strategy*, which set a target to gain women in 40 per cent of SES band 1 level positions by 2018, increasing to 43 per cent of SES band 1 positions by 2020. Divisions were instructed to work towards an internal gender balance of between 40 to 60 per cent in each bandwidth where this was not already the case. The introduction of the *Women in Leadership Strategy*, coinciding with the key leadership of both Australia's first two female Foreign Ministers and first female

institutions have been barring women from leadership over the past three decades, they are not as 'entrenched' as it would seem – evidenced by the rapid almost-doubling of women's representation in senior international leadership in the last few years. Yet, when we look at the data in **Graph 11**, this rapid change is not as striking as it would first appear.

Graph 11: Representation of women in DFAT, 1984-2018



Data source: *APSED, RFI 763 – Statistical Yearbook (1984-2018).*

Graph 11 shows that women formed a majority of the Department since 2006 (50.3 per cent) and a majority of EL positions since 2014 (51.8 per cent). However, SES leadership continues to lag behind, with the most recent APSED data[199] in 2018 showing women's representation at 34.5 per cent as covered previously in **Table 4**. Interestingly, for over three decades a relatively consistent gap appears to exist between women's overall representation and their representation in SES leadership, whilst the gap between EL representation and overall representation appears close to closing. **Table 6** explores more detailed data over the last 20 years in particular.

Secretary, Frances Adamson, has resulted in a subsequent rapid change in leadership composition.

[199] At time of submission.

Table 6: Representation of women in DFAT, 2000, 2018

DFAT	Overall % of women	% in EL or equivalent	% point difference for EL	% in SES or equivalent	% point difference for SES	% in Head of Mission (HOM) or Head of Post (HOP)	% point difference for HOM or HOP
Mean for 2000-2018	51.5%	40.7%	-10.8%	26.5%	-25%	22.5%	-29%
2000	44.9%	26.0%	-18.9%	20.3%	-24.6%	9.4%	-35.5%
2018	58.5%	53.6%	-4.9%	34.5%	-24%	33.8%	-24.7%

Data source: DFAT Annual Reports from 2000-2018, with the exception of 2011, which is missing, and where data points from APSED RFI 763 were substituted.

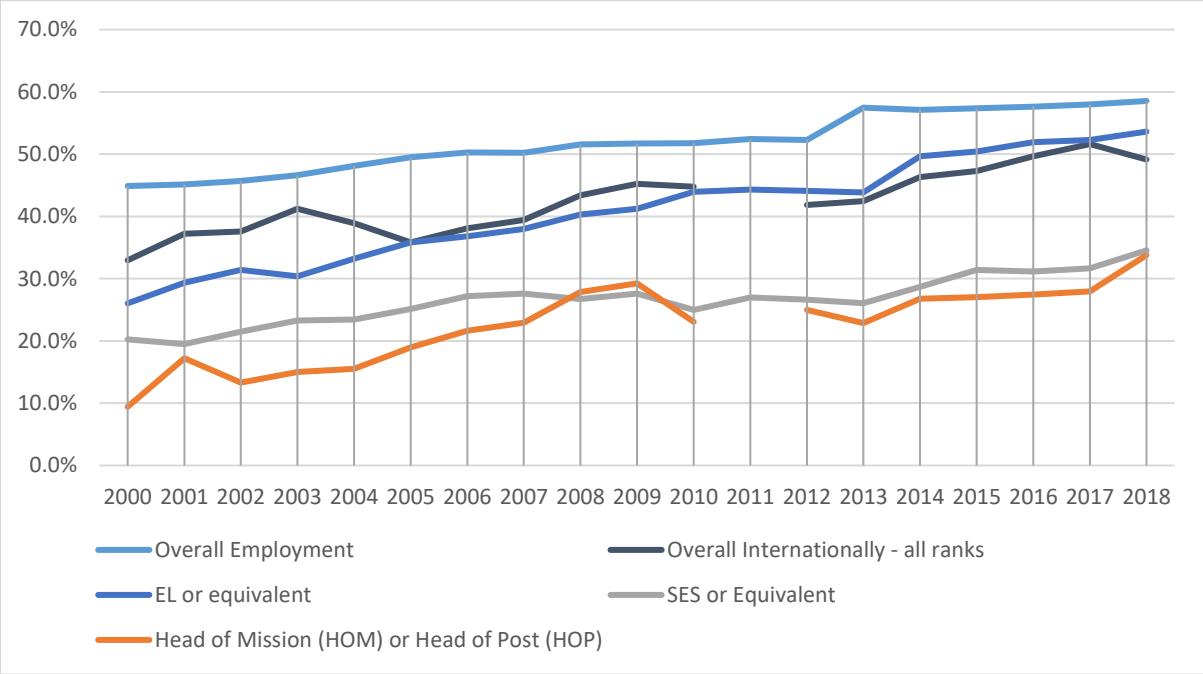
What is striking from **Table 6**[200] is that women in 2018 only had a *0.6 per cent increased chance* of getting an SES position than they had in 2000[201]. Women's chances of getting a HOM/HOP role have improved from 2000 to 2018, by 10.8 percentage points. However, a significant gap remains between women's overall representation in the Department: a 29 per cent average (mean) gap over time[202]. Therefore, while there are more women are in SES and HOM/HOP positions than ever before, their representation in these positions is not keeping pace with women's overall representation. This is illustrated in **Graph 12**.

[200] **Table 6** covers women's representation in DFAT across overall employment, EL leadership, SES leadership, and Head of Mission (HOM) or Head of Post (HOP) roles over 2000-2018. It reinforces that, since 2000, there has been an overall upwards trajectory for women in the Department, with women representing 44.9 per cent overall in 2000 and 58.5 per cent overall in 2018. Women represented 26.0 per cent in EL roles 2000 and an increased 53.6 per cent in EL roles in 2018 (an increase of 27.6 per cent), and 20.3 per cent in SES roles in 2000 and 34.5 per cent in SES roles in 2018 (an increase of 14.2 per cent). However,

[201] The gap remains relatively consistent between the overall proportion of women within the department and proportion of women in SES and Head of Mission (HOM) or Head of Post (HOP) roles particularly.

[202] In 2018, women represented 58.5 per cent of positions, yet were represented in HOM/HOP roles at 24.7 percentage points lower, at 33.8 per cent of positions

Graph 12: Representation of women in DFAT, 2000-2018



Data source: *APSED, RFI 763, Statistical Yearbook (1984-2018); Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2000-2010, 2012-2018). DFAT annual report for 2011 was missing, hence 2011 data on women's overall international representation at all ranks, and representation as Head of Mission (HOM) or Head of Post (HOP) is absent.*

Graph 12[203] highlights further changes over 2000-2018. Three years on from the introduction of the *Women in Leadership Strategy*, in 2018, the gaps between the overall percentage of women employed and those in SES, EL, and HOM/HOP positions – gaps that had remained relatively consistent across the preceding years – begin to close. This suggests that these changes are a direct result of the targets set in the Strategy[204] – highlighting formal institutional success in reaching targets for women's representation. Yet, the Department appears to gain more women in leadership positions only by maintaining an ever-increasing majority of women in overall employed staff. This raises an interesting question: if women's overall representation in the Department stayed the same, would women's representation in leadership also stagnate?

The trend data in **Graph 12** suggests a culture in which women's accomplishments and work

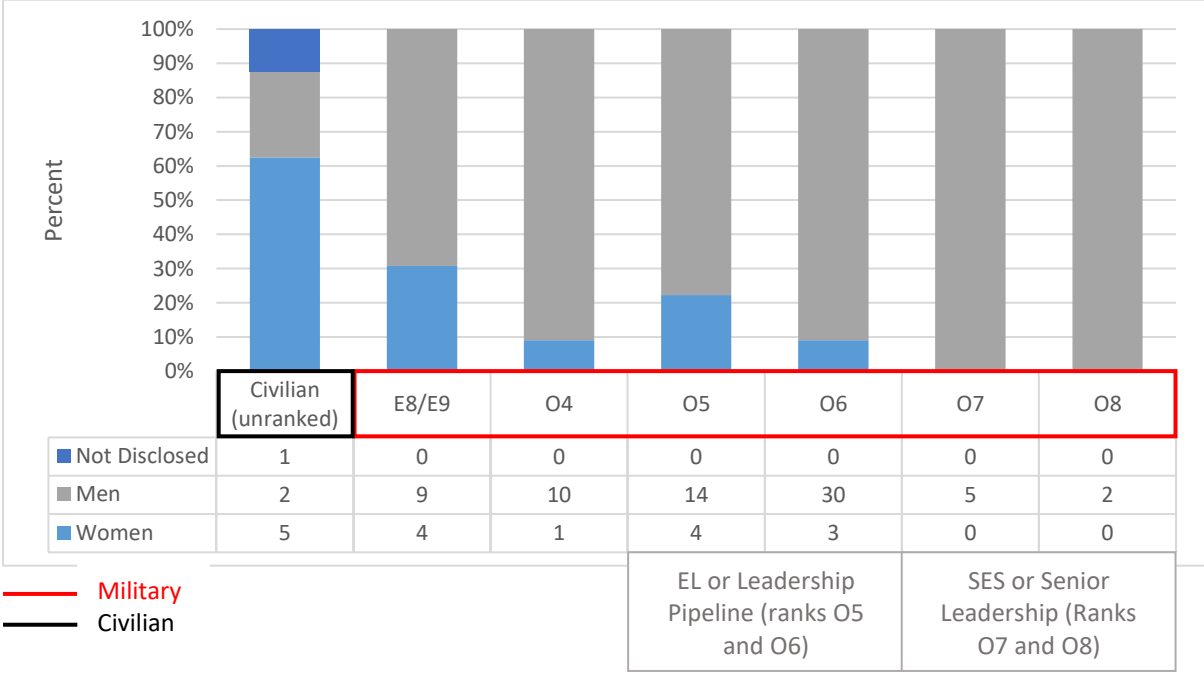
[203] **Graph 12** covers women in overall employment, overall internationally – all ranks, EL roles, SES roles, and Head of Mission (HOM) or Head of Post (HOP).
[204] As well as the critical leadership and enforcement ability of the Secretariat.

is less visible and rewarded. It reinforces the fact that women remain a marginalised majority within the department. In turn, I argue that this obscures the gendered barriers that remain. The initial cause for optimism in DFAT hides more nuanced findings that suggest that women remain critically overlooked and marginalised in the most important duty within the agency – representing Australia internationally.

Defence

Like in DFAT, women's admittance to decision-making roles, strategically important portfolios, and international representation remains severely limited. As discussed earlier, in 2017 women as Defence Attaché (DA) staff (military and civilian) were severely under-represented at only 18.8 per cent of positions overall. Whilst more recent data has been released in the 2019 *Women in the ADF Report*, there is a lack of numerical transparency and consistency, with the report only highlighting women's representation in DA roles in a graph (indicating that women represent a decreased 17.2 per cent of DA roles) and not presenting a rigorous numerical breakdown. Therefore, this section utilises detailed data gained directly from the International Policy Division in 2017, in **Graph 13**.

Graph 13: Representation of Defence Attachés and staff (by gender, rank and civilian/military status), 2017



Data source: International Policy Division 2017. More recent data on Defence

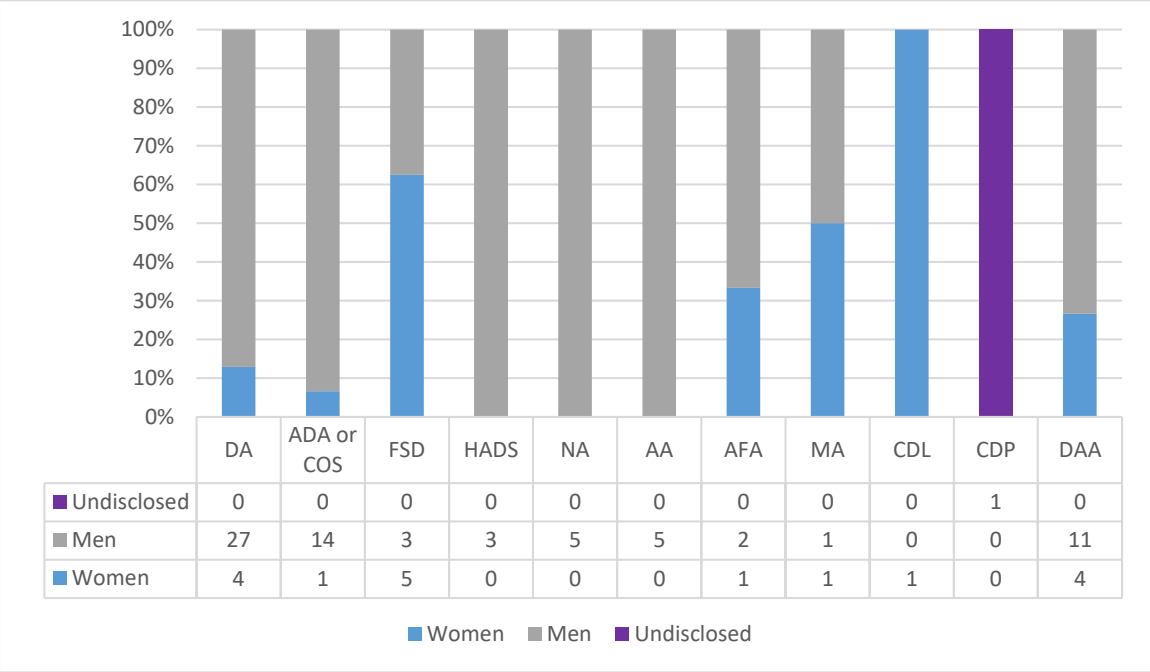
Even though women have more proportional opportunities for leadership and international representation in Defence[205], an imbalance clearly exists at the more granular level demonstrated by **Graph 13**[206]. Women represent 30.7 per cent of E8/E9 ranks and 9.1 per cent of O4 ranks – none of which is yet at EL or SES equivalent ranking. In fact, women only represent 13.7 per cent of EL equivalent positions (O5 and O6 ranks), and form *no* part of the top two tiers of SES equivalent positions internationally (O7 and O8 ranks). According to Kanter's (1977) definitions of tokens being a minority less than 15 per cent, women in the most senior levels of international Defence diplomatic representation (SES and EL equivalent roles) exist in an environment in which women constitute tokens. As tokens, McGlen and Sarkees note that women often must develop "alternative coping mechanisms," (1993, p.77). This was consistent across Defence participants' interviewed, who evidenced considerable resilience and varied methods to minimise the negative effect of their gender on their experiences, noting that the challenges they faced were relentless.

Breaking this data down by gender and role reveals further findings, in **Graph 14** (and legend to roles in **Table 7**).

[205] As found in **Graph 7, Graph 9** and **Table 4**

[206] **Graph 13** shows that women outnumber men in civilian positions by a ratio of 5:2. However, as discussed earlier, few opportunities exist for civilians posted overseas, with only eight positions available in total for 2017.

Graph 14: Representation of Defence Attachés and staff (by gender and role), 2017



	DA	ADA or COS	FSD	HADS	NA	AA	AFA	MA	CDL	CDP	DAA
Undisclosed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Men	27	14	3	3	5	5	2	1	0	0	11
Women	4	1	5	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	4

Data source: International Policy Division 2017.

Table 7: Key to Defence Attaché staffing roles

DA	Defence Attaché or Advisor
ADA or COS	Assistant Defence Attaché or Chief of Staff
FSD	First Secretary Defence
HADS	Head of Australian Defence Staff
NA	Naval Attaché or Advisor and assistants
AA	Army Attaché and assistants
AFA	Air Force Attaché and assistants
MA	Military Attaché and assistants
CDL	Consul Defence Liaison
CDP	Counsellor Defence Policy
DAA	Defence Administrative Assistants

In alignment with Chapter Four's findings, women remain least represented in the DA roles from the Navy and Army. Women are more represented in Air Force and Military Attaché roles (AFA, MA), at 33.3 per cent and 50.0 per cent respectively, however, women are only represented in these roles as *assistants*, not full attachés. Similarly, a greater number of Defence Administrative Assistants (DAA) are women, representing four roles (26.7 per cent) – but these are precisely roles that it is expected women would be siloed in, administrative

and assisting positions.

Women's exclusion from combat until recently is likely to have resulted in some of the skewed statistics – affecting women's low representation in SES or equivalent leadership and DA roles[207]. McGlen and Sarkees note flow-on effect for women that the US combat ban had:

> they are excluded from the most important and key line jobs in the military. The exclusion of women from combat and the restrictions put on the positions they can assume because of the need to reserve slots for men, limits the upward mobility of women in the military and thus the Department of Defense (McGlen & Sarkees 1993, p. 93).

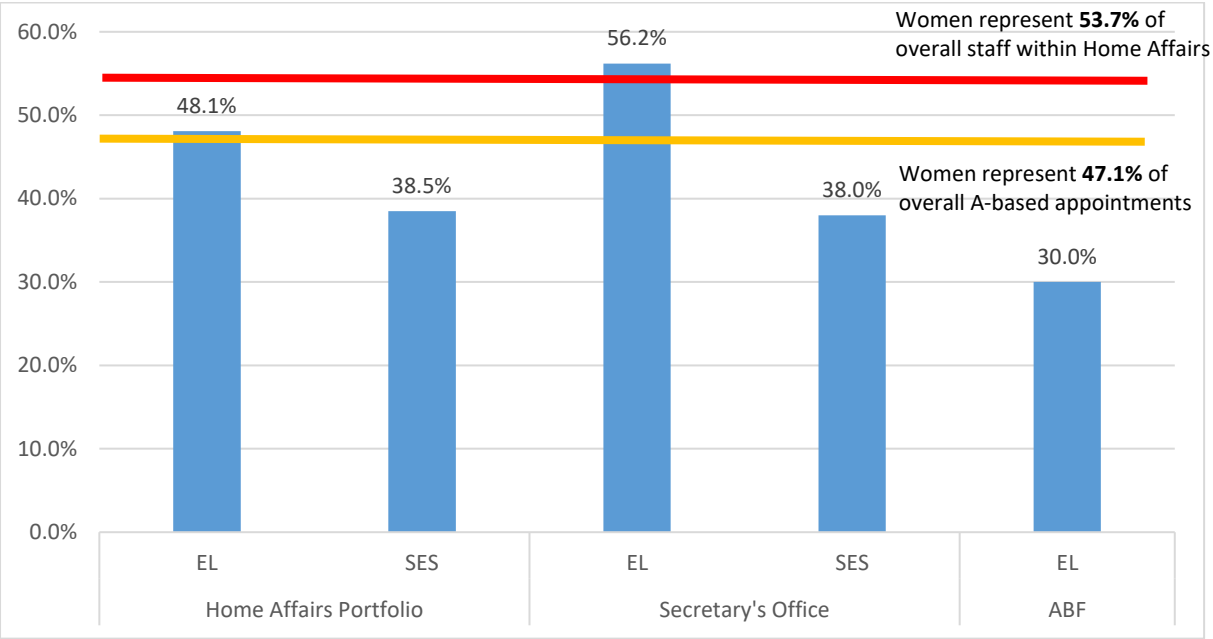
While these trends hold, there is a degree of nuance. As noted earlier, women are most proportionally represented in leadership positions in Defence – as compared to their overall employment – out of all of the agencies studied. This suggests that while Defence's considerably more male-dominated and masculine culture inhibits women, structure and visibility of these gendered challenges has resulted in women and men gaining opportunities in a relatively proportional manner *in which no other agency achieved*. This has significant ramifications, suggesting that if more- militaristic agencies in international affairs can increase their overall proportion of women employed, these agencies may be better structured to give women opportunities for leadership and international representation than any of the other agencies studied.

Home Affairs

The representation of women in A-based roles (international representation) in Home Affairs is analysed in **Graph 15**.

[207] As explored in Chapter Four.

Graph 15: Representation of A-based staff in Home Affairs (by gender, division and rank), 2018



Data source: Strategic Research and Communications Team 2019.

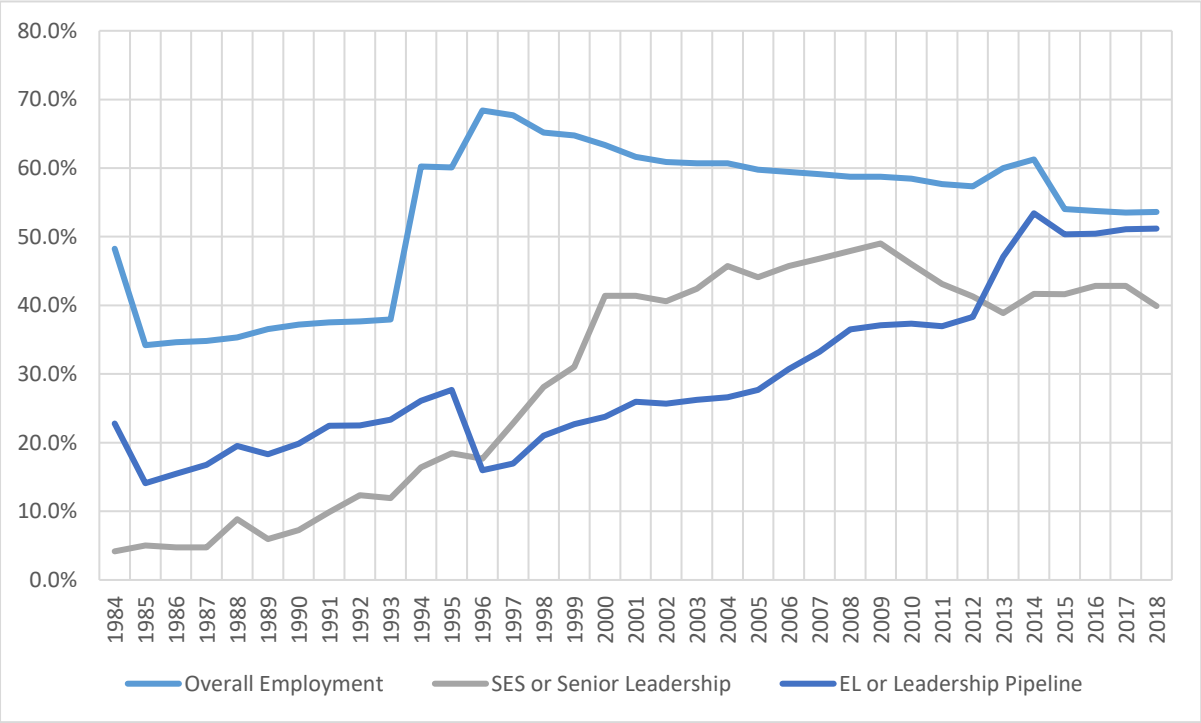
Graph 15 breaks women's representation down by division, rank (EL or SES) and gender[208], and the overall employment level (red line – 53.7 per cent) and overall international representation level (yellow line – 47.1 per cent). Higher status positions correspond with lower representation of women[209]. Women represent 48.1 per cent of EL roles in the Home Affairs Portfolio, 56.2 per cent of EL roles in the Secretary's Office and 30.0 per cent of EL roles in the ABF. Yet, women are least represented in SES roles, at 38.5 per cent in Home Affairs Portfolio and 38.0 per cent in the Secretary's Office. Women form the majority of international deployments in only one area: EL roles in the administrative side of the Secretary's Office.

Women are least represented at the SES rank, and in the ABF, highlighting that gendered rules remain around *who* can represent Australia at the most senior levels. Further, as discussed in Chapter Four, there has been a *regression* in women's representation in recent

[208] No SES roles are available for ABF A-based staff. If there were, we could expect to see a lower percentage of women in the ABF's SES.
[209] Additionally, despite evidencing the most gender equal international deployments of all the agencies studied, the highest prestige posts, including London and Washington DC, are occupied only by men in the most senior ranks of leadership, reinforcing Towns & Niklasson's (2017) findings that women are less represented at the most prestigious posts.

years – women represent a decreasing proportion of the Department, as shown in **Graph 16.**

Graph 16: Representation of women in Home Affairs (and former departmental configurations), 1984-2018



Data source: APSED RFI 763 Yearbook Statistics 1984-2011.

Graph 16 shows trend data from 1984 to 2018 on women's representation in (1) overall employment, (2) SES or senior leadership and (3) EL or leadership pipeline[210]. Home Affairs has been, since 1994, a female-dominated agency, in 1996 reaching its peak at 68.4 per cent women employed across the Department. Yet this has steadily decreased ever since. In particular, since the 2015 amalgamation[211] and creation of ABF, women's overall proportion in employment and in EL positions has decreased. While EL and overall representation is now stabilising, women's representation in SES roles continues to decline from its peak in 2009, when women almost, but not quite, achieved parity at 49.0 per cent of the agency.

AFP

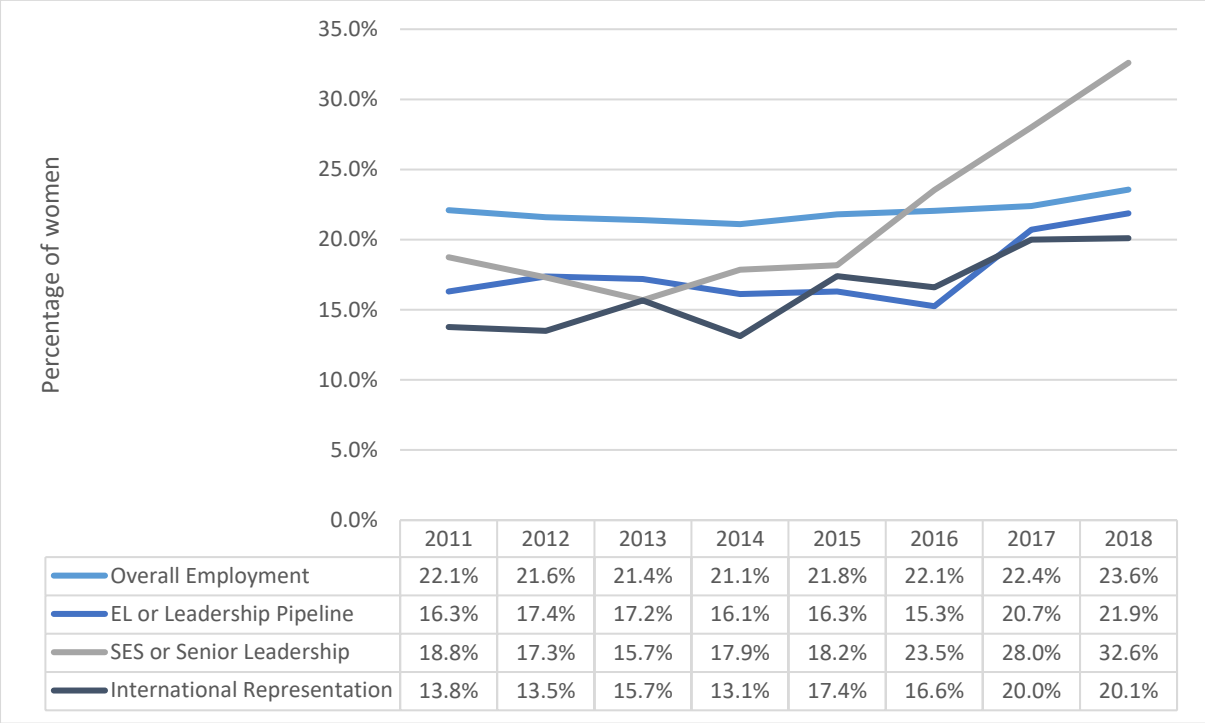
Since very early in the AFP's history, women have formed a substantial, and sometimes

[210] This data was collated by APSED, so while it is statistically rigorous, earlier data (particularly pre-2015) does not represent the modern configuration of Home Affairs.

[211] Of the Department of Immigration and Citizenship and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service.

majority, of recruits. Over most of the last decade, sworn women have slowly increased their representation in the AFP, most evidently for SES positions, as represented in **Graph 17**.

Graph 17: Representation of women in the AFP (sworn), 2011-2018



Data Source: Australian Federal Police (2011-2018) Annual Reports.

Graph 17 covers the AFP's (sworn) representation of women (1) in overall employment, (2) in EL or equivalent, (3) in SES or equivalent, and (4) in international representation. Out of all the agencies, women's representation in SES leadership is increasing fastest in the AFP. Incredibly, in 2018, women are represented in SES leadership 9 per cent higher than their overall representation, representing 23.6 per cent of overall employment and 32.6 per cent of SES positions. Most of the growth over this period happened between 2015 and 2018 – coinciding with the release of the *Cultural Change: Gender Diversity and Inclusion in the Australian Federal Police* in 2016. This reinforces the effect of formal policies and the will of critical actors for driving change, particularly in women's representation in senior leadership[212].

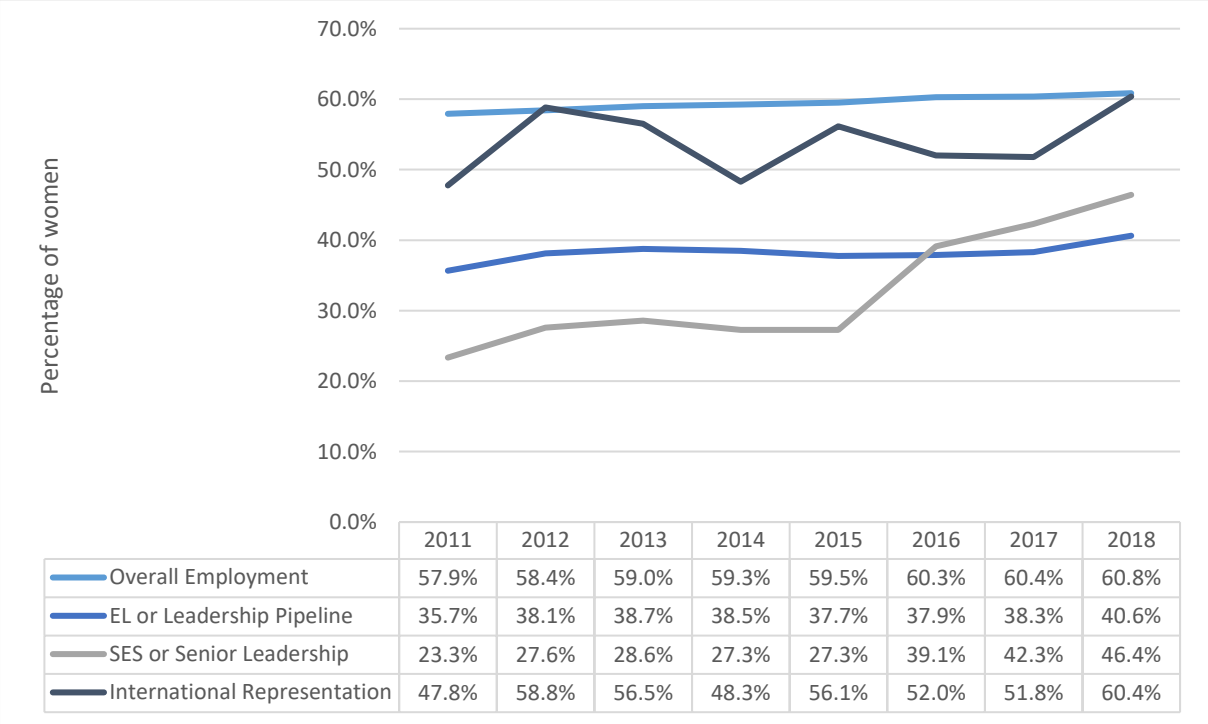
However, **Graph 17** also demonstrates that women remain chronically under-represented

[212] Although it is noted that this data does not yet reflect the loss of the AFP's two most senior women in 2019/2020.

across the AFP. Women's overall representation in the agency only increased by 1.5 percentage points from 2011-2018, from 22.1 per cent in 2011 to 23.6 per cent in 2018. This increase is marginal and insubstantial when compared to the policy commitments and affirmations driving gender equality within the agency. Additionally, progress for EL and international representational roles has been inconsistently achieved over this period. While the AFP may be doing well at advancing women from EL to SES positions, attraction and retention remain issues.

Over this same period, from 2011-2018, **Graph 18** demonstrates how women have also represented an overall majority of internationally deployed unsworn staff, at times proportional to, or slightly less than, their overall representation.

Graph 18: Representation of women in the AFP (unsworn), 2011-2018



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Overall Employment	57.9%	58.4%	59.0%	59.3%	59.5%	60.3%	60.4%	60.8%
EL or Leadership Pipeline	35.7%	38.1%	38.7%	38.5%	37.7%	37.9%	38.3%	40.6%
SES or Senior Leadership	23.3%	27.6%	28.6%	27.3%	27.3%	39.1%	42.3%	46.4%
International Representation	47.8%	58.8%	56.5%	48.3%	56.1%	52.0%	51.8%	60.4%

Data Source: Australian Federal Police (2011-2018) Annual Reports.

Graph 18 covers the AFP's (unsworn) representation of women (1) in overall employment, (2) in EL or equivalent, (3) in SES or equivalent, and (4) in international representation. Similar to the DoD, civilian unsworn/professional women have a higher chance of being represented internationally, than gaining EL or SES leadership (see **Table 4** earlier, p. 168). On average, women represented 53.8 per cent of all unsworn international deployments and

59.5 per cent of the unsworn workforce from 2011-2018 (their mean or average representation). While this signifies that unsworn women do have a good chance at international representation, like in Defence, a small minority of roles are actually reserved for the professional, civilian unsworn population. In fact, in 2018, 80 per cent of international representatives were sworn police and only 20 per cent were unsworn, which suggests that overall, unsworn women have low opportunities for deployment (Australian Federal Police 2018a). EL and SES leadership remain to be the most elusive for AFP (unsworn) women.

Summary of quantitative findings

Overall, there are direct correlations between the level of militarisation or bureaucratisation of an agency and women's representation. Yet, the correlations are not simplistic. Core findings from this section include that militaristic agencies have lower proportions of women overall, in leadership, and in international representation, consistent with the literature. However inversely, one of the core original findings of this thesis is that militaristic agencies also offer women opportunities for international representation and leadership that either more closely matches or exceeds their overall staffing population. Women's representation in more bureaucratic agencies is least proportional to their overall representation. Further, a significant and enduring gap has remained over the last few decades.

On introduction of formal policies across a number of the agencies, rapid changes can be seen. For instance, since DFAT's *Women in Leadership Strategy* in 2015, there have been substantial increases in women's representation. Yet, the entrenched and continuing gap between overall representation and representation in the SES is worrying. The fact that women's international representation (relative to opportunity) has stagnated for almost two decades is significant. It suggests that even in agencies with the highest representation of women, informal institutions remain, making women a marginalised majority. This is consistent with the literature too, which finds that existing discussions "centre around the narrow belief that gender equality will be achieved once nominal equality is achieved" (Cassidy 2017, p. 211).

On the other end of the militaristic-bureaucratic spectrum, gendered divisions in labour and rank remain deeply embedded in Defence. However, the rigidity and hierarchy of the agency does not follow the simplistic pattern put forward by McGlen and Sarkees (1993) who find

that military structures only benefit women when women are in the most senior leadership positions. Rather, while Defence struggles to attract and retain their female staff within the ADF, when they do, women are generally able to progress to EL equivalent and SES equivalent leadership much as their male counterparts would[213] (and not because senior women dominate or even occupy many senior roles). Whilst women remain severely under-represented in DA and staff roles, they are represented more proportionally than the other agencies have been able to manage. Much of this can be attributed to the positives of structure: career management and consistent professional development; clearly laid out manuals describing progression points and career options at early and yearly milestones; and a strong respect for rank and hierarchy which aids women in overcoming gender bias in order to exercise authority once they are in leadership. The visibility of gendered challenges appeared to make those challenges easier to negotiate, as will be discussed later in this chapter. The caveat is that women remain completely *unrepresented* in SES positions in the DA and staffing roles. Defence is also yet to have women in the role of chief of one of the service lines, or as Chief of the Defence Force (CDF). This suggests that there are clear limits to how far women can go in leadership, reinforcing 'old' historical norms around 'who' can represent Defence[214].

The frequent machinery of government changes in Home Affairs and increasing para-militarisation of a once-more bureaucratic agency has resulted in a complex institutional context. ABF maintains near parity in EL and SES positions, which does suggest that more gender-equal institutions are possible under the creation of 'new' agencies. However, considering that women in this section of the agency are lowest represented overseas, it is worth considering whether the 'newness' of the agency has really helped in establishing and maintaining a more gender equal agency. Rather, the norms of physicality and enforcement, like seen in Defence and the AFP, appear to have transported across as gendered, particularly in what it means to *be* and *represent* the 'face' of Australia internationally. The decreasing representation of women more generally in the department is worrying, and appears tied both to the agency's increasingly masculinist, enforcement nature, and inconsistencies in formal

[213]The 2019 Women in the ADF Report notes that women officers do spend more time at rank thank men, however this is marginal – six years at rank for women, compared to five and a half years at rank for men. For other ranks, excluding the SES equivalent, the comparative time at rank was the same for men and women – five and a half years (Department of Defence 2019c).
[214] As canvassed in Chapter Four.

policies guaranteeing gender equality.

Finally, the AFP has taken an unusual approach to addressing the gender imbalance within the agency, with critical leaders both pro-actively commissioning the *Cultural Change* report and also pioneering efforts such as an all-female recruitment round. Women have the highest opportunity for SES leadership out of the agencies studied, relative to opportunity. Like Defence, women tended to be more proportionally represented in leadership and international representation – showing that there are considerable positives to the structured opportunities of these more militaristic agencies, as well as positives of the visibility of gendered challenges that remain. Yet[215], women are better represented in the professional civilian or unsworn side of the agency, rather than being part of sworn policing and operations. This is clearly a disadvantage for women, whereby fewer roles exist for unsworn members internationally or in leadership.

Overall, the statistics reinforce that women do remain under-represented; however, they also demonstrate nuances across the agencies once data is disaggregated. The next section will strengthen this depth of analysis, by analysing participant demographics in order to fully understand: who is chosen to represent Australia overseas?

Demographics and countries of deployment

> *I do find though as a diplomat or as representative of your country, you don't have gender . . . I'm Australia (Participant 8, DFAT, 15 October 2018).*

International affairs has long been the preserve of men, however it has also been the preserve of *certain types* of men, remaining a bastion of prestige, social class, heteronormativity and cultural homogeneity. Analysing demographics allows us to consider the intersectional structures constraining women in Australian international affairs. To date, research highlights significant gaps in understanding who is given the opportunity to represent Australia overseas, with little data capturing diversity beyond gender. Yet, employment opportunities are unevenly distributed across class, gender, sexuality, (dis)ability and ethnicity (Ackerly and True 2006; Acker 2006, 2009). Because of this, we would expect the participant demographics to expose the gendered (and racialised, and so on) nature of institutions.

[215] Similar to Defence and Home Affairs.

Spike Peterson notes, the state exercises power not only through its claim to legitimate violence, but also through state activities, routines and rituals that constitute and regulate "acceptable forms and images of social activity and individual and collective identity" (Peterson 1992, p. 45). *Who* can represent the state is therefore an exercise of authority and state control – as many feminists argue, the personal is political (Peterson 1992; Smith & Lee 2014; Altman 2001). This section will cover participant demographics with regards to: ethnicity; sexuality; class; education; rural/regional upbringing; relationship and familial status; rank; years in service; and (dis)ability. It will also highlight participant countries of deployment.

Ethnicity

One of the most striking initial findings when assessing participant demographics was ethnicity. Race and ethnicity are core concepts to international affairs, as international representation requires individuals to authentically conform to the values, citizenship, and embodiment of the nation they are charged with representing[216]. No policy papers or formal institutions across the agencies delineate what this means, beyond the requirement of citizenship. However, not everyone who is a citizen of Australia has the opportunity to represent Australia, with "white masculinity" historically remaining at the centre of the Australian state (Wadham, et al 2016, p. 272).

Australia is a migrant colonial nation whose indigenous inhabitants were largely and gravely internally dispossessed and, in many instances, decimated (Clark & May 2013). Determining modern-day international representation is therefore complex. In the fledgling Australian state after federation, diplomatic and international representational posts were largely filled by 'new' Australians of Anglo-Celtic heritage, or British personnel. Gradually, this has begun to change, following shifts in the composition of the Australian population. Discriminatory, or explicitly racist, formal institutions, such as the White Australia Policy[217], laws, and even sections of the Constitution barring indigenous Australians from citizenship, have been

[216] Sasson-Levy's (2017) findings on gender and militaries have many theoretical points of relevance to this study. Sasson-Levy argues that militaries are never organised by gender or by race/ethnicity alone – rather, they are always designed at the intersection of race/ethnicity and gender, creating ethno-gendered groups and identities. These ethno-gendered categories are constructed and reaffirmed through formal policies (and, I argue, informal policies too) that result in individuals experiencing their work in different ways, with different forms of convertible power post their discharge/retirement, and different relationships to the institution of citizenship. All of these factors seem equally true for the international affairs agencies studied.
[217] As noted earlier, Immigration Restriction Act 1901.

dismantled[218]. Yet, the historic racially discriminatory formal institutions have had an affect on restricting opportunities for indigenous Australians and other ethnicities from representing Australia internationally.

Contemporarily, Australia is recognised as "strikingly culturally and ethnically diverse," yet international affairs remains stratified along lines not just gendered, but also racialised (Conley Tyler 2016, p.696). Only 14 per cent of total participants interviewed identified as being from an ethnic background. Data on ethnicity and employment is not always kept by the agencies[219]. However, the Australian Human Rights Commission found that, despite individuals from Anglo-Celtic and European backgrounds representing only 76 per cent of the Australian population, they are over-represented in leadership, comprising 94.6 per cent of all Senior Executive Management roles (Australian Human Rights Commission 2018). Further, individuals of Anglo-Celtic or European heritage comprise 99 per cent of State and Federal government department heads.

The under-representation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) individuals goes beyond race and ethnicity, to skin colour. Although individuals of (largely white) ethnically diverse European descent represent 18 per cent of the Australian population, they form 18.9 per cent of leadership (Australian Human Rights Commission 2018). While (largely non-white) non-European individuals of Asian, Middle Eastern, North African, and other non-European backgrounds form 21 per cent of the Australian population, they form only 5 per cent of leaders. Similarly, while indigenous Australians form 3 per cent of the population, they are represented in only 0.4 per cent of Senior Executive Management. These trends hold for the international affairs agencies studied. Intersectional analysis highlights how marginalised statuses (for instance, race or gender) "act independently and combine

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[218] In fact, indigenous Australians had conditional citizenship (often conditional on renouncing their heritage) and voting rights up until a 1977 referendum – a number of years after the White Australia Policy was abolished in 1973 and the passing of the Racial Discrimination Act in 1975. As Mercer notes:

> it must never be forgotten that Australia stands alone as the only country in the former British Empire to have denied its Indigenous people the right to self-determination (2003, p. 426).

Therefore, while the Commonwealth's 1948 Nationality and Citizenship Act instituted that all who were born in Australia were legally citizens, in practice this legislation was an "empty vessel" and Mercer argues that indigenous Australians still remained largely "citizens without rights" (2003, p. 422; Peterson & Sanders, 1998, p. 14).

[219] Particularly given Australia's comprehensive anti-discrimination framework that makes the collection of data on ethnicity subject to strict regulations.

additively to shape people's experiences" (Parent, DeBlaere & Moradi 2013, pg. 640). This may explain why CALD women of colour remain particularly under-represented in international affairs leadership despite the gains made for many women across the agencies.

Across the participants, ethnic diversity was least represented in leadership within DFAT, and most represented in Home Affairs, followed by Defence. This aligns with the discussion in the previous chapter on historical forces, which found a high proportion of CALD individuals employed within Home Affairs. Out of all of the participants studied, only one spoke in accented English. On speaking to senior leadership across the agencies, one senior advisor explicitly stated how accented English is a 'no-go' for diplomacy – that rather than discrimination or stereotyping based on ethnic background, it was often based on accent. Accent also denotes social class[220] (Colic-Peisker & Hlavac 2014), which may have a duplicative effect on women, particularly in the high prestige diplomatic corps.

For instance, during informal conversations and background discussions, informal criteria were raised requiring staff to be 'essentially Australian'. 'Essentially Australian' was connoted with sports, sportsmanship, and being a general all-rounder. The values and language associated with what it means to be 'essentially Australian' are typically associated with the masculine and what 'passes' as being authentically Australian, resulting in this particular informal criteria having gendered and racialised connotations.

Inversely, CALD representation in Home Affairs (and to a lesser extent, Defence) is likely to be higher due to the nature of the work and the operational requirements involved[221]. Having gained a 'critical mass' of not only women, but also CALD representation throughout the Department has likely normalised a greater degree of diversity in leadership. Further, the needs to (a) ensure they had 'culturally fluent' staff in Home Affairs and (b) ensure they had enough recruits necessary for operational requirements in Defence, has likely resulted in an increased proportion of CALD representation overall in these agencies, as well as in the sample interviewed[222].

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[220] Colic-Peisker and Hlavac note that "(e)thno-cultural, educational, socio-economic and occupational attributes of a speaker are almost always reflected in his/her speech," and there exists an "accent ceiling" in which accented language is a "marker of foreignness" that may detract from individuals' merit in the employment market (2014, p. 366).

[221] Particularly in the Immigration portfolio of HOME AFFAIRS.

[222] The implications being, CALD individuals are welcomed when they are needed to die for the state, but not

Across all agencies, there were clearly benefits to CALD representation, too. In many instances, CALD representation meant greater language skills and cultural competency. One participant from Home Affairs explains, "I was born and raised in the Philippines, and they really latch onto that and they go, 'you understand us, but you're Australian still'," indicating a special relationship or quicker rapport developed based off a perceived mutual understanding (Participant 13, Home Affairs, 22 February 2019). Another participant noted, "in diplomacy … [CALD] people bring … cultural understanding readymade because they've had to grow up in the crazy Greek community in Melbourne. They bring language skills, all of that" (Participant 10, DFAT, 2 November 2018). Participant 11 in Home Affairs noted the special understanding that her Maori New Zealander background brought to her work:

> I researched and I found out it was a matriarchal society that I was posted to. I ring the old ladies in New Zealand because I am part Maori and I said I have to go to [this location] to work: 1) can I have your permission to go and do that, and 2) how would I manage best to obey the courtesies of that island. And then four days later they'll ring back and say oh, what we think is we'll ring such and such and then we'll give you a letter and then before you go you should speak to her son who speaks really good English, and then when you get there you'll make time and won't have any meetings for work until you meet and have a cup of tea with [this lady], you'll meet all the ministers' mums, then they do their bit and you'll be able to do what you need to do for your work (Participant 11, Home Affairs, 18 February 2019).

This suggests that the cultural knowledge available to representatives of diverse ethnicities may act as a crucial positive for work in the field. It was evident from Participant 11's narration that the standard norms of diplomacy and negotiation may not have been appropriate in some circumstances, and that because of her cultural background, she was able to access knowledge, customs and networks that might not have been otherwise available[223].

Despite the benefits that CALD individuals bring to the field, there were also noted 'security concerns' associated with CALD diversity. During background research, ethnic diversity within Home Affairs was canvassed. I asked about the ethnic diversity of leaders, to which one respondent replied "well that's a security concern, isn't it?" – what appeared to be an

always when they are needed to represent the state in leadership.

[223] While technically any person in the role should be able to do the job as well as the next person, for particular posts or scenarios, there may be further benefits that some individuals bring over others – an argument that in the past was applied to justify the exclusion of women from international posts, in favour of men.

attempt at a joke that touched more deeply on entrenched beliefs within the agency and wider society. This theme of CALD identity being a 'security concern' was repeated across Defence. Participant 2 spoke about the additive layers of identity that influence on leaders' experiences:

> So I'm also not a person of colour, so I don't stand out that much. I've only got the gender hurdle to get over. My last name is pretty foreign, you know, we have a bit of a giggle about that and people move on. But, I'm not being approached, unlike many of my close friends, to be on the cover of yet another brochure, because they're the Asian female. They get so sick of it. One of the things that's happening, which I think is quite interesting at the moment, is because of the paranoia around China in Defence circles, people of Chinese descent, whether or not they were born in China, speak Chinese or anything – if they look Chinese, there is a growing sort of sense of "oh we should be a little bit suspicious and careful of you, right?" "What was your name again?" That sort of thing. "Oh are you from China?" I think that that's pretty hateful (Participant 2, Defence, 19 February 2019).

Across the sample, one participant identified as indigenous. In Larkin's (2013) study of indigenous representation within the APS, he notes that the cumulative effect of a racial hierarchy within agencies sustains a racial division of labour within the APS. Considering that it was only in 2018 that DFAT posted its first indigenous woman ambassador, Julie-Ann Guivarra, it seems that barriers clearly remain for CALD women, particularly women of colour and indigenous women. In fact, intense feelings of tokenism existed for participants who identified as CALD or indigenous, particularly in a policy environment that defaulted to viewing them as 'disadvantaged' because of their ethnicity. One DFAT participant noted:

> the problem with diversity policies is it starts from a premise of disadvantage. So the premise on cultural and linguistic diversity is if you are a CALD person you are by definition disadvantaged. So our policies will be aimed at alleviating disadvantage (Participant 10, DFAT, 2 November 2018).

When I attended one official embassy event, two CALD people of colour, one woman and one man from Home Affairs and DFAT, bumped into each other, turned to me and laughed as they explained they were the diversity hires for the embassy. What was perhaps meant as a light-hearted joke turned out to be a distinct, and even isolating observation. As just one example of informal behaviour in embassy settings, there was evidently a shared experience of tokenism, marginalization and isolation that formed part of individuals' experiences.

Sexuality

Sexuality also reveals rules underpinning 'who' represents Australia, and the norms and values surrounding their inclusion. Acronyms such as LGBTI+ – short form for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and/or intersex – are used throughout this section, as is the term 'queer'[224]. While participants largely self-identified as gay or lesbian, sometimes LGBTI+ or queer was used to refer to themselves or others, and individuals' own identification was most important and thus is reflected in the language used in this section.

Historically, LGBTI+ individuals have been viewed with caution and suspicion, as security risks typically excluded from sensitive diplomatic positions (Chua 2016). Sexual identity placed individuals especially at risk of being blackmailed, and the loyalties of LGBTI+ individuals in diplomacy and security were questioned, perceived as being part of a transnational cosmopolitan community (Chauncey 2005; Crawford 2010)[225]. While the field of political science and IR has marginalised 'queerness', both remain centrally focused on power and the (re)production of power relations (Smith & Lee 2014). As Marinucci argues, "the oppression of women and the suppression of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender existence are deeply entwined" (2010, p. 106). In fact, sexuality had a deep impact on participants interviewed.

Four out of the total 57 interviewees openly identified as lesbian or gay. Considering women's under-representation across diplomacy globally, and the low proportion of LGBTI+

[224] 'Queer' is a contentious term, both colloquially and in academia (Giffney and O'Rourke 2009). Within the literature, there is an argument for the reclamation and appropriation of the word (Rand 2014), as a more inclusive term that allows for fluidity of gender and sexuality expression. The legalised/formalised (and informal understandings of the) constitution of gender and sexuality categories vary according to shifting dynamics and varying international contexts, which makes the subject of gender and sexuality in international affairs particularly complex. However, the subordination of certain genders and sexualities is well documented – with femininities subordinate to masculinities (Cassidy & Althari 2017) and hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2009) both legitimising men's dominant position in the field and justifying the subordination of women and men along gender lines, as well as ethnicity, sexuality, ability and class. Homosexuality is often perceived to be more 'feminine' in men, yet more 'masculine' in women. In fact, queer women are often perceived as 'butch' or 'masculine' women, not quite fitting in the same gender category as a heterosexual woman. As two separate categories, (1) queer women, and (2) women leaders have much in common, both often perceived as a 'third gender' or 'genderless'. Yet queer women leaders face distinct and often 'additive' effects of their intersectionality.

[225] For Australia's first openly gay diplomat, Stephen Brady, and noted gay senior diplomat John Dauth, queer identity had marked impacts, affecting individuals' abilities to take the posts they wanted, in some cases requiring them to take 'lesser' posts in an act of 'career suicide'. Yet for most of the international and Australian histories of LGBTI+ people in diplomacy, the focus has almost exclusively been on gay men, with the issue of queer women only raised in the context of equality. For instance, in discussions in the UK, the question was framed as: if gay men were barred from international appointments, should queer women also be barred?

women in society and the agencies, the sample size is roughly representative and included individuals of diverse ethnicities and urban/rural upbringings. While all women were 'out' (their sexuality was publicly known), the degree to which they were 'out' depended on the audience and their host country. For instance, depending on a host country's legal and social acceptance of homosexuality, differential treatment, harassment and discrimination was common, with queer women often experiencing a profound form of exclusion. Their experiences were summed up as thus: "[being] LGBTI+ is harder offshore where the environment does not sustain [you] – where it's illegal or where you're very much frowned upon" (Participant 2, AFP, 26 June 2018). The experiences of queer women envoys were affected by their ability to be 'out', but did not depend on it. Individuals may have been 'out' within their agency or to a select group of colleagues, yet not 'out' more broadly. Or, they could have been entirely 'out' to the world. If they were 'out' entirely, they were often subject to greater overt instances of homophobia or heterosexism – name-calling, bullying, isolation, physical threats or violence – both from within their agency and from the field or host country. If they were not 'out', or only partially 'out', they still experienced instances of homophobia and heterosexism, however this was often coupled with the burden of invisibility and lack of recognition, both of themselves and/or of their partner and relationship.

For instance, ability to gain the required visa was often an issue, with considerable delays and highly unusual instances of visas being dealt with by the host countries' foreign affairs department rather than the immigration department. Due to visa requirements, queer women who represent Australia in some host countries recounted bringing their spouse as a 'member of the house', rather than being included on a spousal visa as usual. As one participant states:

> before [Australia] had [legalised] gay marriage, I think we had something where if the other country kind of recognised same sex relationships, the same sex partner could go in on that visa, but otherwise you go in on a member of the household domestic visa (Participant 1, 18 June 2018).

Participants reported instances of colleague's spouses deploying as 'maid' or 'chauffeur', which had ramifications on whether they could claim spousal financial benefits. Further, in emergencies, generally only those on spousal or family visas were evacuated – not those on household/staffing visas. Navigating visas and benefits had significant financial and social ramifications for individuals, which also has ramifications on the wider attraction and retention of staff. Substantial improvements have been made in recent years, with

departments extending allowances to spouses regardless of their visa status. However, as long as LGBTI+ individuals in the field remain closeted or only partially out, visas remain an issue.

For individuals posted from more security and enforcement style agencies, the challenges at post were viewed as even more difficult. Whereas homosexuality has been comparatively more accepted in traditional diplomatic spheres, military and para-militaristic organisations throughout both Australia and internationally exhibit many examples of highly institutionalised homophobia and heterosexism. In the military, this has historically been experienced through 'don't ask, don't tell' policies in the US, however the lines of homophobia went even further in Australia, where a total ban on gay men and women in the military existed until 1992. In fact, gay men and women served at a time when their identities were illegal, and "lesbians were punished as deviants who might somehow contaminate the services" (Robinson 2017, para 17). Australian policing agencies were often on the forefront of historical persecution of LGBTI+ individuals.

The experiences of queer women highlighted the binary challenges attributed to spouses at post – it was not just an issue of what a male 'trailing spouse' at post might do (which is still disruptive enough diplomacy). Rather, queer women appeared to challenge the whole structuring of posts around heteronormativity. Women were in roles of both the diplomat and the spouse at the same time, in the same household – doubly different to traditional diplomatic norms.

Additionally, because the ideal diplomat remains the heterosexual, (white) man in Australian international affairs, sexuality was also a salient factor for heterosexual women who represented a deviation from the masculine norm in international affairs. In Defence, Participant 7 notes that:

> when you look at close girlfriends and I who are still single, there is a view that we must all be lesbians . . . actually we're not [lesbians] . . . but I mean I've been accused of being a lesbian for a long time, particularly within the Army (Participant 7, Defence, 20 March 2019).

For some participants, the correlations between them having short hair, no children and no partner (or a combination of the three), and being a woman in a significant position of leadership, led to them being repeatedly perceived as queer. Mostly, this was received good-

naturedly and did not affect their work. However, the way participants were perceived by the outside world and their counterparts is significant for understanding the nature of gender in international affairs. Even if not queer, women were frequently typified to be queer. This is emblematic of 'othering' experienced by women leaders and diplomats for whom international affairs continues to reinforce specific gendered and sexual power dynamics that support gender inequality and heterosexism (Cassidy & Althari 2017). It reinforces the "deeply entwined" nature of the oppression and suppression of women and of 'queer' (Marinucci 2010, p. 107).

Additionally, for LGBTI+ participants, although 'queerness' was inherent in their experiences, similar to Christo's (2015) findings, their status as women generally preceded their sexuality. Gender and sexuality produced related, but also distinct experiences. While gender is often based off socially constructed differences – many of which are physically 'obvious' – sexuality is often invisible, and therefore the need to identify as LGBTI+ or queer differed from participant to participant. Sexual identity was therefore an integral part of participants' identity, but not always one they could promote or announce. As discussed in Chapter Two, Neumann's *The Body of the Diplomat* found that women represented two different femininities and hierarchies for understanding their roles: "as a diplomat that happens to be a woman" and "as a woman who happens to be a diplomat" (2008, p. 687). For those who were openly out and were sought for specifically LGBTI+ related initiatives or events within their agencies or in-country, the hierarchy for understanding their role followed more of a 'queer and woman-first-diplomat-next' identity format. In almost every other circumstance, their gender and sexuality were downplayed, following a role-first-woman-next pattern, with their sexuality often left out entirely. Often, the decision to remain partially in the 'closet' was based out of fear that coming out would limit their career options, damage their reputation, or put them physically at risk on their postings or even in their agencies. Not only was this reflective of their experiences, but was also mirrored in the interviews, with participants often only mentioning their sexuality near to the end of the interview, after trust and rapport had been established, and a key part of their experience was evidently missing from the narrative discussed to that point.

Inability to identify, or ability to identity their queerness only in certain contexts, highlights

international affairs as a space more hostile than not to queer women's identities[226]. It appears only welcoming of diverse women conditional on a large variety of external factors – highlighting what Altman and Symons (2016) note as a conditional acceptance of queer identity. As well as being influenced by gendered and racialized institutions, international affairs is clearly heteronormative – basing its presumptions and practices on the experiences of heterosexual actors.

Class

Class was also pervasive across the agencies, but not homogenous. DFAT embodies many traditional diplomatic values, particularly around 'elite' private school education, dynastic ties and an association with upper-middle class, genteel, and 'cultured' norms. Variation to this was noted, for instance Participant 14 spoke about not being part of the "DFAT dynasty," equating employment in the agency to that of being born into a royal empire:

> I was very much middle class, mum's a teacher, dad's a teacher . . . I'm public school, [rural] university [educated]. I'm not what some people associate with our diplomatic service and nor what some people sometimes expect (Participant 14, DFAT, 4 February 2019).

Government service has typically been associated with the upper-middle classes and professionalism, and was on occasion historically associated with favouritism, nepotism and cronyism as mechanisms to get the top jobs within public service[227]. Leadership positions or international representation, moreover, was associated with the elite[228]. Within the modern agencies, the increased professionalisation of the service in favour of merit-based appointments, rather than politics and connections, has had an impact, increasing the diversity of representation across class divides. However, class lines have not been entirely blurred, and class is experienced in different ways across the agencies. Participants from DFAT reinforced the most prestigious class connotations, as opposed to the AFP, Defence and elements of Home Affairs, which had more working class connotations and participant profiles.

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[226] In fact, many of Australia's first female diplomats in the department are reported to have been queer, perhaps as they were not affected to the same degree by the Marriage Bar or children as their heterosexual peers were.

[227] A prohibition was placed on patronage and favouritism in the Australian Public Service only in 1999 (Parliament of Australia 2010). Matheson asserts that staff selection in the Australian Public Service has historically exemplified "social closure", particularly based on educational credentials or lack thereof (2001, p. 43).

[228] Many instances exist globally whereby diplomacy was sponsored by the individual, meaning only those with the finances and influence wielded diplomatic roles (McCarthy 2015).

Education

Educational attainment varied across the participants. Participants in DFAT[229] and Home Affairs had undertaken the most education, while many participants from Defence had joined the agency for its embedded education opportunities, with previous tertiary education not a condition of entry. There was less focus on higher education in AFP, and participants demonstrated the considerable success that could be reached regardless of educational background. One AFP participant noted that "I was a senior in 1990 in Queensland . . . I was the only one in my immediate family to make it past Grade 9" (Participant 10, AFP, 31 January 2019). Class and educational attainment were often entwined – while level of education attainment does not prescribe class, it is often indicative of class[230] (Webb, et al 2017). Prior to 1995, individuals did not have to have a university degree to apply for a job with the AFP. Many senior level leaders who have been part of the AFP since before 1995 therefore do not have university degrees, which is a significant difference to some of the other departments, notably DFAT. Another senior AFP officer discussed what is important in her job, and how challenges are navigated:

> I have not got a degree. So is education a prerequisite? It's not . . . sometimes it is the old common-sense factor . . . in almost 28, 29 years, I've gone with my gut . . . I think if you haven't got that . . . please don't deploy offshore [laughs] . . . Policing in any given day, is any given situation, and you cannot predict it . . . you are usually unarmed, you're using your mouth and you are in a situation that could go pear-shaped within two seconds. So how do you prepare for that? Sometimes you can't. So every day you just go there and you hope for the best. Especially when you're in offshore in mission component areas and so you have to be able to cope (Participant 4, AFP, 21 June 2018).

Rural/urban upbringing

Rural and regional upbringing versus urban upbringing also factored into participant demographics. Overwhelmingly participants came from 'rich' urban centres, predominantly

[229] Across women listed on DFAT's Ambassadors and overseas representatives page online in 2018, all (100 per cent) had at least a bachelor's degree (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2018a). Of these women, per cent had a second degree, generally a Masters Degree, diploma or certificate, generally but not always in a specialised, related field. Most had studied some form of international relations, law, politics or history. Therefore, in my dataset, participants who studied topics that differed from this felt they stood out. For instance, Participant 14 commented that "It's not a very kind of conventional [career path] – I didn't go and do law or politics at one of the Australian sandstone universities" (Participant 14, DFAT, 4 February 2019).

[230] In OECD Anglophone countries, including Australia "social class is found to be a statistically significant influence on higher education outcomes" (Webb, et al 2017, p. 149-150; OECD 2015)

Canberra, Sydney, and Melbourne. Yet of all the participants, just over 10 per cent disclosed they were from rural or regional backgrounds, and they were fairly evenly split across the agencies. In most cases, this backgrounding played a significant role in their identity, and in many cases was reiterated by the participants themselves as an important part of diversity within the agencies. It was also an important part of their narratives around resilience and what made them capable in the work they did. Participant 4 from the AFP noted, "I'm finding in all my learnings at the moment, the more resilient people are those that had a country upbringing" (Participant 4, AFP, 21 June 2018).

Relationship and familial status

Not all participants disclosed marital status and whether they had children, however of those who did, 32 (55.2 per cent) were either married or in a relationship and 16 (27.5 per cent) were single having divorced or never married. 10 (17.2 per cent) did not disclose. Women in DFAT and the AFP were most likely to have children, and most participants from these agencies did have children. However, in Home Affairs and Defence, under half of the participants had children[231]. Spousal status and children were key considerations regarding deployment and leadership. Most participants with children took their early-career posts when their children were at pre- or primary school age and most women took their senior-career posts when their children had finished secondary school or commenced university.

Interestingly, marital or relationship status did not always equate to greater support for the women on their deployments. For approximately half of the participants who had spouses, their spouses accompanied them on posting and were able to provide crucial supports for them, their role and their children. Yet for the other half of participants, their spouses *did not* accompany them on post. This occurred even if the woman was deployed and took their children with her, leaving her effectively 'single' at post and often still in charge of raising their children. One participant commented, "I'm a strong advocate for helping women to have children [with them on their posting] because to me that's extremely hard, *especially when you're married*" (Participant 1, AFP, 13 June 2018, emphasis added). She highlighted that

[231] Even so, it is worth noting that 46 per cent of Defence participants reported having children, which is more than double the average for women generally in the ADF. This might signify that those with children may be more likely to pursue a 'diplomatic' Defence role or that the Defence Attaché role is more family-friendly than general ADF service. Alternatively, it could just reflect a correlation made in this small sample size.

whilst (female) spouses often provide core personal and professional support for men, (male) spouses often do not fill these same roles for women. Often in these cases, the husband (it was always a male spouse), would not accompany the woman.

One Defence participant provided further insight into the challenges that deployment raises for relationships, commenting that it is good practice for women in Defence to gain a partner early in their career. It was reported by the participant to be more difficult to get a partner later as they generally did not understand relentless and all-consuming nature of the work.

If a participant's child(ren) remained in Australia while she deployed overseas, often the spouse and wider family were very supportive in maintaining the home, and regularly visited the women at post or in a third country 'holiday' location. Returning to the family after post was a considerable challenge for many, for whom their family and partners had 'got on with life' as usual and both parties experienced tension on returning to the home dynamic. Out of the agencies, the AFP had best-developed institutional supports for individuals returning from post to re-integrate without causing family disturbance, often taking participants through a short one-to-two day period of re-integration before releasing them back to their families. Trends around family and children will be further analysed in the next chapter on participant experiences.

Rank

Out of the total 57 formal interviewees, 31 (54.3 per cent) were at SES or equivalent ranks, and 21 (36.8 per cent) were at EL or equivalent ranks, three with undisclosed ranks, and three not ranked (the former ministers and one political appointee). Participants at SES or equivalent rank represented 86.7 per cent of DFAT participants, 42.8 per cent of Defence participants, 42.8 per cent of Home Affairs participants, and 54.5 per cent of AFP participants.

Years in service

Most participants were in their mid-late stages of their career, with experience ranging from 5 years to over 40 years in their respective agencies. Fewer years in service generally correlated with lateral transfers.

(Dis)ability

No participants disclosed a disability.

Country of deployment

Participants had been deployed in every region of the world, across a wide range of postings. Requirements within Defence and some Home Affairs deployments meant that not all participants could choose their country of deployment, although in circumstances, such as in the civilian side of Defence, women could register expressions of interest only for the countries they wanted. For those who could choose their country of deployment, gendered considerations were a key consideration in determining whether they took up opportunities or not. Particularly for those with children, the choice was explicit. For others, factors like the type of lifestyle, level of domestic support (for instance, the ability to have domestic help), and spousal opportunities for their partners weighed considerably into their choice[232]. A small number of countries were considered 'no-go' countries, including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. A number of countries were highly contested as countries participants would willingly nominate for, including Papua New Guinea (PNG), Afghanistan, and a number of other Middle Eastern countries in particular. For instance, participants question the level of safety and perceptions of women in power in PNG. One participant noted:

> PNG has a culture of … there's high levels of family violence, there's traditional norms that essentially mean that currency is paid for brides, and high levels of just general sort of community violence. And definitely for women there's a higher security risk. Personally, I wouldn't go out of the compound or out of a secure area and just go walking in the streets. But if my male six-foot partner had to cross the street, I feel like he would be safe enough to do that. Whereas I wouldn't. So there is definitely a culture where there's gender bias and gender inequality (Participant 10, Home Affairs, 1 February 2019).

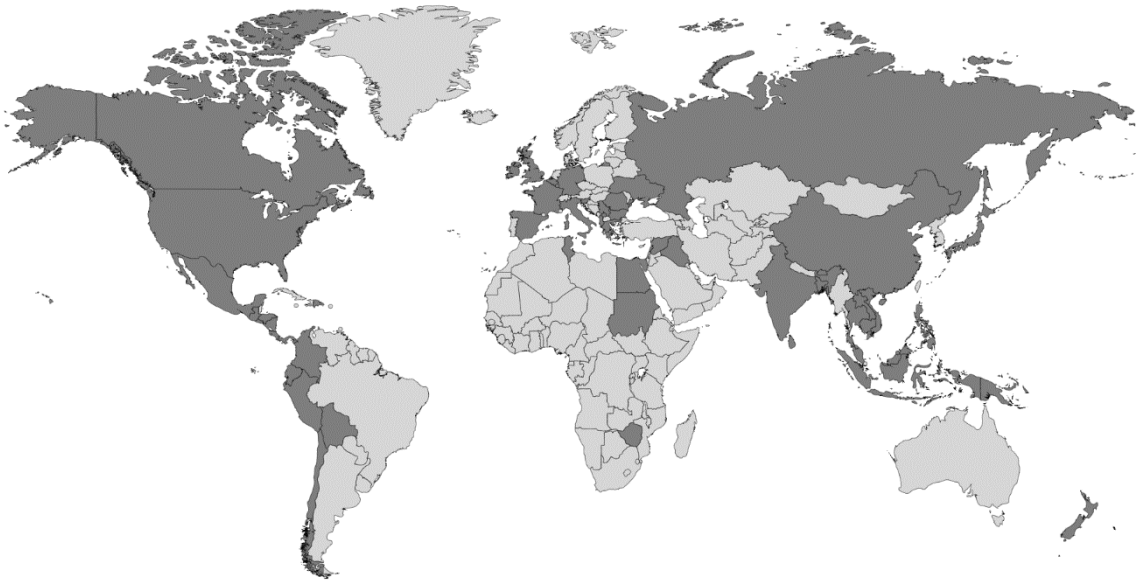
Despite this, PNG was the fifth-most deployed to country[233], and most participants who had spent time there had greatly enjoyed the experience on a professional level, even with safety or other concerns. Additionally, even countries such as the US were warily regarded[234]. For

[232] Factors influencing women's postings will be explored in Chapter Six.
[233] Which may reflect the fact that Australia has a large presence in PNG, and that there are many early career posting opportunities for junior staff.
[234] For instance, due to political circumstances, queer participants were affected by the decision of the US State

queer women in particular, no location was entirely 'safe'. Rather, safety was marked more by safety within participants' own agencies, reinforcing findings that agencies (not host countries) matter most to women's treatment internationally (Stephenson 2019; Stephenson, forthcoming).

Participant's countries of deployment are represented in **Figure 7**.

Figure 7: Map of countries of deployment



Note: Dark grey marks the countries in which participants were deployed, excepting Julia Gillard and Julie Bishop's trips.

The women interviewed had represented Australia in over 40 countries[235]**.** In some cases across Home Affairs, AFP, and the civilian side of Defence, women would opt out of career advancement in favour of overseas postings. For them, the ability to regularly post overseas

Department to stop issuing visas to the same-sex partners of foreign diplomats sent to the US or the United Nations in New York unless they are legally married (Stephenson and Harris Rimmer 2018).

[235] Over the entire career span of participants, the following countries were most deployed to: China (11 times); USA (9 times); United Nations in New York (6 times) and Afghanistan (6 times); Papua New Guinea (5 times); and the UK, Japan and East Timor (4 times each). A range of other countries were deployed to 3 or less times across the interviews. The full list of participant's countries of deployment (excepting Julia Gillard and Julie Bishop's international trips) is covered in **Table 8** in the Appendices**.** As foreign minister and prime minister, Julie Bishop and Julia Gillard represented Australia in the most countries out of the women interviewed – with Julie Bishop visiting 105 countries, some multiple times. Out of the agencies, women deployed the most in DFAT (averaging 2.8 deployments), followed by Home Affairs (averaging 2.6 deployments), AFP (averaging 2.1 deployments), and Defence (averaging 1.5 deployments). Generally, those in senior SES ranks had deployed the most, with women in EL or leadership pipeline roles having deployed the least. The AFP was an exception: those in EL level positions deployed on average 3.25 times, whereas those in SES level positions only deployed an average of 1.8 times. This could be a result of the fact that international roles within the AFP were generally restricted to EL levels until recently when international roles at an SES level were introduced.

was more important than career progression, which often offered less, or no, postings at more senior levels. In these agencies in particular, postings were not always seen as a career positive, with the choice often being made between posting or promotion a "double-edged sword" (Participant 14, Home Affairs, 9 May 2019).

Demographics summary

Overall, participants were largely Anglo-Celtic, middle-class, and heterosexual. While most women did have a partner and family, it was striking that this percentage was not higher, which suggests that leadership remains to impact on participants' choices and opportunities around spouses and/or children. Already, emerging 'rules' exist around who can represent Australia overseas, with women of colour and those from sexually diverse backgrounds remaining particularly affected. The next section seeks to understand what the 'rules of the game' are in international affairs and how this affects who is chosen to represent Australia internationally.

Gendered 'rules of the game'

> *I never felt I was a woman – I was just a police officer – which was fantastic (Participant 10, AFP, 31 January 2019).*

Throughout interviews, it became clear that there were specific accepted modes of behaviour and rules that the women had to negotiate in order to progress and be recognised in their work. Understanding these rules aids us in understanding how institutions *obligate* and *narrate* forms of gendered behaviour, as well as *whose* behaviour is legitimated (Lowndes 2014). Rules were distinct across the agencies, but reinforced similarities in gendered treatment. How well institutions were navigated by participants was directly correlated to the 'visibility' of the rules, which had effects on both vertical segregation (explored earlier in this chapter) and segregation across international posts (explored later in this chapter).

This section will discuss two ways in particular that international affairs institutions are gendered. Firstly, this section will analyse 'what' are the rules that prescribe (and proscribe) acceptable feminine and masculine forms of behaviour for the women participants. Secondly, this section will discuss "how rules distribute power by assigning actors to particular roles, specifying their access to organisational resources" (Lowndes 2014, p. 687). This section

demonstrates that women's representation goes beyond what we know of their statistics and demographics, with specific values, norms and behaviours delineating who represents Australia, and where, internationally.

Dictating women's voice, value and visibility

Rules-in-use are described by Ostrom as a distinctive ensemble of "dos and don'ts that one learns on the ground" (1999, p. 38). Across the agencies, rules prescribing (and proscribing) acceptable feminine and masculine forms of behaviour coalesced around three key themes: whether and in what circumstances women were listened to; how women remained systemically undervalued, and; whether they were seen, and therefore taken seriously, or not. Many of these gendered institutions were not just experienced within the agencies, but also in wider settings as explored in the theoretical framework in **Figure 1** (see p. 59). Since work in international affairs has multiple layers of institutions affecting actors – from the individual context, to the agency, host and home society norms, and the norms of the field – there was often an absence of 'complete' formal institutions. 'Complete' formal institutions would indicate rules and norms that were consistent across all four core sites of participants' experiences. Therefore, women's experiences were affected by differing institutions at each layer of their lives, with formal institutions available in some areas and only informal institutions guiding the rules-in-use in others. There was often tremendous conflict between rules. In lieu of formal institutions, informal institutions were more likely to arise.

The quest to be heard

Gendered rules guide Australian international affairs, dictating whose voice is heard, when, and in what circumstances. Women's voices are frequently marginalised in international affairs, and at least historically, have often remained tied to women's assumed knowledge or specific role (Westendorf & Strating 2020). Their assumed knowledge was (and is) subject to bias in which women's knowledge is often of lesser perceived value compared to men's[236]. Women have also been subject to longstanding and deep vertical and horizontal segregation, which likely has effects on the topics in which their expertise is sought. Women's ability to be heard is directly related to their opportunities for representation. Yet, their representation

[236] In their study on gender stereotypes and deliberation, men were significantly less likely to believe that speakers judged as 'competent' were female (Coffman, Flikkema, & Shurchkov 2020).

(as canvassed earlier in this chapter) is not indicative of their opportunities to substantively *use* that representation. This is a key element this section aims to achieve. Overall, "bounded change within an existing system" is evidenced, and while formal recognition and opportunities for women may have increased, this has not necessarily altered women being sought for expertise, nor heard (Mackay 2014, p.567).

Women represent Australia in multilateral and bilateral settings. In multilateral settings, such as in the United Nations or other international forums, participants noted that protocol formally provided opportunities to speak and be listened to, as each country is given a set order and number of minutes in which to speak[237]. For instance, former Prime Minister Julia Gillard noted that:

> If you're in a room like the G20, everybody knows why everyone's in that room. There is the automatic accord and status that goes with being the leader that came into that room to represent their nation. Now that doesn't mean that there aren't gender dynamics at play, and when you are in those rooms, they are often incredibly gendered. My biggest memory of that is going to an APEC meeting, the one that President Obama hosted in Hawaii, where I was the only woman . . . [but] the protocol is fairly ordered (Julia Gillard, pers. comm., 21 May 2019).

In bilateral meetings or within the participants' own agencies, women were often ignored or had their contributions marginalised. The lack of formal rules around who speaks and when resulted in the suppression of women's voices according to an informal hierarchy of whose voice mattered most. Higher ranks were able to exert their voice more. However, between men and women of the same rank, participants noted that women's voices were more likely to be overridden by 'mansplaining' and silencing that acted as an enforcement mechanism for whom and when individuals could speak. Women were often not automatically recognised as the voice or authority on a topic – even if they were – and women were frequently overlooked in group meetings. Participant 12 noted, "lots of mansplaining goes on in DFAT. People talk over you all the time," with women's opportunities to contribute to 'hard' or operational topics particularly affected (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019). Participant's voices were silenced by being spoken over, and by men repeating the contributions of women as their own. The protocols of multilateral engagements did not exist

[237] Further, each country is allocated the exact same rules of engagement, according to formal rules – for instance, permanent members in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) may have different opportunities than non-permanent members, yet all permanent members and all non-permanent members have the same rules of engagement.

in bilateral settings, and the lack of formal rules around who speaks when resulted in the disadvantage of women whose voices were less recognised and valued, and for whom many women may have been more reluctant and less confident to speak up.

Experiences did vary however, and it was easier for women who 'fit' the existing physical and discursive (masculine) mould to exercise their voice (Sasson-Levy 2003). One Defence participant commented:

> I haven't felt in the five years I've been here that I have suffered because of my gender in any way, I've just had to find a slightly different way of proving myself. But I will say, it probably helps that I am naturally extroverted and talkative and fairly robust, and self confident and even down to little things: like I'm not slight, you know, I don't have this sort of hurdle to be seen in a room because *I walked in and people saw me* (Participant 2, Defence, 19 February 2019, emphasis added).

Another participant in Defence, who was only five foot tall and had a slight frame, found that she was frequently ignored in meetings, or not even given a seat at tables during meetings.

Mackay explores why 'new' institutions[238] often revert to old practices, signalling a regression in gender norms that is apparent when considering women's ability to speak and be heard. The combination of 'newness' and 'gender' make the institutionalisation of reforms even harder. New rules often go in direct opposition to the prevailing 'old' norms within the agencies in which women's voices were often marginalised or entirely absent. Further, many contexts in which participants had to work were outside the strict institutions and purview of their agencies, resulting in a reliance on more universally experienced (global) gender bias. In fact, almost 90 per cent of people worldwide have a deeply ingrained bias against women (UNDP 2020). The implications of women's (in)ability to be seen and heard have significant personal and professional ramifications, particularly as career progression is often marked by how much and how well individuals contribute to certain topics – the loudest voices are most rewarded. Critically, international affairs relies on the skilful use of voice to negotiate – women are at a disadvantage while their voices are not equally heard, or expressed.

The fight to be valued

Relatedly, the value and authority that participants brought to negotiations often began from a place of having to prove themselves, and was perceived, explicitly, as 'not equal' to the

[238] Such as the gender equality policies witnessed in all the agencies.

representation of a man in the same position. Internally to agencies and externally to the world, women were perceived as less authoritative, less senior, and less legitimate as leaders – even in the same rank or role as men. Women of colour felt they had to work twice as hard again to be recognised. Participant 15 summed up her experience:

> I'll never forget, in one country, which I shall not name, but they had a stream of very excellent women high commissioners year after year and the prime minister, male, said to me, "when are we going to be upgraded?" I said, "Excuse me?" He said, "Well, when are we going to get a man high commissioner?" He was having a go, but for him to have raised it, he was also a bit sincere, you know, why do we – when are we going to get a real ambassador (Participant 15, DFAT, 5 March 2019).

Women's 'outsider' positioning was repeatedly reinforced by participant experiences. Trying to combat the biases or assumptions of international counterparts was difficult however. Unlike agency-based discrimination, there is little recourse to combat discrimination and harassment in the international field. This is particularly so because much of the work of international affairs is based around minimising diplomatic incidents – potentially reducing the chance of justice[239] for women 'when things go wrong'. Yet, it does reinforce an existing gender order in which women are at the bottom. Language like "real ambassador" suggests that only men can do the work and embody what it means to be an ambassador, and that women are just 'pretend playing' in the role until the next man comes along. This evidently affected women's perception of their own ability to fulfil the role too and may be additively experienced for women of diverse backgrounds, with one LGBTI+-identifying participant noting:

> I don't think it's necessarily because of my gender or my sexuality or my ethnicity, but . . . I spent a lot of time worrying that I wasn't ambassadorial enough, I wasn't like some of the people I'd seen in DFAT, particularly the men I have to say, because there's more of them to look at (Participant 14, DFAT, 4 February 2019).

This sentiment recurred amongst participants.

Assessing formal policies in the diplomatic 'field' are important for understanding what it might mean, as above, to be a "real ambassador". The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961)[240] does not explicitly mention gender by way of prescribing what genders

[239] At least publicly.

[240] The Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations is the guiding international convention on diplomatic relations. The Convention defines the head of a mission (HOM) as "the person charged by the sending State with the duty of acting in that capacity," with the function to: represent the sending State in the receiving State; protect the sending State's interests; negotiate with the receiving State; assess the conditions and developments

can be a representative. However, *only male pronouns* are used to describe the roles and responsibilities of a diplomat, with the word "his" used 35 times throughout the Convention, and "he" used 12 times. As the official, and overarching formal institution decrying 'what' diplomacy constitutes and who can occupy such roles, the Convention is explicitly gendered[241]. Despite agency-specific or APS-wide policies that now use gender-neutral language and act as the more immediate policies or formal rules-in-use for the selection of representatives, the overarching weight and prestige of the Vienna Convention still holds, establishing an overarching diplomatic architecture in which, even if unintentional, references to women are missing. Male pronouns are used if not explicitly to refer to men, then as 'ungendered' or gender neutral pronouns. At least contemporarily, this is problematic given the discursive role language has in shaping social reality[242], and given that androcentric language and androcentrism maintains a gender imbalance "by obscuring male advantage as simply a gender-neutral standard" (Bailey, LaFrance & Dovidio 2019, p. 308).

As one example of many, two sets of formal institutions work to contradict each other partially: with the Convention clearly gendered, emphasising "he" and "his" roles, and agency policies emphasising equality. The more-recent agency policies speak to contemporary or 'new' values, whilst the Convention is more inextricably tied to 'old' informal values, which (even if unintentional) bind gender, prestige and the protocols of diplomacy all in one. It is not clear which formal institutions 'win' as the more dominant set of norms and rules guiding gendered expectations within the diplomatic field, yet what is evident is a tension between these rules, which creates instability, particularly between generations.

Participant 12 noted that "there's a whole new generation coming through that will not stand

of the receiving State on behalf of the sending State; and, promote the friendly relations between States (1961, Article 1 and Article 2). HOM are divided into three classes: ambassadors or others of equivalent rank accredited to Heads of State; envoys, ministers and internuncios accredited to Heads of State; and charges d'affaires accredited to Ministers for Foreign Affairs. The Convention therefore covers a range of strictly defined 'diplomats', plus associated envoys or attachés. Most participants are defined in, and all are affected by, this Convention.

[241] It is acknowledged that this reflects the treaty drafting conventions of the time when gender equal or neutral language was non-existent and all treaties (except when explicitly with women) would have used "he", "his" and "him". The way in which the Convention is interpreted by states and courts would likely reflect more contemporary values, however the rigidity and explicit gendering remains part of the overarching context within which participants work.

[242] Hamilton (1988) found that 'he' has male-specific and gender-neutral denotations, and that both may be activated even when the gender-neutral meaning is intended.

for this stuff, but as long as there's people of my era and older around, it will continue," highlighting that gendered challenges were frequently "pushed underground" and subdued rather than disappeared (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019). This is in consistent with Mackay, Kenny and Chappell's (2010) findings whereby power shifts between informal and formal, as well as new, institutional arenas. It appears that both a) competing formal institutions as in the Vienna Convention and agency policies and b) a shift to more informal underlying notions of the male ambassador therefore affect 'who' can represent their state internationally.

For women who were not the 'first' woman in their role, one DFAT participant noted, "the default comment was 'another woman?'" (Participant 12, DFAT, 19 February 2019). This response was not just from the host government, but other ambassadors at post too. Participant 12 noted that "nobody would comment on this if it was [all] men", and went on to say:

> I was outraged, you know, I was like "oh my God, I can't believe you guys are saying this stuff! Like, what century are you in?" but you know, I mean, you can't show that on your face when a minister says to you "you're a woman" and stares at your chest, you know, you just look them in the eye and say "yes I am" (Participant 12, DFAT, 19 February 2019).

Participant experiences reinforced that informal rules and norms still place a higher value on men's contributions and achievements, which may be better recognised, more visible, and more celebrated. Value is subjective, and as such, is not something easily strategized within formal institutions and policies. Despite this, all agencies have formal commitments to equality, valuing the equal opportunity and contributions of their employees. However, the 'rules-in-use' differed, with participants frequently feeling othered and made to feel they did not belong.

Additionally, across all agencies, almost all participants spoke of their agencies as being 'male-dominated'. Participant 2 noted that:

> once upon a time, we would never have said when we were placing people in certain location, "what does that mean for the gender balance?" It wouldn't even have been part of the conversation. Not in a negative way, it just wasn't noticed. It wasn't a thing. At its worst, that would've been "oh, does that embassy have too many women?" . . . it's not like [women] weren't there. There's just a bit more confidence . . . There's just a very different kind of feel that there's more women around. It just makes you not be

a *complete minority* (Participant 2, DFAT, 19 June 2018).

What is significant about many of the participants' experiences was this feeling that they were in the minority. While true for leadership, more correctly women have remained a *marginalised majority* overall within DFAT, as well as Home Affairs. Women have remained the majority of employees for over two decades in Home Affairs, and nearly as long in DFAT, where they have continued to be the majority of recruitments for over three decades. Women's own perceptions of their prevalence within the department suggests that women's bodies and voices were less *visible* – the third core area where women were affected – and continued to be overlooked.

The struggle to be seen

Whether and in what circumstances women were seen was highly conditional. In important formal negotiations and women's work generally, participants frequently felt invisible, and often, not taken seriously. The *lack* of visibility that women experienced in these settings was deeply entrenched and had crushing results where women missed out on promotion opportunities or putting themselves forwards for international roles[243]. Alternatively, for diplomatic events, one-on-one's and unrelated-from-work downtime, women were *highly* visible in a way that limited their range of acceptable actions – socially prohibited from drinking with counterparts (or even alone, or with their partner in their own time), or joining golf and other such typical informal activities. Access to public spaces and 'down' time was specifically gendered. Participant 12 noted:

> one of the things I'm learning in this role, that still has an impact on your life and maybe that impact is slightly gendered, is the public nature of the role. I can't go to the bar and have a beer because that would attract a lot of attention here, I'm a very public figure. That has an impact on how I behave . . . there's no 'off' switch in this role . . . it has different implications I think for men than it does for women . . . you have to manage differently, I guess. And that is a gender thing because men can go and you know, they can rock up at a golf club and find someone to play a round of golf with or hit a few balls, they can have a beer at the bar or whatever. I think that would be – you know, here that would be very much commented upon, and I don't feel comfortable doing it (Participant 12, DFAT 1 February 2019).

Informal events, drinks, dinners or social sports often provided background knowledge relating to contemporary events, politics and relationships, as well as inside information on

[243] For women who identified across different ethnicities and sexualities, this was multiply experienced, with some women even Anglicising or de-gendering their name in their agency directory so as to not be further marginalised and made invisible.

negotiations and opportunities (Stanbridge & Ramos 2012). This was frequently inaccessible to women due to norms around their acceptable behaviour in public.

Women's visibility also related to their appearance and comportment. Across the agencies, women in more 'masculine' roles adopted various discursive and bodily identity practices compliant with dominant masculinities – signifying both "resistance to and compliance with" the existing gender orders (Sasson-Levy 2003, p. 441). Particularly across Defence, the AFP and the ABF, women tended to dress in a more masculine style – confined both by their uniform (when required) and acceptable modes of comportment. Conforming to more masculine archetypes not only allowed them to subvert dominant norms around femininity, it also required them to conform to androcentric[244] norms that were particularly evident in militaristic and para-militaristic cultures. Effectively, it gave women power, whilst requiring them to co-opt to hegemonic masculine norms.

Crucially, the findings from this section indicated that in formal occasions where doing their job really mattered, women were made invisible. In informal occasions where women had an upper hand in networking and negotiating with specific individuals, or had down time, they were too visible, again constraining their behaviour. Their visibility or lack thereof therefore became an enforcement tool to limit and control women's representation. In some cases, it was emblematic of women being seen only as they reached the 'glass cliff'. This finding is significant, indicative of a diplomatic double bind.

Summary of rules that prescribe and proscribe behaviour

Overall, the space between formal and informal rules was murky. The layered nature of institutions within agencies, and throughout the entire system – in individual contexts, in agencies, in the wider diplomatic sector, and in each host and home country context – meant that there were no 'complete' rules guaranteeing equality. Women's voice, value and visibility were enforced in specific ways, illuminating constraints on women in Australian international affairs. The different ways in these constraints were negotiated also affects the second element to be canvassed in this section, namely, "how rules distribute power by assigning actors to particular roles, specifying their access to organisational resources"

[244] A form of gender bias "privileging of male experience and the 'otherising' of female experience" (Bem 1993, p. 41)

(Lowndes 2014, p. 687).

Divided by gender, status and international appointments

Lowndes (2014) argues that gendered rules, as above, distribute power by assigning actors to roles, specifying access to organisational resources. Distribution of power and roles was seen in participants' debates about their career trajectories, and reinforced the Lowy Institute's (2019c) findings that women were often concentrated around 'soft' policy areas and away from operations. Career management had considerable positives for ADF women, providing clear, transparent pathways to the next rank and type of role. This was similarly the case for AFP women[245]. However, some participants expressed the issue of being career-managed out of the operational roles critical for career progression. Unconscious bias was identified as a major barrier for women, whereby career managers tended to assign operational jobs to men, giving women fewer opportunities to be involved in operational planning. A lack of operational planning experience was considered 'career suicide', with chances of reaching leadership very low. Accordingly, women are highest represented in largely non-operational roles, which reinforces horizontal segregation[246]. Whilst APS service has similar formalised pathways across (not necessarily within) agencies, careers are not managed to the same formalised degree[247].

Decisions around whether to specialise or remain a generalist further dominated women's experiences across the agencies. Most participants began in generalist work streams. Yet, many noted a tendency to specialise amongst their female colleagues[248]. This resulted in a quicker initial career trajectory, but longer-term career damage. The choice between specialising or staying in generalist operational streams was one with heavy consequences across the agencies. Specialisation had many positives for women[249]. However, inevitably these niche roles or corporate governance roles placed limits on women's progression – eventually taking them out of key streams needed for international opportunities and senior

[245] Particularly after the Cultural Change review.
[246] In the most recent Women in the ADF Report, women remain highest represented in Health and in Logistics, Administration and Support, and lowest represented in Engineering, Technical and Construction, followed by Combat and Security.
[247] The APS Integrated Leadership System (ILS) also places the burden of career development on individuals, rather than agencies, which is problematic given that women often only apply for roles if they meet all criteria. Women are frequently appointed on experience, men on potential (Mohr 2014).
[248] For instance, in human resources (HR), capability or acquisitions.
[249] Including quicker career progression and greater flexibility than operational roles.

leadership. One AFP member talked about the choice between generalist and specialist streams when she stated:

> for me that breakthrough moment was when I was working in surveillance. I wanted to go on the Executive Development Program at the Institute of Police Management. I wasn't getting on it. All of my performance reviews [would] say, oh you're an incredibly strategic thinker, you should be doing X and you should be tracking towards management. I kept applying for this program and couldn't get on. I had a manager who turned around and said to me, "you're in surveillance". I said but that shouldn't make any difference – this is for future leadership, this is for this, that and the other. He said "you're in surveillance". I said but boss, I've got this and you're always commenting on this, I should – he said, "you're in surveillance". So I took a $30,000 pay cut [to leave specialist surveillance and join operations] (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018).

At the time, Participant 5 was the only woman in surveillance, so it was not an area where women were traditionally siloed, out of operations. However, as an isolated case, the participant was one of few women in the AFP at this time. Surveillance was a role that did not require as much of the 'hands-on' physicality that is involved in generalist police work, and could therefore be undertaken in much more flexible circumstances, for instance around family duties. The role may have been quite a good role for some women, considering women's work conditions in other streams, plus the extra duties that the women often bore at home[250]. However, it was also clearly considered a side step to the operational work and career development that 'really mattered'. Participants recounted that these specialist roles often had more limited resources – particularly in terms of power, opportunities for personal and professional development, and career progression to senior levels.

Women in agencies without formalised career management still experienced career segregation and were often employed in roles perceived as 'soft', such as human rights and public diplomacy in DFAT, immigration in Home Affairs, surveillance in the AFP, or HR management or administration across all the agencies. This also reinforced profiling particular roles for particular genders, as one DFAT participant noted of her work in economics and trade, "it was a little bit unusual for that to be a woman, frankly, a girl that was doing that" (Participant 1, DFAT, 4 May 2018).

Access to resources and opportunities had big effects for women seeking international

[250] Domestic chores, childcare and eldercare.

representation. Alongside Towns and Niklasson (2017) uncovering a gender imbalance in ambassadorial appointments globally, the authors also found that "women are less likely than men to end up as ambassadors in countries with the highest economic and military status" (Towns & Niklasson 2017, p. 538). For diplomats and ambassadors employed by DFAT, a similar finding exists, with the Lowy Institute (2019a) finding that Australia's largest and most strategically or economically important posts are much more likely to be headed by men.

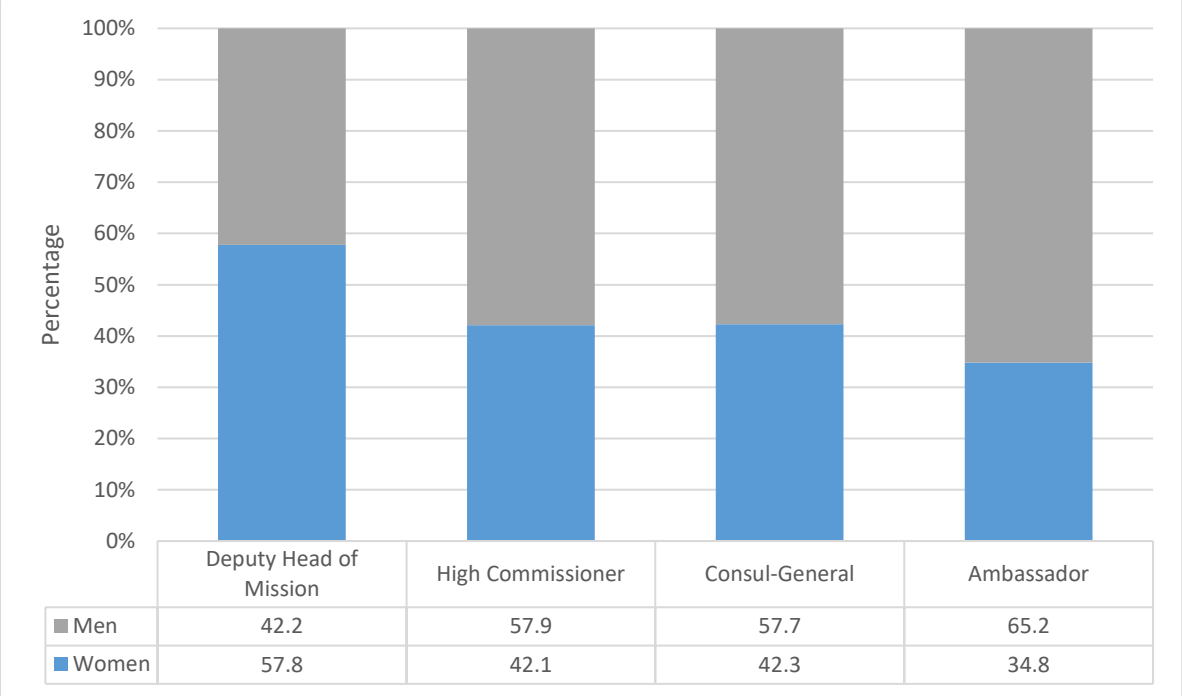
Women have traditionally had higher representation in International Governmental Organisastions (IGOs)[251] – organisations that mostly have explicit values around gender equality and leadership compared with many host countries[252]. Yet women represent only 28.5 per cent of specialist ambassadorships (an improvement from 2018 where women represented only 17 per cent of roles)[253] and appointments appear to continue to be gender segregated around 'feminised' and 'masculine' portfolios. The representation of women in international DFAT leadership has been ranked from highest to lowest, in **Graph 19**.

Graph 19: International representation of women in DFAT (ranked from highest, to lowest), 2020

[251] As of 2020, 75 per cent of Australia's senior representatives to the United Nations (UN) are women (down from 100 per cent in 2018) (Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade 2020b). Women represent Australia in 33.3 per cent of IGOs outside of the UN - including the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)[251]. This is down from equally representing these roles in 2018.

[252] Representation in these roles is emblematic of horizontal segregation to typically 'soft' humanitarian portfolios.

[253] Specialist roles include: Arms Control and Counter-Proliferation; the Environment; Regional Health Security; People Smuggling and Human Trafficking; Cyber Affairs; Gender Equality; and Counter-Terrorism. Women represent the Ambassador for Arms Control and Counter-Proliferation, and the Ambassador for Gender Equality.

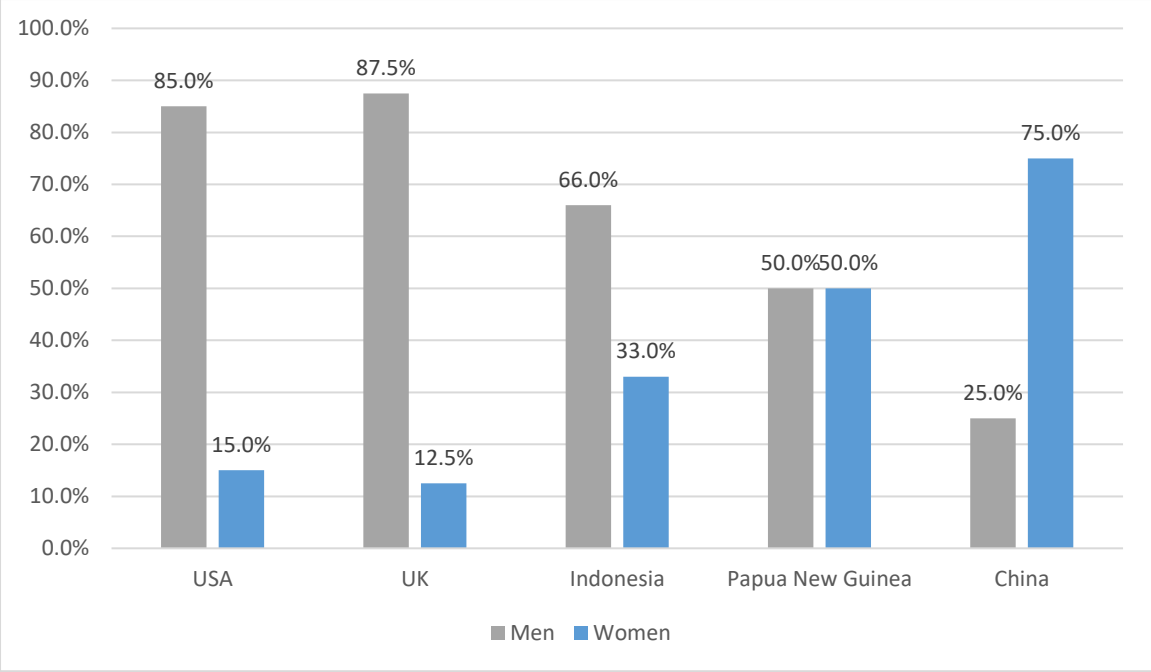


Data source: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2020b.

In **Graph 19**, women predominate in only one area of leadership appointments, where they represent 57.8 per cent of Deputy Head of Mission roles. Women's representation gradually falls, the more senior and high status the role. Women do have better representation in roles that are part of the pipeline to senior leadership; however, overall, women are still not accessing the top roles equally. Additionally, women are yet to occupy posts in London and Washington DC, two of the most strategically important posts.

Graph 20 assesses the five largest international posts for Defence Attachés (DA) and staff.

Graph 20: Representation of women in Defence Attaché and staffing roles (by country of deployment), 2017



Data source: International Policy Division 2017.

Graph 20 shows the countries with the largest DA and staff teams[254]. Of these posts, only Papua New Guinea has equal representation of men and women attachés, and only China has more women than men. In every other post, women are under-represented – sometimes severely so, representing only 15 per cent of USA posts, 12.5 per cent of UK posts, and 33 per cent of Indonesian posts. Is there a gender story here? If the number of DAs deployed to a location is indicative of the importance of that country to Australia's defence relationships, then it is clear that women are less likely to be deployed to Australia's highest-ranking Defence deployments. Out of these countries, it is also clear that Australia's closest allies (the USA and UK) have both the highest number of attachés accredited to their post[255], and the lowest proportion of women. On the other hand, the countries that are more likely to be perceived as threats, have a higher representation of women.

In fact, arguably Australia's biggest 'threat' – China – has majority women in leadership. While it is possible that this is merely coincidence, considering the overtly gendered nature of Defence and its mostly male deployments, it appears more than coincidence. In fact, during the bulk of this research taking place (2017-2019) all agencies had a gender equal or a female

[254] Including the United States of America (USA - 13 positions), the United Kingdom (UK - 8 positions), Indonesia (6 positions), and Papua New Guinea and China (4 positions each). These five countries appear the most important strategically (and therefore highest status and prestige) for Defence Attaches.
[255] 13 and eight roles, respectively.

majority senior leadership team deployed in China and Hong Kong[256]. It is impossible to infer anything concrete from this; however, it does raise questions around the deployments seen as most appropriate for women, a topic also raised by participants regarding these posts. At a point in time where interactions with China grow increasingly sensitive, is this indicative of a 'glass cliff', whereby women are likelier to achieve leadership roles during periods of crisis (Sabharwal 2015) – when the chance of failure is highest? Alternatively, is it emblematic of women's perceived strength in pacifying and peacemaking, a diminutive female representative that can appease Chinese authority when required?

If more than coincidence, the narrative might indicate that Australia's most important negotiations with *allies* – that involve strategic partnerships, threat detection and important joint security operations – are ones that require *men* to lead. Australia's biggest *threats*, on the other hand, require a certain amount of management of relationships, balancing political power and military capability, and soft negotiation – negotiations that require *women* to lead. The use of women's gender could be a strategic move to appear less threatening – a strategic move to placate a volatile China. In Defence, participants commented that women tended to be more likely take the roles requiring higher diplomatic skills.

Overall, the often subtle rules of the game had a distributive effective when it came to access to roles and resources. All agencies evidenced horizontal as well as vertical segregation. It was clear that because of this horizontal segregation[257], women also became more vertically segregated.

Summary

Women's representation in Australian international affairs is generally, although not exclusively, on an upwards trajectory. Yet, the quantitative data covered in this chapter highlights that women remain chronically under-represented and that there is a pervasive, systemic gender bias against women – a theme that is strengthened even when agencies are disaggregated. Even for DFAT, seemingly the most gender equal agency, the gap between women's overall representation and representation in leadership has remained virtually unchanged for the past two decades. Overt discrimination and marginalisation have given

[256] This correlation is made with caution, as it is noted that these statistics have shifted in DFAT following natural fluctuations in appointments. This assertion would require trend data assessment to fully justify.
[257] For instance, out of operational areas needed for progression.

way to covert and hidden forms of discrimination, and the high representation of women across the more bureaucratic agencies has only obscured the challenges that remain for the marginalised majority – women. This signals gendered institutions that are not easy to change. It highlights that institutions can be simultaneously fluid (adapting to the general trend of women's greater representation) *and* enduring (maintaining underlying systemic gendered challenges). Additionally, as this chapter and earlier chapters have demonstrated, when women gain power in some areas, the locus of power shifts (Mackay 2014).

Analysis of participant demographics demonstrate that rules remain around who can represent Australia internationally, with women of colour and sexually diverse women particularly affected. The low rates of women with spouses or children indicate that international affairs roles are particularly onerous and present significant challenges for women seeking to 'have it all' – leadership, international representation, family and children. Women were further affected by rules-in-use prescribing their behaviour, with the result that women were frequently silenced in their work, undervalued for their contributions, and either too visible or not visible enough on the world stage. Rules affected women at the individual level, agency level, home and host society level, and diplomatic field level. Formal institutions mandating equality across these spheres were not 'complete' – overarching and consistent at every level. Rather, competing formal institutions, and, in places a lack of formal institutions, demonstrated that international affairs often became reliant on old norms and informal rules of engagement. Whilst multilateral settings appeared to provide women with the most opportunities to be heard, participant experiences highlighted how women's voices continued to be lost or disregarded as unauthoritative particularly in agency and bilateral settings. Women reported being systemically undervalued, often perceived as 'less than' that of their male counterparts. Additionally, the ability to be visible (or not) had a severe limiting effect on women's range of action on the international stage. Women were often only seen in times of heavy scrutiny, and completely marginalised when it mattered to their career progression or claiming accomplishments.

The implications include that not only were women's actions and behaviours more controlled than men's, but that particular roles were delineated for women, with women remaining horizontally and vertically segregated. Women remain marginalised from the most prestigious roles and highest status countries. While structure and career management in the

more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies did appear to have benefits for women, as reinforced by the quantitative data on women's representation, it is evident that these spheres are also impacted upon by biases from supervisors and career managers.

Overall, women's increasing representation on the world stage, while significant, is still not equal. Progress often masks considerable gendered challenges that remain. This chapter has argued that a process of exclusion and discrimination that continues to operate in the field, with women remaining chronically under-represented over time, across demographics backgrounds, portfolios, rank, and postings. The next chapter will build on the rules-in-use explored in this chapter, to understand women's experiences at three core periods of deployment: pathways to posting; experiences on posting; and return from posting. It will identify likely periods in which women leave their professions, and why, as well as the values important for women's success.

Chapter Six: What are the experiences of women in Australian international affairs?

Introduction

> *It's not all clinking champagne glasses with dictators . . . but that is very much part of my job (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).*

As the last chapter demonstrated, statistical improvements in women's representation masks pervasive gendered differences in international affairs. This chapter therefore explores what experiences can tell us about being a woman in Australian international affairs agencies, in order to better illustrate why women continue to be under-represented. This chapter argues that gendered institutions 'travel' with participants as they experience their deployments. Complex and multifaceted rules at every turn affect women's experiences, ultimately highlighting international affairs as reliant on multiple forms of gendered sacrifice affecting women across contexts. It has been divided according to three critical times in women's experiences: their pathways to posting; their experiences once on posting; and their return from posting. This chapter addresses what happens, and why, women may leave their jobs, as well as briefly summarising the values and characteristics important to participants' successful international deployment. Through researching women leaders who have 'made it' into leadership, this chapter highlights the institutional rules and norms that endure, as well as how they might be navigated.

International representatives across the four case agencies exist in a challenging environment, undertaking challenging roles, for men and women alike. The Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) states that:

> Australian officials overseas are seen at all times as representing Australia both in the performance of their official duties and in the manner in which they conduct themselves as private individuals. Regardless of their official roles or responsibilities, their status as foreign officials means their actions will be subject to *greater scrutiny and public interest* than they would be at home. Australian officials abroad may also face dilemmas in the area of personal conduct which do not arise in Australia—whether in social, cultural, financial or personal settings (2020, para 6, emphasis added).

Therefore, international affairs requires an extraordinary commitment from posted officials. No role could be summed up simply as 'a job', as responsibilities closely entwine with

individuals' entire identities and lifestyles[258]. International experiences are characterised by: a high level of mobility; an ability to work independently of the agency headquarters, representing both the agencies' and Australian national interests; and a requirement for high level of executive decision-making on important national topics spanning a wide range of issues, both inside and outside their particular area of expertise (Stephenson 2019).

Beyond the general challenges experienced by all international representatives, there are gendered differences in experiences. For some aspects of life, the gendered challenges faced by women, such as the 'double burden' of work inside and outside of the home, were translated directly to their international environment. Yet, participant experiences also reinforced the uniqueness of the field of international affairs; a context deeply layered, complex, and teeming with multifaceted gendered rules.

Pathways to posting

Analysing women's pathways to international deployment aids in understanding the rules and practices that determine who, when and in what circumstances an individual can deploy. This section is broken up into three parts: understanding women's career entry and progression; how individuals gained their postings; and the factors that participants considered before applying for or accepting a posting. In particular, this section uncovers how women 'got to' their leadership positions. It demonstrates the salience of individual circumstances to the decision of whether, when and where to post, and inversely, how little the actual role or host country context appeared to affect women's decisions, unless it was related to personal safety. While opportunities for posting are increasingly 'merit-based'[259] resulting from formal institutional change, informal connections[260] and operational requirements continue to influence who is chosen for the highest prestige roles. Gendered challenges within agencies, as well as gendered expectations at home, in the field, and host/home societies, continue to affect women's opportunities.

[258] In cases, what might be considered as 'total institutions' – a system that encompasses individuals' whole beings (Goffman 1961).
[259] Merit is still problematic, as note in the Literature Review.
[260] Whilst this is consistent more generally across the workforce, it has specific implications for women in male-dominated industries and departments.

Strategising around difficulties on the path to progression

Most participants joined their agencies as graduates in graduate programs, and many in the AFP and Defence came through recruitment processes that began in secondary school. None of the AFP participants had been lateral recruits[261], with traditional employment pathways – joining as a graduate and working their way up – dominating the experiences of sworn participants. DFAT participants had the most lateral transfers (37.5 per cent), often coming from related federal departments[262]. Career trajectories were largely the result of gradual career progression. In general, DFAT participants had the slowest career trajectories out of the agencies[263], which could be a result of the smaller/decreasing budget, as well as the increased talent pool because of the AusAID merger. For ADF participants in Defence, their careers began in the Australian Defence Force Academy (ADFA). Similarly, AFP (and recently ABF) staff commenced in their separate training academies. These training facilities inculcated strong discipline, group-think, and masculine-informed rules of enforcement. Most undertook generalist pathways initially, although the training process often detailed future pathways across different divisions or streams of work – providing an early idea of future career progression and options for advancement. For civilians in the other agencies, participants would often start in graduate programs for their particular areas – Trade, AusAID, Customs, Immigration, and so on – with initially little work across portfolios[264].

When discussing strategising their career paths, participants generally advocated for planning. However, in reality, very few participants actually did this[265]. More commonly, participants demonstrated an aptitude for taking risks and following opportunities when they were offered. In DFAT, an inverted T or "upside-down T" of experience was sought – a broad base knowledge of a range of topics, with deep specialised knowledge in one or two areas (Participant 7, DFAT, 5 October 2018). Similar trends existed across the other agencies, except for Home Affairs where a greater degree of specialisation was found – Immigration,

[261] Those who transferred from other agencies or fields.
[262] Like Prime Minister and Cabinet, Trade (pre-merger), a state Supreme Court, or international divisions of domestic-facing agencies. Lateral recruits were generally at an EL level when they transferred, although most noted that their career trajectory slowed after joining the agency.
[263] With the exception of one AFP participant who had been an employee for nearly four decades, yet only promoted once in that entire time – the result of a particularly long and protracted gender discriminated career.
[264] This graduate process has changed over time, with graduate positions now generalist in the first year, with compulsory rotations to different portfolios offered over the second year of their program.
[265] This could be emblematic of the time they commenced their careers, in which transparency in career progression was not mandated.

Customs and ABF staff did not tend to cross over and get experience outside of their job area. Whilst participants from DFAT and Defence generally joined the agency for the international opportunities, those from Home Affairs and the AFP often did not even know that their agency ran international deployments until many years into their employment[266].

Career progression was often a troubling time for participants – a time at which they were more at the mercy of their (mostly male) superiors and often had – or felt they had – little recourse when things went wrong[267]. Although most acknowledged that times have now changed, almost all SES-ranked participants had experienced engrained and challenging instances of sexual harassment, discrimination or humiliation on their way up the ranks. In the Navy for instance, as junior seamen[268], women experienced being 'kicked around the bridge'. Participant 4 highlighted how:

> [it was] not very long into my career and any confidence I'd had in terms of leadership had been eroded, because when we trained as seamen officers in those days we'd be what's called "kicked around the bridge". You were humiliated, very bad for morale particularly if you weren't very good at the job, and I'd have junior sailors and they would say "oh we feel really sorry for you". I felt terrible. The seaman officer in terms of the way we trained, they'd think the ship revolves around them, because they are the principal warfare officer. But, the attitude and the way they trained people in those days was pretty bad (Participant 4, Defence, 19 February 2019).

Age was also a factor that affected women's career progression. The Australian Human Rights Commission hints at considerable informal rules in Defence, whereby "(t)here are unwritten, but strong and broadly understood, organisational expectations about the age range within which certain promotional pathways and/or types of experience are to be attained" – which, if missed, makes it much harder for individuals to progress (2012, p. 26). Similar age-related promotional pathways were evidenced in the AFP[269] – where, if participants missed advancing to a certain rank by a certain age, it was assumed that they must have been deficient in some manner. This further held back their careers, with women blamed in a

[266] This could also be an effect of the fact that prior to September 11, 2001, these agencies were less engaged internationally.
[267] This may be a result of appeal processes having improved over the years, yet being less-developed – or used – earlier in their careers. There was also a tendency to not push things too much when incidences did happen, mostly out of fear of the ramifications on individuals' careers. The APSC and agencies themselves do have appeal processes, however women were often disinclined to use them. This also suggests that they were not very unionised either.
[268] There was no term for seawomen, or a gender neutral term.
[269] Particularly as police and security forces have age limits on retirement.

Catch-22 situation for their lack of advancement at similar rates. This compounded disadvantage as women were more affected by career breaks to have children and care for children and aging parents, often unavoidably slowing their career trajectory. In Defence, norms existed around when was most 'acceptable' (and potentially least career damaging) to have children, which was generally around the mid-late twenties, with one participant noting that her having children at age 29 was considered "late" (Participant 4, Defence, 19 February 2019). Yet, these periods often coincided with key times when women would be experiencing their first international postings or crucial promotional opportunities. Women's career and life options were therefore often informally policed by colleagues and agencies (not to mention societal and family norms) – with a result that many of the earliest female Australian international representatives had no children[270], and the choice to have children for many women since is one that comes with a gendered toll not shared by male colleagues.

Politicised, instable and obscured: navigating how to get an international posting

On average, participants across all agencies had been employed for at least two years before deploying on their first posting. Participants were generally required to spend a few years back in Australia or Canberra after their deployment and before undertaking their next posting[271]. Opportunities to gain an international posting were generally advertised[272] within the agencies, and required an 'opting in' process. Across most of the agencies (DFAT excluded), the prestige or status of the post was generally informally known, rather than formally ranked[273]. This had gendered ramifications, as only those 'in the know' or connected enough to senior leadership would fully understand the status or prestige of a post – particularly where multiple roles might be offered at the same level across very differently ranked countries. Women remained less connected with those in positions of power within the agencies, particularly in agencies that remained most male-dominated.

Most international representatives deploy at the level they are currently at, with some

[270] Particularly, but not exclusively, if they were career diplomats as opposed to political appointees. Both of Australia's first female HOMs, Dame Annabel Rankin and Ruth Dobson, remained unmarried and childless. Contemporarily, neither former Prime Minister Julia Gillard nor former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop had children or married.

[271] Unless they were following their partner on a deployment, in which case each person would generally take turns at taking the deployment, while the other worked remotely (or took leave) from their new post location.

[272] Country location, plus rank and role, would be advertised.

[273] With the exception of DFAT, for whom postings are transparently ranked when offered and status is known.

deploying as stretch assignments, and some deploying as a downgrade to their current rank if they are seeking a particular role or status of country. Appointments are chosen partly on merit and partly on operational requirements, such as the ability to speak the language and the agencies' capacity to fill the position they are leaving. Yet, as discussed, women tended to occupy lower status positions than men when posted, and tended to be posted to lower status countries, echoing Towns and Niklasson's (2017) findings that women are less likely to be appointed to high status countries. In DFAT however it does not appear to be because the prestige and rank of countries is not known, as all are formally ranked:

> it's highly structured, everyone knows the rank … Head of Mission and Head of Post jobs get advertised on rank, and the rank is related to their importance to Australia and the significance in the size of the embassy and the job (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2019).

Since this ranking is known, it suggests that women are either not applying for the highest prestige or ranked positions, or they are not getting them. Given Conley-Tyler, Blizzard and Crane (2014) and Westendorf and Strating's (2020) studies on the topic[274], the latter case seems more likely.

In DFAT, many of the highest status, highest prestige posts are political posts[275]. This has a gendered impact, as women remain a minority of Australian political leaders. In fact, from 2007 to 2019, only two out of 17 (11.7 per cent) of political diplomats were women – Amanda Vanstone in Italy (2007) and Patricia Forsythe in New Zealand (2019) (Lowy Institute 2019b). Men continue to dominate all of the other political posts over this time, including nine out of 10 of Australia's top strategic posts[276]. Washington D.C. is not only the peak international posting for Australia, but it remains underpinned by ideals of masculinity[277].

Despite a few legacy political postings remaining, the trend towards greater

[274] These studies debunked the myths that women are less interested in Australian international affairs, and apply for roles at lower rates than men.
[275] This suggests that these postings still rely on political background or expertise, rather than the professionalised diplomatic expertise of career diplomats, which, by definition of their appointment, are bipartisan and a-political in approach.
[276] From Washington DC, to Chicago, Houston, New York, London, Brussels, The Hague, the Holy See, and Tokyo, with New Zealand only in 2019 receiving its first female political appointee (Lowy Institute 2019b).
[277] It is a role that has never been held by a woman, and as earlier mentioned, involved a highly controversial 2018 mateship campaign celebrating individuals core to the US-Australia relationship – none of whom were women.

professionalisation was evident across all agencies. In the AFP, deployments had moved from a network-based approach of 'who you know', to a professionalised, merit-based approach. Participant 1 noted that:

> you don't get tapped on the shoulder; you apply through a process and it's based on the merit at the time as to who they select. I was just very fortunate; I left it so long in my career that I was still picked up, albeit at the last highest rank that you can go (Participant 1, AFP, 13 June 2018).

This had positive effects on the women interviewed, particularly as women benefit from de-identified, merit-based selection processes – such as those recently introduced in the AFP that aim to remove unconscious bias in selection panels. In the AFP, the inconsistency of these policies however did appear to be undermining progress, as noted by Participant 10:

> it's a little bit confusing at the moment. So they've got a people taskforce now and they're looking at promotion and recruitment processes because it appears to be causing quite some angst. In the round that I went through, it went for a ridiculously long period of time and it was almost tortuous because they went to such extremes to say it's a blind application process. They had like, 600 apply, narrowed it down to, I don't know, 300. … They had a panel of four that had independently reviewed applications and they then only had like, a 5% variation. And then a batch went through the assessment centre. And then we did these assessments and exercises where you're writing reports, doing the psych testing, you're doing presentations – and then we still went on and we did the interviews. And it just went on and on. It must have been a very demanding and costly process . . . I think it had some unintended consequence where they set a benchmark, perhaps, that's not really practically sustainable. And so, when they've modified that people have challenged the process since, and other processes (Participant 10, AFP, 31 January 2019).

Participants reflected on how the instability of these new processes (formal rules) created an environment of angst and disharmony. In the place of stable new rules, 'old' elements of organisational culture were reverted to, akin to Kenny's (2013) findings of institutional erosion and drift, and Chappell and Mackay's assertion that informal rules "preserve the gender status quo, or gendered logic of appropriateness, in the face of reform efforts" (2017, p. 32). This was also an issue for participants in Home Affairs, where inconsistencies between policies across the agency – resulting from the merger – made progression more difficult to navigate. Additionally, policies did not always protect participants, with another participant, from Defence, given an international posting only to be asked to step aside for a man in the agency who had threatened to leave if he was not given that particular role. This

highlights that posting and promotions remain far from gender neutral and professionalised, despite rhetoric to the contrary. Gendered norms endure.

Gendered factors determine which posts to apply for and accept

Participants considered a number of core factors in the pre-deployment period. In order of importance[278], these included: family considerations around children; family considerations around their spouse; the role and type of work, and lastly; the country of deployment. However, this ordering was not homogenous across participants, with LGBTI+ participants more likely to rank the country of deployment as a higher consideration, mostly out of concerns about the legality of homosexuality, perceived safety, and treatment they might receive in-country. The overall low level of concern for the host country highlighted that women remained most concerned about their gendered treatment and experiences from their own agency, rather than their post location[279] (Stephenson 2019). The only exceptions to this occurred in extremely gendered cases where safety and the cost to women's freedom was more gravely impacted[280].

Unpacking the top four factors participants considered prior to posting, the first was around children, often concentrating on timing. One AFP participant talked about how:

> over the years, [the AFP] have expanded offshore, grew the international network, and then you sit back in your career and you think, okay, I'd love to do that but then the timing's everything. I had young children, and it was very hard. I also had a husband who had a career. And then I went through a divorce, which makes it even harder. You're bounded by where your children are and then the schooling age of

[278] For the majority of participants.

[279] This was particularly so as home agencies continue to dictate the majority of formal policies around deployments, maternity leave, spousal supports, the role and type of work, and the protocol for what happens when things go wrong – everything from natural disasters and other emergencies, to claims of sexual harassment and workplace discrimination. This finding, expanded upon later in this chapter and Chapter Seven, adds to growing research steadily debunking Foreign Service as an inappropriate place for women. It also adds to understandings around the barriers to women's representation internationally, demonstrating that the weight previously given to external factors, such as a host society's beliefs around gender and leadership, may have less to do with the under-representation of women than the formal and institutional rules and discriminatory policies of those home agencies involved in international affairs. As one participant notes:

> there was a real resistance to having women leaders working in Asia because the view was culturally we wouldn't be accepted - in fact it would be an impediment to delivering outcomes. But I think it's been proven to be wrong (Participant 3, AFP, 21 June 2018).

[280] In general, the concern over host location was primarily raised with regards to only a few select locations, as earlier canvassed, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Papua New Guinea. Each of these posts were categorised by Defence as hardship postings, with Pakistan and Papua New Guinea rated F on a scale of A to F, with F being the 'hardest'.

> your children as well … So I literally waited until I could – until my last child was in Year 12, to apply to go offshore (Participant 1, AFP, 13 June 2018).

Of those who had children, most participants would either deploy prior to their children reaching adolescence, or after they finished secondary school. The life of an international representative was generally not compatible with the needs of family, particularly during adolescence and the needs of secondary education. In many cases the ability to have domestic help overseas weighed as a significant consideration, particularly if women did not have a partner who would be primary carer. Participant 10 in the AFP noted:

> from a personal point of view, what I was trying to get was a posting where I could have domestic support with my daughter. And that never panned out. America was an expensive exercise . . . a friend of mine who had long service leave came over for four months to help me get set up because she had previously been a single mother offshore with a different agency. And I ended up having a team at the time that helped me out with childcare, but there was no like, having a nanny, it's just not affordable over there. And now, I don't have any kids living with us, I've got three step-kids now but the three of them – three of our four are all adults. And now I have a live-in helper . . . Could have used that 10 years ago (Participant 10, AFP, 31 January 2019).

It is significant to note the extent of support required to make a posting work – features often rendered invisible in analyses of international affairs. In men's careers, these realities are often further externalised, with the burden of setting up home and childcare remaining the domain of wives[281]. In the absence of women having their own wives (which is a separate theme, to be returned to later) to absorb this externalised cost, participants drew on friends, colleagues and extensive familial networks to 'do' deployment. Posts remain structured around heteronormative, nuclear family models that assume copious lengths of unpaid labour and support (frequently borne by women), in order to function.

Spouses were generally the second top consideration prior to applying for or accepting a posting, with post location largely dependent on whether the spouse could also work whilst there. If they could not, that post location was almost unanimously not applied for or accepted. If participants did still apply for that posting, the spouse was more inclined to remain in Australia. Participants discussed the concerns of their partners; that they would not have anything to do, or that the financial loss of both income and superannuation would be

[281] Not only this, but historically in the US for example, a diplomat's performance review included reviewing and grading the performance of his wife.

too much. This is a very different model to traditional diplomacy whereby the male representative would be accompanied by a female 'trailing spouse'[282] who was not employed outside (or, formally, inside) the post, even if expected to do significant 'wifely duties' of hospitality and representation[283] (McCarthy 2015). Participants noted that women are often still expected to leave their job or not work if they are a 'trailing spouse' at post – but that the reverse remains almost entirely unfulfilled for men. Further, it demonstrates that it may be more financially viable to be a single-income household only if the single income is the *man's* income – a reality that women continue to experience a gender pay gap in almost every sphere of work[284] (Workplace Gender Equality Agency 2020).

In many cases, male spouses would not accompany their female partner, mostly due to career aspirations and commitments at home. This was particularly the case for the spouses of DFAT participants, who were more reluctant to move with the rest of their family, often resulting in participants representing Australia as the highest representative at post, whilst also providing the full-time care to children who had come with them. One DFAT participant, who at the time was HOM, summed up the issues of spouses at post:

> my children were one and three when we went to [our posting], and my husband wasn't there. He was commuting between Canberra and [us] and I had the children with me so that was, I think there were all sorts of challenges there because I mean a number of things. First of all, the issue of what does your spouse do . . . and I don't think it matters what gender you are, although traditionally it's been more likely or common for the female spouse to follow the male rather than the other way around. One thing I noticed when I was filling my two head of mission postings, was . . . most of the male heads of mission had spouses with them . . . whereas none of the female or very few of the female heads [did.] . . . the second thing of course is when you've got small children, there's heaps of childcare. So often when you're in a developing country, you're very dependent on the availability of child care, and for domestic staff to help you look after the children, so I think that's another thing. The third thing I would say would be the allowances that they pay you . . . they're never going to compensate for the loss of income, for the lack of career advancement and all that kind of thing [for spouses], so I think those are systemic issues . . . I don't think there is an easy solution (Participant 3, DFAT, 18 June 2018).

[282] Cangia notes that trailing spouses have a "precarious privilege" (2018, p. 9).
[283] Historically, at times, being graded by departments on these too.
[284] The gender pay gap is getting worse, not better in Australia, particularly in the context of the recent COVID pandemic.

In Defence and the AFP, fewer postings were accompanied[285], and so by virtue of policies, most women deployed alone. If Defence or AFP participants had children, their spouses were more likely to remain at home with the children; and, they were often the primary care-giver and so did not engage in paid employment. Within these households, the role of spouse was particularly supportive, demonstrating that a supportive spouse did not necessarily have to go on posting.

For those who were seeking to deploy with their spouse, participants expressed that the time it took to consider the posting opportunity could have been expedited with more attention to spouses. For instance, one participant from the AFP stated that:

> if you have somebody who wants to deploy, male or female, and their spouse is AFP and they have the right skillsets, make it easier for them to work and organise it for them so they don't have to go through all this to do it themselves. Because if we could deploy and straightaway they said, we're offering you the posting, but we guarantee [your spouse] will get work, I could have made that decision as soon as I got the offer from the AFP. I said to them "I can't accept it yet, I need to speak to [my spouse] and we need to talk to some people about getting him some overseas work" . . . If the spouse doesn't want to work its fine, that's cool. But if they want to do some type of work and they've got the right skills – and most of them will have, most of them will have some skills in whatever area they're from – speak to them about it then give them some opportunities . . . don't make assumptions on behalf of partners and spouses, pick up the phone and speak to them (Participant 9, AFP, 18 January 2019).

International posting opportunities were almost never exclusively individual decisions for the participants, because of spouses and children. At this individual level, women were the main caregiver in most circumstances, which affected their ability to commit to roles without extra levels of support – domestically, and through their workplace. For participants without children, there was a greater level of freedom in their individual decisions, however their workplace would often make presumptions: about their likelihood to get married and/or have children soon; or whether they were queer[286]. Formal institutions and policies prevent workplaces and managers from asking questions around marriage or children, and from discriminating on this basis. However, the participants' experiences highlighted that

[285] Referring to a deployment that allows a spouse and children to accompany the representative on international posting. Opposite of an unaccompanied deployment, where only the representative (no family) may deploy.
[286] Although this does not carry the same negative connotations of the past, there may be enduring stereotyping and bias associated, as found by Chua (2016), Crawford (2010) and Chauncey (2005), canvassed in the previous chapter.

questions around children and/or marriage were still a regular occurrence – and one restricted mostly to women in the agencies, not men. The participants' experiences, particularly around spouses and children, highlight international affairs as a state action reliant on externalising costs borne predominantly by women. This reinforces that while social norms may be somewhat fluid and changing, women's role as the diplomatic *and* domestic housewives remain. The implication of this was that for women with female spouses, provided they were 'out' and able to be visible in their post locations, they were generally very highly equipped to deliver on this diplomatic double-burden.

The third factor most considered by participants was the type of posting and role. Participants generally sought out work that was interesting and challenging first, considering second whether the role would progress their career. This indicates that job satisfaction was often more important to individuals than career ramifications – and postings did have significant career ramifications. These included that it took women from the pipeline to leadership positions and placed them 'out of sight' of supervisors and promotions teams for a period of years, reduced their training opportunities, resulted in a loss of networks within the agency at home, and so on. One Home Affairs employee noted that once she went on international posting:

> 5.5 years went past, I didn't get one lick of training. No development, no nothing, you just have to work at your job for that three year posting. So, if you apply for something [a promotion], they will say to you, "okay, you've won the job, you're fantastic. Report for duty next Tuesday". So, you either can't take up the role [because you're overseas], or you take up the role, and you come home early from posting, which was always seen as something negative. That's like the worst of the worst [with both career and personal ramifications] (Participant 2, Home Affairs, 11 December 2018).

For the AFP and Home Affairs, postings were markedly less important to their overall career progression within the agency, with many noting that it was a choice between posting or promotion – you would not get both. Similarly in DFAT, participants were unlikely to receive both a promotion or a posting at the same time, however rank and prestige generally built on the previous posting, with women tending to gain subsequent higher prestige posts. In Defence, a number of participants received both posting and promotion at the same time, although this was generally after nearing the end of a successful posting. The recurring reality was that women who sought deeply international careers often would not progress at the

same rate as their domestic-bound colleagues, and even in DFAT where posting did result in progress, women remained chronically under-represented in *senior* international affairs leadership.

The final main factor women considered prior to applying for or accepting a posting was the country of deployment. As canvassed in the previous chapter, there was some concern about which countries of deployment would be dangerous or disrespectful to women[287]. However, participants mostly considered country of deployment in terms of the lifestyle it would afford. In particular, the following concerns were raised: whether they might have access to low cost domestic help; whether they would have to live in a walled compound or in accommodation of their choosing; if there were environmental concerns such air pollution; what schooling systems were available for children; and, how safe it was for themselves, or children, to walk around streets and partake in everyday public life. Many women noted that despite many of these concerns being shared concerns between themselves and their partner, the onus often fell to them to do the research and organisation – particularly around childcare and education.

While participants received many negative comments around having young children at post or giving birth at post, there were considerable benefits for the women themselves. Living in compounds attached to embassies was considered a major bonus by some, particularly for participants with young children. One Home Affairs participant noted:

> we lived on compound, and so it was really great . . . I breastfed both my children until they were 18 months old. Not many people get to do that. So, I'm not bitter at all. I'm in fact very grateful (Participant 2, Home Affairs, 11 December 2018).

Lifestyle, therefore, was a key factor influencing women's choice to apply to and accept certain deployments.

Overall, it was striking that considerations like the role description and professional opportunities were often 'given' factors, taken for granted, and therefore not always a main concern to women deploying internationally. The opportunity that international roles might provide was a consideration subsidiary to whether the opportunity was even possible, logistically, in the first place. Participants felt this to be a consideration unique to women

[287] International postings may be ranked from A-F on a hardship 'scale', but it is unclear to what extent these rankings take into account gender in what is classified as 'hardship'.

across the agencies, and highlights substantial gendered institutions across multiple contexts determining women's ability to deploy.

Experiences once on posting

International posting is often the end or overall goal of representing Australia in international affairs, and therefore is a critical period for understanding why women remain under-represented. This section explores (1) the gendered rules that define deployment and (2) the experiences while on post. More than any other agency, the extraordinary demands on Defence personnel in particular are noted. Discrimination and harassment are just the start of the physical threats women in Defence experience. Sexual assault and death are real and tangible concerns for deploying personnel, who are more likely to be deploying into war or conflict-affected areas, and for whom their role as a Defence leader is both high profile and exposed[288].

Gendered rules define deployment

Specific scripts and modes of behaviour inform how diplomacy and deployment is 'done' across the agencies[289]. These scripts and behaviours inform the 'do's and don'ts' of the field and are often specifically gendered – following a "logic of appropriateness" that suggests that institutions constrain certain actions (and actors) whilst encouraging others (Chappell 2006, p. 223). The demands and requirements are often exceptional compared to domestic representation. International affairs is unique: duplicating and magnifying many of the gendered challenges across multiple contexts, from the individual level, to agency, home and host society, and diplomatic field.

[288] Prior to deploying with Defence, training centres on not if you are sexually assaulted, but when. Being captured by foreign 'infidels' was specifically noted as worse for women, for whom gendered treatment is significantly worse. As one advisor to this research noted, when captured in conflict, 'women are for babies, men are for pleasure', highlighting international affairs as an exceptional and extraordinarily demanding field of work.

[289] Beyond those in DFAT – employees who are 'naturally' considered diplomats – each of the other agencies have specific understandings of what 'diplomacy' involves in their agency. Defence diplomacy involves supporting ambassadors, supporting NATO missions, and force protection, with the core duties surrounding understanding and communicating security threats. Home Affairs and the AFP work to support ambassadors, yet also facilitate safe border crossings, negotiate key issues such as human trafficking, terrorism, drug offences and international criminal investigations, as well as maintaining the overall safety and security of Australia from an international standpoint.

Postings were often characterised by a range of practices and behaviours that had specifically gendered implications and informal rules around them. For instance, one participant noted:

> we talk about Asia, you can't – to be honest, can't rely on going to strip clubs and drinking beer until three in the morning to build those relationships. So I think that the way we [women] engage is different (Participant 3, AFP, 21 June 2018)

Excessive drinking and masculinised forms of entertainment characterised many deployments. An inability or unwillingness to participate in after-hours drinking engagements was common amongst participants. However, it was also recognised as an important part of work across the agencies, often a source of relationship building, important negotiations, and insider information to assist the work of international affairs. Participants were caught in a Catch-22 situation, whereby the informal rules dictated that much of the important work of diplomacy happened in these casual, relationship-building settings – at bars, while playing golf, at solo dinners. Yet, informal rules also dictated that it would be inappropriate for women to partake in such settings or occasions, as found in Chapter Five.

Flexibility was also important, with diplomatic work requiring almost total flexibility from participants, without giving much formal flexibility in return. Formally, flex time and part time work was often prohibited across the agencies. For instance, in Home Affairs, "flex-time is available to all APS Level 1-6 Employees, other than . . . *those employed at overseas posts*" (Department of Home Affairs 2019, p. 16). Those in EL and SES levels are not entitled to flex-time domestically or internationally. The Secretary may approve paid adoption/foster leave, or supporting partner leave "*with the exception of Employees on an overseas Posting*" (Department of Home Affairs 2019, p. 30). In Home Affairs' Workplace Determination[290], the entitlements as part of the overseas conditions of service are "determined by the Secretary from time to time," indicating that not only are they not clearly transparent, but that there is flexibility in the entitlements (Department of Home Affairs 2019, p. 66). This could result in inconsistently applied entitlements, which has gendered ramifications considering the latent discrimination and bias found within the agencies and society more generally. As the Thodey Independent Review of the APS noted, many APS systems and entitlements are fragmented and incomplete (Commonwealth of Australia 2019)

In Defence, because recruiters and career managers had generally not done part time work

[290] Similar to an Enterprise Agreement, a Workplace Determination covers the agreed terms and conditions between parties – employers and employees.

themselves, they rarely saw it as being possible for roles they were recruiting for, which tended to affect women more than men. In fact, the Australian Human Rights Commission found that "(t)here are deeply held beliefs within the ADF that many roles cannot accommodate flexible working arrangements," a trend that appeared particularly true for deployments (2012, p. 35).

For those in the most senior ranks of leadership, particularly within DFAT and to a lesser degree the other agencies, there was considerable freedom despite policies – "you're running your own shop" (Participant 6, DFAT, 2 August 2018). Many were able to take engagements from home or work flexible hours, often working in the morning, with time off to pick up children, feed and bath them in the evening, before returning to work late at night. This was also a convenient way for participants to ensure that their local time zone matched with Canberra for any required meetings back home outside of their usual work hours.

Some leaders influenced the informal norms around flexibility too. One participant in Defence noted that in her role in workforce retention:

> I would say to my guys [the managers she was responsible for supporting], "the answer is going to be 'yes' you are going to accept that flexible work arrangement and you can sign whatever you like, but if the answer is going to be 'no' then you need to come and talk to me". So I guess [I was] enabling them to make the easy decision but then getting them to seek help when it's the harder decision (Participant 1, Defence, 19 February 2019).

While the formal policies granting flexible and part time work did exist, rules-in-use indicated that managers were not often willing to agree to flexible work arrangements. This participant therefore demonstrated her ability to influence and change the rules-in-use to encourage a workplace that normalised the granting of flexible work arrangements where there was previously low up-take.

Unfortunately, participants who did seek to change informal norms often did so in isolated cases in the context of the wider organisations. As the *Phase 2 Review into the Treatment of Women in the Australian Defence Force* highlights, variability amongst supervisors' willingness to approve flexible work arrangements remains a key concern (Australian Human Rights Commission 2012). For women in pipeline leadership roles, deputy roles, or those part of larger Australian contingents, there was often far less flexibility. This often also coincided with critical periods in participants' lives: largely when they were in the midst of raising

young children. Gender, age, and stage of life intersected to add or lessen challenges for participants.

How diplomacy was 'done' was therefore largely predicated upon informal engagement and negotiation opportunities that had significant implications for women. While diplomacy requires a lot of flexibility, flexibility was rarely formally guaranteed. There were ways around this. If women were the most senior official at post then, given the physical distance away from Canberra headquarters, they had greater flexibility to determine their schedule. As women remain least represented in the highest ranks of leadership and deployment, most women's ability to wield this flexibility was often constrained by a lack of opportunity.

Externalised (gendered) costs underpin experiences on post

Sacrifice and commitments external to the specifics of the job – what might be seen as 'externalised costs' – dominated challenges on post. The top core themes revolved around: (1) maternity and motherhood; (2) post reliance on spouses and wider family support; and (3) the challenges that therefore arose of being the 'single' female diplomat. A further externalised cost was (4) the gendered experiences of differential treatment, harassment or discrimination received *in-country* (from country counterparts, or own agency colleagues).

Firstly, each agency has historically had difficulty in appropriately responding to and managing pregnancy and parental leave, in international deployments. This overwhelmingly affected women. Inability to take flex-time resulted in years of leave without pay, particularly around crucial childbirth and child-rearing years. Considerable "cultural issues" with pregnancy on post remain, across all agencies, with women often thought[291] to be taking advantage of the system (Participant 14, Home Affairs, 9 May 2019). One participant who became pregnant on her first posting noted that:

> I got pregnant and had my first baby . . . when I told them I was pregnant they threatened to send me home. At that stage there was no real leave provision for women . . . I worked with two guys whose wives were having children and they weren't being sent home . . . there was that threat to me and in fact, my equal opportunity representative, who was herself a woman, also told me that she wouldn't have gotten pregnant on posting. So the person who was the worst to me was in fact the other woman in the office . . . I said, "well, good luck, give it a go. Try and send

[291] By their colleagues.

> me home if you like". So I was given the very generous provision of two and a half months off . . . it's pretty hellish actually . . . I can remember, you know, going into the bathrooms and crying from exhaustion and breastfeeding and all the rest of it (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2015).

Many described being among the first cohort of women[292] pregnant or childrearing at post, noting the significance and rarity of this happening. Informal rules around motherhood and pregnancy were clear and enforced by both men and women: posting was not a place to get pregnant or have a child, particularly if you had any career ambitions going forward. This rule was often enforced by social ostracism as well as women being moved out of core operational or engagement roles, into administration or work with lower chances of progression. In many cases, high levels of resilience and determination was required of these women. Later, these same women frequently became advocates for changes to maternity and parental leave policies in their agencies. However, without the support of the highest officer at post (the High Commissioner in the above example's case), it is difficult to tell whether the women would have been able to continue their posting and pregnancy together. This reinforces the importance of critical actors and 'sponsors' within the agencies, that may have helped women stand up against discriminatory or unfair policies and practices.

Critical actors also translated to critical gatekeepers, with one participant commenting how:

> when I had my first baby and I went back to work, my then boss who was actually a very nice person, said "well I suppose you won't be interested in overseas postings or short term missions now." . . . when I got promoted to the senior executive service, my boss said "why do you want to be in the SES when your husband's a doctor?" (Participant 3, DFAT, 18 June 2018).

These narratives reinforced gendered stereotyping of roles and types of work suitable for women, as well as reinforcing gender norms inappropriate in a modern workplace.

Tragically, miscarriages and stillbirths on post were also very specific gendered experiences. One woman posted to a conflict zone in the Middle East experienced sitting on the doorstep of the local hospital having miscarried after no medical evacuation services were available – conflict had just broken out. With no counselling available at the time and limited personal support on post, this was a very heavy burden to bear. Difficulties in navigating medical facilities further amplified challenges.

[292] In formal representational roles – that is, not as the 'trailing spouse'.

Many changes have now occurred across the agencies, and in the last 24 months during which this research was conducted. These changes are likely the result of both policy and critical actors. For example, after years of not having gender equality policies across the agency, Home Affairs now has gender equality policy and following this, has abolished its previous policy on maternity leave, whereby leave was not granted to those on deployment overseas. Now, no mention is made of restricting women from taking maternity leave when posted overseas.

Even so, women (and men) who are deployed internationally often do not get the same provisions as those awarded to Australia-based staff. In the AFP, the standard enterprise agreement (which does *not* cover those deployed internationally) accounts for maternity/parental leave provisions (Australian Federal Police 2017b). Within overseas conditions of service manual, no mention of maternity/parental leave is made at all – leaving formal policy unclear on whether maternity leave provisions exist overseas, and if so what kind of leave is possible. In the absence of formal, supportive rules and institutions, agencies are more likely to regress to 'old' norms, which suggests that it may be very difficult, if not impossible, to undertake maternity leave whilst posted overseas with the AFP.

Overall, it appears that the Australian standards for APS employment are to be upheld and met in every regard except for those on overseas deployment. There are some likely reasons for this, in that international deployments are expensive and spending must be justified to tax-payers. However, it raises an important issue, which is that Australia's representation on the world stage is only possible due to various, institutionalised forms of externalising costs onto employees. The brunt of these costs is borne by women, regardless of whether the employee in question is a man or a woman. This is because the majority of domestic work, caring work (of children, elders, or other dependents), and unpaid diplomatic labour is carried out by women – regardless of whether they are the trailing spouse or the HOM. As one participant said:

> [the agency] has to own the fact, as a department, that part of our job is to entertain. Part of our job is to meet with people and have a drink with them in certain countries or whatever. Part of our job is to do things out of working hours and that might mean that we have to provide support [for this]: that might be financial, so whether it's allowances for people to hire babysitters or nannies . . . support for example that allows us to do that sort of a role (Participant 12, DFAT, February 1 2019).

Reliance on women at post to ‘do it all’ had clear gendered effects.

Children were far from a negative from an agency point of view, though. Despite the extra work and care required by individuals with children, children also represented a positive in terms of adaptability and adjustment. Having children helped posted couples and singles to gain a strong network, sometimes more quickly than if they did not have their children with them – akin to Marriott’s (2017) findings. One Defence participant noted:

> children give you almost instant membership to a particular group of [staff] for which children all go to the same school, the parents all get together and talk, and so that provides a community right there. Whereas if you don’t have children . . . that isolates you even more and even if you want to catch up with, you know, some of the women or the men who have children, you do feel like you’re imposing a little bit on their time because they’ve got the kids, it’s hard to find day care or babysitters when you are overseas [and people don’t really speak much of it] (Participant 9, Defence, 26 February 2019).

Children have always been part of international affairs and diplomacy in various ways, and they are evidently critical members of deployed family units (McCarthy 2015; Marriott 2017). Yet, agency and whole-of-government support does not fully account for the sacrifice, and costs, associated with childbearing and childrearing, which has gendered impacts on women particularly. As one participant said:

> the idea that you should just change people’s attitudes would still not fix the fact that [my husband] and I have made a sacrifice in terms of time spent with our children. That is a sacrifice, which you can’t just say “well that shouldn’t be the case – that’s a family choice” – it’s a miserable family choice, I think (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2018).

The onus is on agencies to ensure that women with families, not just men with families, are supported – because while men with families can externalise these costs onto (female) spouses, women often cannot externalise these costs onto (male) spouses.

The second challenge that affected women was therefore the agencies’ assumed reliance on spouses and wider family support to ensure that posts worked efficiently and effectively. Tied into the above findings, participants commented on the types of support required from spouses. Participant 11 commented how after getting pregnant and giving birth on post:

> what made it possible is that my husband took the first year off and studied. It’s been a genuine partnership, which is also very unusual in DFAT . . . if I look at most of my

> friends, that hasn't actually been their experience. If I look at a lot of successful women in the department, a few of the most successful either have wives – women with wives, which is a very successful model, I can tell you – or women whose husbands have deliberately chosen to be the supporting person (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2018).

Similar to other diplomatic studies on the importance of 'trailing spouses', it is clear that diplomatic and representative work often requires the work of not one, but two (Harris Rimmer 2019). Yet, participants described instances when their husbands refused to accompany them on posting in order to pursue their own career at home. They described instances of representing the highest rank at post, yet still being expected to go home to let the tradesperson in to check on the fire alarms, even though their husband was on posting with them, at home, and unemployed at the time. One woman even described her husband divorcing her as soon as she achieved a higher rank – believing that wives should not occupy a higher position than their husbands should in the same agency. Each instance had similar themes: that overall, men's work (and even 'non-work' in the case of some who were unemployed at post), was more important than that of their spouses.

Participant 3 noted that when it came to organising diplomatic dinners or functions at home:

> often we used to sort of joke "I need a wife". I mean if my husband wasn't there, or even if he was, he didn't take any interest anyway. So I had to organise everything (Participant 3, DFAT, 18 June 2018).

As Participant 11 said:

> men whose wives are happy to come with them fare better than women who may not have a trailing spouse option, and even if they do have a trailing spouse option, their spouses and they engage socially around that differently (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2018).

It was not simply that male spouses cannot or refuse to do the work of a diplomatic trailing spouse – although male spouses were perhaps better at not agreeing to undertake much of the unpaid supportive work required of spouses at post. Men were seen as being both incompetent at the work, and unwilling to make the financial sacrifice of being an unpaid host. Financial resourcing therefore became a big concern of women interviewed, who were often effectively required to do twice the work for half the pay[293], unless they identified as

[293] While diplomatic missions have traditionally relied on unpaid labour to carry out much of this work, participants argued strongly that these roles now needed to be adequate funded. As one participant noted:

> I have a big house here and I'm meant to use it to entertain and have lunches and dinners and

queer and *did* have a diplomatic wife or female spouse to help them share the burden.

In these cases, not only were queer women and their wives best equipped to manage the 'diplomatic double burden'[294], but they also remained most affected by invisibility and homophobia. In fact, without agency recognition and support, three out of the four queer-identifying participants in particular noted that they or their colleagues were more likely to experience challenges. Interactions that were reported included homophobic and sexist comments, a lack of understanding or recourse after homophobic incidences, particularly if there was a feeling of being "tolerated" rather than actively supported by the agencies, and bullying (Participant 14, DFAT, 4 February 2019). Further, all participants spoke about issues surrounding visibility and acceptance: navigating to whom they could be open and out (which had effects on access to allowances and visas), and the impact of entrenched, crushing and long-term invisibility on mental (and physical) health.

Ultimately, "the days of having people whose spouses are happy to work [free for the post] are changing" (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019). How agencies attract a range of family types was therefore an important consideration participants raised, so that Australia does not just have "a reputation of single people" (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019). For many there was a strong feeling that postings would not be possible without the support of their spouses, which raises the important question of remuneration for spouses, and support in the absence of spouses. This is particularly timely, given that:

> DFAT has recently changed the allowance structure and removed the allowance that allows you to employ a housekeeper. I think that's a very regressive step for women and for single parents because it means that, effectively, if you're a woman you are financially penalised overseas because you have to pay out of your own pocket for that extra help that allows you to get your job, not out of the allowance that DFAT provides for you . . . I think other people have provided DFAT with that feedback, but

> everything else. That is a fulltime job, organising. In a country like [this], you can't just pop to the supermarkets to buy ingredients for breakfast, to actually have a household run properly takes a lot of work, if you want it to run at a representational level. There is a big reliance in the DFAT system on the women, female spouses – I shouldn't say that – diplomatic spouses to make that work for them. And traditionally those spouses have been female. I don't even have a husband, I have to have staff that can do that stuff. But I spend a lot more time thinking that I know the other ambassadors wouldn't because they'll have someone who can do that for them . . . picking the menu, making sure that the table's been set and they've placed the cutlery the right way, that stuff matters to people unfortunately. You have to get your protocols right . . . it's not as easy as it might seem, so some of the systems in our own system are still a little bit antiquated in that sense (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).

[294] Particularly in the cases where women could be 'out' about their sexual orientation and partner.

> I think that that single change put us back quite a long way from a posting perspective (Participant 7, DFAT, 5 October 2018).

A number of participants also spoke of their experience of being trailing spouses themselves, where they had accompanied their male spouse on his posting. One noted how:

> when you talk to anybody about these things, there's this big thing of like "oh God, I'd give anything to be a trailing spouse." "God, I'd love to sit around and do nothing all day and just go to women's groups." I'm here to tell you it's the worst time of your life. You lose your identity, you just go "hi, I'm the wife of blah-blah." The attitudes in the community haven't changed so much that they don't associate you with those things because when you're an expat you're there for a reason, so what's your reason? You're either working or you're there with someone who's working . . . I lost all my long service leave, every time I went on a posting with my partner, you know, it's a big hit … I didn't get promotion opportunities, I didn't get posting opportunities – you're uprooting your life away from friends and family, you're uprooting your career, you're dependent on one person, not just through your identity but often just for the conversation because we don't know anyone for a long time. There are no supports in place for you to – you know, to help you – not necessarily formal ones in place to help you find your way out there (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).

Clearly, there are considerable financial and career ramifications for individuals, not to mention loss of self-esteem and identity on post. These may be greater for men who are trailing spouses, for whom historical notions of being the 'bread winner' and provider may be more confronted by the loss of identity and self-worth. This was a significant reason why male spouses tended to stay home, alongside their lost career opportunities and financial ramifications. Across the interviews, it was rare for male trailing spouses to not work.

For men who did accompany their partner on post, it was generally a significant positive, particularly if they also worked in government. One participant commented how:

> I experienced a bit of resentment because my husband's career, far from being diminished by the posting, actually took off. He got promoted and I didn't. I'm still at an EL1 [level] at this point and my husband left Canberra as an SES Band 1 officer . . . During that time he was promoted . . . So his career has been stellar, and I feel like he was benefiting from the posting because he was using his intercultural experience to great effect and I was not benefiting from my posting in that same way. So that was kind of an interesting dynamic because I've never experienced – I never expected that would be the result. I thought we were going for me, for my career, and it turned out that he was the one who was actually having all the benefits (Participant 5, DFAT, 19 June 2018).

Given that post reliance on spouses and familial support was such a crucial element of most participant's experiences, the challenges of the third theme, being single while at post, were clear. The challenges centred around (1) traditional notions of diplomacy as a two-person job (paid envoy and unpaid supporting spouse), and (2) international affairs' reliance on externalising costs as explored above. Many challenges around entertaining and completing the work of diplomacy centred on women's experiences in DFAT, however the feelings of stress and isolation resulting from not having a supportive partner at post were present across all agencies studied.

Some issues were more trivial than others, for instance:

> you'll get invitations to dinner and it will say "To the honourable so and so and spouse" and you have to say, "look, I don't have a spouse," and then you've wrecked their numbers setting a party table (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).

For others, experiences coalesced around the isolating nature of the work. Being single was the first thing that one participant raised, noting, "it is a reasonably solitary existence and you can't go trawling the bars to pick anyone up" (Participant 1, DFAT, 21 June 2018). Participants expressed frustration that they did not have a partner who could be there as *confidant* or someone to express the stress and burdens of the day. Aside from these two themes, many of the issues of being single at post were related to the amount of work that was required. Participant 12 discussed how:

> if I had a partner it would be easier. And my partner would be doing all the things the Head of Mission partners are meant to do, which is being sort of in charge of the embassy family, setting up family day – it's very much geared to having a male ambassador with a female partner who wants to be the ambassador's wife (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).

For others again, even though they were now single, previously having a spouse at post had not necessarily changed the amount of work they were required to do. Participant 10 is now divorced after having been previously married. She stated:

> I have to run this huge house on my own. I would do anything to have a professional wife to help me with my events and decorating and floral, because I have to think about all that on my own. I bet you if I was here with a male partner, I'd still have to do that. Like the women always take the double job. When I was on a posting – in my earlier postings with my husband, he was at home all day long – I would do all the entertaining and I would cook. I would come home from work at the end of the day and I would have to cook . . . So I mean I would do that after hours. This guy was

> very good at sitting there all day long complaining how bored he was [and how] he had nothing to do . . . in the end the style of diplomatic life is a very old fashioned style (Participant 10, DFAT, 2 November 2018).

Aside from the challenges around childbearing and rearing, as well as posts' reliance on spouses and families and the overall externalised costs that make international affairs 'work', women experienced many instances of gender-based differential treatment, harassment or discrimination. These included being mistaken for a secretary or personal assistant (even in circumstances where it was clear that no secretaries or personal assistants would have security clearance to be part of discussions), demonstrating how much little has changed since McGlen and Sarkees study, where participants noted:

> (i)f they know your expertise, they will listen to you. They will ask your advice. Often if you walk into a room of strangers, however, they merely will just assume you are a secretary (McGlen & Sarkees 1993, p. 106).

Many participants experienced issues around establishing credibility – the assumption being that, by themselves, women were not credible to be in such roles. What helped women to establish credibility and authority often included uniform, particularly in the case of ADF personnel in Defence, AFP officers or ABF staff. The lack of uniform was also a clear detriment, particularly to unsworn AFP officers and civilian Defence personnel. One Defence participant noted how:

> in International Policy Division everybody kind of knows what level a particular person is, where they fit, who reports to who and even the military who deal with international policy on a more regular basis get it. They understand roughly where it all falls, but when you sort of move a civilian into an area where they just don't know where that individual fits, you're challenging their sense of what hierarchy is . . . [internationally] I've felt like I've been bolted on to the area and if I had have agreed that everybody in uniform far outranks me, and I'll just sit quietly in my office and be part of the locally engaged staff, then I feel that my [welcoming] into the office would have been a lot smoother and I wouldn't have ruffled any feathers (Participant 9, Defence, 26 February 2019).

Experiences like this resulted in the International Policy Division (IPD) developing a directive of civilian ranks compared with military ranks, particularly important for when the DA was away and staff needed to know who did what in the interim. Participant 9 noted how:

> that directive has never been raised since it was issued . . . so I think I'm in this awkward situation where my role, my position and my standing in the organisation has never been accepted, so I'm not really the one who can be trotting out this

> directive to kind of say "right, here is where we all sit, and guess what? I'm up near the top". It's not really a thing that you want to [say], but there has been no other leadership doing that. . . . I've looked into other parts of the embassy to try and find some, not necessarily allies, but people who I can engage with, get my work done and just, you know, kind of fall back on that 'proving yourself through your work and through what you offer' [thing]. But it's been quite challenging and has been one of the factors as to why I was planning to only do two years over here, not three (Participant 9, Defence, 26 February 2019).

Others described being interpersonal and friendly as a tactic used to gain credibility and respect, and one that might have been easier in some instances *because* they were women, and often the first order of business was a bit friendlier[295]. One AFP participant noted how "I was rocking up saying hi, I'm Australian, love me for who I am, have a koala. I simplify that but it was about building those personal relationships" (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018). But she also described the blatantly gendered and even sexist reception many of her female colleagues endured on introduction internationally, explaining how a senior female colleague:

> talked about when they were introduced to a forum, they were fresh into a post that has quite an Islamic background, [and] when she was introduced they basically put music on and she had to do a dance (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018).

Interestingly, this woman's experience demonstrates how she then quickly moved to demonstrating credibility:

> . . . she played along because of the culture but then made the point when coming off from that, of sitting down with the three or four star general there and equating her experience to his with regard – she used to drive battleships and this is her operational experience within the AFP (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018).

These experiences reinforced how many of the participants had to endure exceptional expectations that would not have been required by their male counterparts, and which often had distinctly gendered undertones of entertainment and subservience. While most were adamant that their gender was not a disadvantage to what they did, the way that others reacted to their gender was clearly stereotypical, often discriminatory, and sexist.

In fact, sexual harassment and assault were common to participants' stories, if not for themselves, then for women they knew. Most instances tended to come from within their agency however, rather than from their host country. This may be indicative of the protocols and norms of diplomatic work that aim to minimise tensions between countries, rather than

[295] As similarly found in Morin (1994) and Fliegel (2017).

creating to diplomatic incidents. More common to women's experiences on posting, particularly from their host countries, was disregard, discomfort, or even mild disapproval of women in their roles. Even so, there were overwhelming instances of women being made to feel invisible, unimportant, or inadequate. Their experiences highlighted: being overlooked during introductions; assumed to be the note-taker or junior; sat at the wives' (not decision-makers') table at functions and events; barred access because of their gender to certain military and security facilities internationally; made to perform – sing or dance – for entertainment for their host country colleagues; not invited to informal events or gatherings; not socially permitted to engage in the same range of activities as their male counterparts; more likely to be scrutinised or watched; and, despite their status and position, were still subjected to sexual harassment and, in some cases, assault.

Women were also met with curiosity and interest – sometimes as 'novel', and other times approached with respectful curiosity. While the experiences of women on posting may appear extreme, they were reported to be much better than their experiences within their own agencies. Internationally, gendered situations were often experienced once off. Within their agencies, there was a much higher chance that these gendered and sexist experiences were recurrent and regular. As one AFP participant noted:

> I remember going over to the UN working with 120 member states, going "it can never be this hard again". Interesting I actually found the return – I felt probably *more disempowered* and I felt *more barriers* than what I found being offshore because when you are offshore [you tend to think] it is just you . . . [in Australia,] I think it's cultural. I think systems, institutions are cultural artefacts, aren't they? Once you go offshore those cultural artefacts aren't as impressive, so I really do think it's culture that stands in the way of that here. I remember coming back and I thought, wow, I can relax now, all that diplomacy that you've got to apply in dealing with people from different parts of the world with different cultures, political agendas, regional alliances is exhausting. I thought coming back here would be simpler but in some ways it's more complex … I guess when you're going international and you're working, I suppose you're very conscious of those differences but I think when you're working domestically there's a lot of the unconscious biases that are playing out that we don't acknowledge (Participant 3, AFP, 21 June 2018, emphasis added).

This highlights a recurrent theme across interviews: in asking participants why they thought their experiences were better internationally than within their home agency, many suggested that they expected to experience gendered difficulties in some postings overseas, and so were prepared for it. In Australia, they expected to be treated equally and be protected by the

diversity, inclusion and other equal opportunities policies, and so the disjuncture between these policies and their experiences was more sharply felt. This was a key reality of some of the formal institutional policies and supports; theoretically, they protect women and promote their equal treatment, yet in practice they are often gendered. This finding will be discussed more in Chapter Seven.

Overall, international representation in all agencies was reliant on externalising various costs onto their employees – notably, women as formal representatives or as wives. Not only did this make it difficult for 'single' individuals, but it placed an unfair burden on women more generally that was magnified by childcare and other responsibilities. Additionally, it has implications on the dual role expected of women in diplomacy, particularly for those women who do actually have wives – a theme that will be returned to in Chapter Seven. While multitudinous discriminatory or sexist occasions occurred in women's experiences, women reported worse discrimination, harassment and marginalisation from their own agencies, rather than their host location. As will become clear in the next sections, this had significant ramifications whether, and when, women would leave their agencies.

Returning from posting

Much of the literature on women's leadership[296] focuses on the pathways to leadership. Similarly, in considering women's international deployment, much of the literature and this thesis to date has focused on being selected for international representation, with little consideration of the return from posting. However, the return from posting was a key time in participants' career journeys – it was the most likely time at which women would, or considered, resigning from their agency. The findings from this section have considerable ramifications on understanding women's retention across international affairs.

Frequently, women described that their experiences and expertise were inadequately re-integrated back into their agency, resulting in work dissatisfaction and difficulties retaining staff. As one Home Affairs participant stated:

> to come back to reintegration in Australia is probably the hardest part – the return rather than the going. I think most people would probably share the same or similar view (Participant 5, Home Affairs, 15 January 2019).

[296] As canvassed in Chapter Two.

For some agencies, like the AFP, the re-integration process was generally reported to be a thoughtful and considered process that enabled recently deployed staff to remove themselves from what was often a stressful international setting and re-adjust back home. Among some of the formal processes were requirements that deployed individuals spend a period of time, usually a few days, in a third party or 'neutral' Australian space first, where the focus was on de-briefing the experience and shifting back into an Australian lifestyle[297].

Yet there were evidently still some issues within the AFP. Individuals who were posted with their spouse (also employed in the AFP) were not offered any support for reintegrating the spouse back into a work division on return to Australia. One participant stated:

> [when you are ready to return] you're asked to put in the preferences of where you'll go back to and where you want to go back to. And, at that time there was no consideration whatsoever of my husband and trying to help him get a position back in Australia because they basically said well, he's not part of international (Participant 9, AFP, 18 January 2019).

For Home Affairs, there is also a reintegration process, however it is more of "a commitment" that:

> you have a position back in your home area, which is the area which you were last working in before you went on deployment . . . the onus is really on individuals to [work out] for themselves where they want to work, what you want to be doing. And most people, the majority of people, will try to line up a position through their own contacts or connections, unless they're taking a promotion on return (Participant 5, Home Affairs, 15 January 2019).

In fact, on further consultation with ABF staff in particular, many participants had decided prior to returning from post whether or not they would leave the agency, largely because of stress about finding an adequate position on return. Recently introduced policy required staff to take a posting in Canberra on return from deployment – a strategy introduced in an attempt to better utilise the new experience and expertise of staff. However, in reality, it often led to participant anxiety and discouraged individuals from staying in the agency. While participants were willing to be posted overseas, uprooting their families and lives to move to

[297] One senior leader commented that often when women returned to their families, it stirred tension and conflict, as there was a tendency for the women to tell their partner that they are doing this wrong, and that wrong, and that wrong – without realising that everyone had been managing fine without them while they were away. This de-briefing time was therefore essential, with staff coached into understanding how their families coped without them and that re-integration back into the family can be a difficult process if there is an expectation that life will go back to old dynamics.

Canberra after a posting ended was an altogether different ask, and they tended to resign or apply for exceptional circumstances, rather than move to Canberra as policy required.

Despite the low uptake of this particular policy, introduction of policies like this do have merit. A core concern of the majority of participants in Home Affairs, Defence and the AFP was having their international experience recognised and utilised on return. Many participants expressed frustration that the new skills and expertise they gained were not harnessed. In these cases, women often felt that their colleagues did not understand international deployment, viewing it as a holiday rather than the often difficult and challenging work that it was. In addition, their time away was seen as more burdensome to their career, than if they had stayed at home. This indicates difficulties that these agencies in particular have in adequately valuing the expertise and experience of internationally deployed staff[298]. One Home Affairs participant commented that:

> international deployment is seen as a marking time in your career, it's definitely not something that's going to put you in a good position for promotion. They left you behind, they just left you behind. Because you've been off the chart for three years. So, I mean Home Affairs might see this a bit differently, but certainly in the Customs days it was, "You do your overseas posting and then you come back and you're three years behind everybody else" (Participant 4, Home Affairs, 14 January 2019).

After returning from posting, many participants spoke of the need to build up their "Canberra credibility", noting that posting is a "double-edged sword" (Participant 14, Home Affairs, 9 May 2019). For colleagues who had been on posting, they could understand the benefits the experience brought, but generally, it was difficult to have this international experience valued by colleagues and seniors. Upon return, this often translated into work dissatisfaction. Out of all of the times women chose to quit, this was the most likely time they would leave.

This was also true for DFAT, even though participants' comments indicated that DFAT valued their postings most out of all the agencies studied. Even though participants' newfound skills and experiences were felt to be valued in the agency, it did not generally correspond to career progression[299]. In fact, for most, the posting was viewed as the reward,

[298] As mentioned in Chapter Four, until recently, the role of Defence Attaché (DA) was considered a "golden handshake" – the last post individuals might take prior to retirement, suggesting that any learnings at post would not even be important enough to warrant an individual returning to work.

[299] Even though, technically, it should be positively linked to career progression, particularly in DFAT as its mandate is inherently international.

with postings often setting career progression back by a few years. Defence was the only agency that did not conform to this trend, perhaps because the role of DAs is changing to be more important, high prestige and high status, with a new focus on DAs as Defence's premiere diplomatic force. With the increase in funding in Defence and away from DFAT, as noted in Chapter Four, some DFAT participants or colleagues reported transferring laterally to Defence, because of the better career progression opportunities Defence offered. This suggests a further drain on talent and expertise from DFAT. It also highlights that the return from posting is a key gap in talent retention, particularly for women, whom have demonstrably lower opportunities for career progression to SES ranks, as outlined in Chapter Five statistics.

What happens, and why, women leave

Only one woman among the research participants had left her posting early. However, a number of the participants interviewed had moved on from their roles, either to work elsewhere or for retirement. Excluding those who had retired, participants chose to leave their roles for a number of reasons. All participants noted that they enjoyed the work. However, the reasons they tended to leave stemmed from issues around being undervalued and unrecognised (and therefore not promoted). As mentioned above, timing was crucial to the decision-making process. Arguably, leaving after returning from posting is a strategic move – with women gaining the positives of posting and international experience before moving on. However, it also highlighted a deficit in their experiences on return.

Pre-departure briefings exist across all the agencies, ranging from multiple-week training sessions on everything from language to culture and politics, to year-long language immersions prior to commencing their role. However, post-departure debriefing varied considerably across the agencies[300]. In fact, women from all agencies experienced things like: arriving back in Australia to a new office that had not been told of their impending arrival; colleagues not even realising they were away for a period of years; or no job being immediately available on their return.

[300] As mentioned earlier, only the AFP had post-departure re-integration practices that appeared to have a considerable effect in helping participants to re-adjust not just to their return to their agency, but also their return to family too.

Because the return period was one of the most difficult parts of posting, it was also often a time of reflection. Despite the considerable perks of the job – from international relocation to extra allowances and the privilege of representing their country on the global stage – difficulties were inherent in what were also high stress, high pressure jobs. Across all participants, common words used to describe the work included: "very public," "isolating," "lonely," "exposed," a "24/7 job," and "strains relationships", with one participant noting that "at some point it just becomes de-stabilising and absent". Words participants used to describe themselves included: "resilient," "comfortable in your own skin," and "able to spend time by yourself", with one noting that it was "not the job for insecure people who don't like spending time alone, I would say, because it can absolutely magnify your insecurities" (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019). This reinforces how little has changed since military researchers in the US found that the lifestyle of those deployed is typically:

> unpredictable and one in which [women] must maintain a state of readiness to respond to possible deployment, extended tours, or training away from home. Keeping the 'home fires' burning in her absence calls for extraordinary planning and multiple sources of support (Vinokur, Pierce & Buck 1999, para 5).

Additionally, the volatility and high-pressure nature of the work appears to have particular ramifications for women on or returning from maternity leave: the *Women in the ADF Report* found that women were generally retained at lower rates than men were, particularly after paid parental leave (Department of Defence 2018).

Overall, women could either choose between going on post or progressing their career. This choice to *post or progress* resulted in the women in this research (those who chose to post) often reporting a slower career progression. When combined with the high-pressure nature of the job, it often made more sense to leave and progress laterally through another agency or organisation. The ramifications were that key, experienced women were often removed from the pipeline. At some stage, the challenges became too high, and too often, and the rewards too few, and too late.

Further, Julia Gillard notes of her time as Prime Minister:

> the fashionable political analysis when I was Prime Minister was that nothing about my prime ministership could be explained by gender. That I was just being treated like every other Prime Minister . . . Now, mainly because of the circumstances in the Liberal party, there's actually a lively debate about sexism in politics . . . whether

> being a woman can be a problem when you put yourself forward for a leadership position. Whether there's sexism that plays out in whether or not people will vote for you. All of those things are being discussed in the way that they were just dismissed when I was Prime Minister. So that's progress, in the sense that, you don't ever fix big problems unless people are talking about them (Julia Gillard, pers. comm., 21 May 2019).

It is likely that now, more overtly recognising gendered differences in treatment may add to women's desire to leave international affairs if it is not acceptable, up to standard or does not change quickly enough. Women may simply look for better treatment elsewhere.

Leaving their agencies did not mark the end of women's gendered experiences in the field. For those who left Defence particularly, the gendered effects were stark. From previously being in extremely high leadership roles, reporting directly to the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) or in other executive pathways, participants who had retired from Defence felt they had little transferable power, unlike many male colleagues and contemporaries. Sasson-Levy comments on this:

> (m)ore often than not, [women's] military careers are blocked at an early stage and their advancement and promotion are curtailed and limited. Moreover, their positive military experience is not carried into their civilian life. After their release from the army, they are not entitled to the economic privileges that combat soldiers enjoy, or to their political voice and power. Thus, they are not endowed with the "recognition and respect" (Burk 1995, p. 503) of the "good citizen," as are their male counterparts. The power the women soldiers acquire through their military service is revealed as temporary and localized, as it does not lead them to positions of power either in military or in civilian life. Therefore, we can decipher the dual mechanism of inclusion and marginalization by which the existing gender order is preserved (Sasson-Levy 2003, p. 459).

Similarly for DFAT, unless participants reached the position of 'senior diplomat'[301] prior to retiring or moving on, they reported lacking the respect or currency needed to progress their career in other ways. Unlike their male colleagues, women's power was felt to be temporary and localised. While senior men often left their agencies to pursue successful and longstanding careers and consultancies, women infrequently had the same opportunities and recognition post- their careers in their agency ending.

[301] Generally, Head of Mission (HOM) or Head of Post (HOP).

Succeeding in leadership takes more than skills and experience

For those who remained employed in their agencies and are in, or on track to reaching the most senior echelons of leadership, several characteristics came to the fore. All participants had a strong understanding of themselves and their personal value, even if this was not externally validated. Participants detailed the following attributes as important to their work: emotional intelligence (which some noted was a natural ability for women); strong relationships; political acumen; collaborative, soft skills; discipline; and, authority. The importance of relationships and having a degree of political nous was crucial across all agencies – a universal attribute. Further, all credited changes within their agency, noting that in general, the situation for women had greatly improved. Most were quite optimistic about the future of women's leadership in Australian international affairs.

Demonstrating attitudes of resilience and 'getting on with the job', Participant 12 in DFAT spoke about how:

> things have really changed since I entered the workforce, you know, it really has changed. I mean, I remember going to my first interview and putting my hand out to shake hands with someone and they said "I don't shake hands with women". I said, "that's a shame for you," and continued the conversation (Participant 12, DFAT, 1 February 2019).

Many of the women, particularly those who were in the most senior ranks of leadership, and generally in the later stages of their career, were confident and self-assured. Participants were largely unfazed and pragmatic about possible barriers to their leadership:

> I've honestly found that people don't naturally accept you if you're a 5 foot 2 woman, at any stage in my career, on face value . . . [but] you're definitely noticeable if you're a 5 foot 2 Australian woman walking into a room . . . and that's either been a disadvantage or an advantage . .. but in those conservative cultures that I've been in [that] don't normally hear woman's voices, I have not, in the end, had a problem (Participant 11, DFAT, 15 November 2019).

There were also differences in some of the characteristics of participants. For instance, Defence women described themselves as: very practical; pragmatic; had a 'get on with it' attitude; were not likely to take things personally; were highly resilient; and were deeply values-based people. In fact, of all the agencies, Defence identity, particularly in the ADF, was deeply ingrained – a values-based identity that defined every element of their life, from work through to family. This was similar in the AFP, though to a lower degree, whereby

women's jobs were more than 'just a job', but rather informed a deeper part of individuals' psyche's and lifestyles. As a result, these women had extraordinary coping techniques for dealing with the relentlessness and trauma of their work. One advisor described a mantra she used to repeat to herself under stressful circumstances – be yourself, back yourself, know yourself, look after yourself. As well as these highly developed internal narratives, she reported a 'phone a friend' policy: a personal check she used to keep in balance when work became overwhelming. She noted that while it is okay to be vulnerable, once you are fragile, support systems become critical and must be built into a kind of personal protocol.

Since McGlen and Sarkees's (1993) study on women diplomats and security leaders, change is clearly occurring, although much has remained the same in terms of women's experiences and overall status in international affairs. Among this research's participants, there appeared to be a greater uptake of the idea of gender equality, and perhaps more freedom for women to do something about the inequalities that remained. Conducting her research on diplomacy over the last century, McCarthy found that:

> . . . from the moment they stepped into the Foreign Office many female diplomats were profoundly resistant to the idea that they had a 'special' contribution to make as women and were sceptical of the notion that they might bring a different set of perspectives and experiences to their work (2015, p. 345).

In this research that did not always seem true. In fact, for the majority of participants, when questioned on why women's leadership was important to international affairs, most replied that it was because women brought something 'different' or 'special', particularly in circumstances where they may be the first Indigenous, queer or woman of colour leading in their agency or host country. Interestingly, while most participants recognised the debate about men and women's 'sameness' versus 'difference', they asserted that women did things differently to men – adding to the breadth of understanding and experience around a topic, or approaching challenges in new or different ways. In some negotiations, their gender appeared to help them deliver outcomes. As Participant 1 in DFAT noted:

> [my colleagues] did say to each other, this really is so much easier having all the girls take care of it. I think, it's not that girls are better negotiators, but I think they are, or can be, more clear-sighted about the outcome you're looking for and the pathway to get there. Maybe I'm wrong. But there's much less ego and aggression on the table as a general rule (Participant 1, DFAT, 21 June 2018).

Further, former Foreign Minister Julie Bishop notes that:

> I'm not generalising, I'm not stereotyping, but women actually bring their perspective, their experience and their leadership style. It tends to be much more transformational - which is the way experts describe it - in that women are more focused on the individual needs when they build a team. They're much more compassionate, they're much more concerned about the emotional well-being of people. Men are more transactional and they set standards and then they hold the whole team to account. They're not so concerned or interested in the individual needs (Julie Bishop, pers. comm. 3 April 2019).

This more conciliatory and consensus-based approach may be particularly important for international negotiation, where the stakes and impact of decisions can be high. Yet, if we accept that there are gendered differences in behaviour, there can also be profound implications for this – not all welcome. It may explain why there was a tendency for women to be deployed in higher numbers in some of the more contentious environments, like China, as explored in the previous chapter. It also has a role in stereotyping women for particular roles and portfolios, adding to the vertical and horizontal discrimination experienced.

Detailed operational experience in their field, plus 'soft' transferable skills were also necessary. One participant noted "I think to be a better posted officer, you do need experience, and I quotation mark this, in "the business", to actually understand [what you are doing]" (Participant 3, Home Affairs, 14 December 2018). Additionally, participants tended to demonstrate a strong aptitude for communications, networking and building relationships that seemed to be the mainstay of international representative work. Participant 4 stated:

> I never thought about applying for [posting] because I never thought that I had the right skill sets. But through my experience of working internationally and working with the overseas posted offices, I realised that I probably had the right skill set to do it . . . people [suggest] that you had to have all of this operational experience when in actual fact, the thing that probably put me in the best possible position was strength in relationships rather than some particular expertise (Participant 4, Home Affairs, 14 January 2019).

Overall, international representation and leadership took more than a combination of skills and experiences, but also mental attitude and support systems that all contributed to women's success. Whilst most women felt they were not as prepared as they would have liked to be, these key factors helped ensure that their postings were generally highly successful. However, as earlier recognised, without considerable other supports, the progress of women into leadership was not possible based on skills and 'merit' alone.

Summary

Despite all the challenges outlined, women still seek to serve their country through international affairs. They take pride in their work, and their influence and outcomes are considerable. They pave the way not just for other women, but also for Australia's place and purpose in the world. They matter. Women's experiences of leadership internationally were generally a major career boost, giving participants many opportunities for personal and professional development. However, it is clear that gendered challenges continue to present barriers to women's representation overseas and their continued career progression on return.

This chapter has focused on outlining the pathways to posting, experiences whilst on posting, and experiences upon returning from posting, highlighting a number of crucial challenges that remain, despite many recent gender progressive changes in Australian international affairs – further evidence of gendered institutions enduring through fluidity and adaptation. The chapter highlighted issues around the costs of international representation that are systemically externalised onto individuals (including spouses and children) – resulting in an international affairs service reliant on feminised sacrifice. The chapter also highlighted continued issues around childbearing and rearing on post, as well as spousal support issues and agency organisational cultures that continued to place a greater strain on women, than their host countries often do.

Many of the issues found in domestic government work 'travel' with the women as they experience their international deployment. Yet it is clear that women in international affairs experience both domestic and international representation in unique ways. Women remain affected by institutions at an individual level, including expectations and responsibilities within their family units to bear the burden of unpaid labour and the mental load of navigating foreign education, housing and health systems. Women are affected by institutions at the home and host society level, requiring them to adeptly navigate different gendered cultures and expectations often with little recourse in terms of any negative experiences had – for instance, conforming to gendered scripts requiring women to be subservient and entertain in some countries, or security requirements that forbid women from access to facilities in others. Women are affected by institutions across the diplomatic field that continue to view men's value and voice higher than women's, and result in systematic marginalisation in

bilateral forums and negotiations particularly. Finally, institutions within the agencies affect women. These are not only enduring, but as women have gained increased representation in international affairs, these institutions are also fluid, shifting to new and more masculine and 'hard' centres of power. Further, and worryingly, is that women report the most sexism, discrimination and harassment from within their own agencies, suggesting that long after women have returned from posting, the challenges remain.

This does not bode well when women make the choice to leave their agencies to retire or pursue other career options. Not only are agencies failing to properly retain and reintegrate their staff on their return from posting, but also whatever power women manage to amass is largely non-transferable beyond their agencies. Some opportunities exist, particularly for women who move to new 'hard' power centres like Defence, where not only is quicker career progression possible[302], but where women also have better chances at leadership and overseas representation, as found in Chapter Five.

But for the most part, women's power is seen as localised and temporary. When analysing the findings of this chapter together with agency histories in Chapter Four, and our understanding of statistics, demographics and 'rules of the game' in Chapter Five, it is clear that gendered institutions continue to constrain women leaders. As earlier noted, at some stage the challenges became too hard, and too frequent, and the rewards too few, and too late. The findings of these past three chapters will be explored in the discussion in the next chapter, answering the core research question: why do women remain under-represented in international affairs?

[302] And more proportional career progression too, with women and men spending roughly equal periods at each rank before progressing (Department of Defence 2019c).

Chapter Seven: Why do women remain under-represented in international affairs?

Introduction

> *We're not talking about digging a ditch here. We're not talking about heavy labour. We're talking about international relations and there's no excuse for it. There can be no excuse for it to be male dominated (Participant 7, DFAT, October 5 2018).*

This thesis has demonstrated that there are complex reasons why women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs. Feminist Institutionalism (FI) asserts that institutions are often difficult and slow to change (Thomson 2018; Waylen 2017; Mackay, Kenny & Chappell 2010), which highlights the enduring effect of historical inequalities. The abolition of many formal gendered institutions and rules, canvassed in Chapter Four, gives reason for optimism. Gendered change seems reinforced by the increasing numbers of women in leadership across all agencies that were the focus of this research. However, as explored in Chapter Five, the increasing trajectory of women in leadership is at odds with detailed data, disaggregated and analysed over time. It is also at odds with much of women's narratives and reported experiences discussed in Chapter Five and Six, which highlight a consistent marginalisation and invisibility of their achievements and roles across the agencies. As Chappell and Waylen (2013) note, while men's access to power has been reinforced over time, organisational rules, routines, practices and discourse has rendered "women, along with their needs and interests, invisible" (Acker 1992, p. 567). The role that informal institutions play in constraining women leaders therefore remains an overwhelming factor in why women remain under-represented. Rather than witnessing a decrease in gendered institutions in international affairs, it appears that gendered institutions endure through fluidity – shifting the locus of power to new institutional arenas, changing the shape, but not necessarily the nature, of gender inequalities (Waylen 2017; Mackay, Kenny & Chappell 2010).

Three factors explain women's continued under-representation in Australian international affairs:

1. the legacy of history, which continues to shape contemporary agency identity and norms in subtle and often undefinable gendered ways;

2. the ‘layering’ and duplication of regressive gendered rules across multiple institutional fields, not only within the agency context, but also the diplomatic field, home and host society context, and individual (often familial) context; and
3. the way that this complexity and ‘layering’ of rules compound to effect women at different stages of their international postings, their careers, and their lives.

This final substantive chapter brings together the findings of the previous three chapters on history, demographics and experiences, applying FI theory to answer the research question of why women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs agencies. Some of the core and most surprising original findings will be summarised. Then, the three factors explaining women’s under-representation are analysed in the context of each of the agencies. The durability and the fluidity of gendered institutions means that international affairs remains an exclusive, and exclusionary, field in which women remain under-represented, under-valued and often invisible.

Unexpected allies and unpredictable foes

For women in international affairs, it is not just that international representation and leadership exhibit greater challenges than domestic representation might. Rather, these five surprising core findings highlight the complexity of women’s place in the field. These include that:

1. Women are most proportionally represented in leadership and international representation in more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies, and least proportionally represented in leadership and international representation in more bureaucratic agencies. This finding adds nuance to what is known about gendered challenges in militaries, suggesting that as long as women can remain employed in more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies, they will be more likely to reach leadership than women in any of the other agencies studied.
2. Militaristic agencies demonstrate overtly gendered norms, behaviours and practices indicative of ‘toxic’ masculinities. This is unsurprising given the male-dominated histories of these agencies, and that hegemonic masculine archetypes remain to influence informal norms. What is surprising is that bureaucratic agencies demonstrate their own kinds of ‘genteel’ toxic masculinities that are just as pervasive,

only in some cases more difficult to identify and therefore confront.

3. International affairs agencies rely on externalising costs onto employees, their spouses and their families. This resulted women who deployed with female partners tending to fare better than women who deployed with male partners, particularly for diplomatic roles that still rely heavily on unpaid spousal labour. Inversely, this group of LGBTI+ or queer women also tended to experience some of the highest rates of marginalisation, silencing and discrimination.
4. Historically, women's exclusion from international affairs has been justified based on women's perceived treatment by 'foreign' host countries. Yet, women in this study reported experiencing more, and worse, challenges domestically within their agencies, rather than host countries when on international postings. This adds to the literature steadily debunking international affairs as an inappropriate place for women to work.
5. Most of the challenges experienced by women posted internationally were relatively homogenous across agencies. Despite considerable differences across these portfolios, women's similar experiences indicate that the gendered elements of international representative experiences are relatively homogenous, and therefore have wider application, across the field of international affairs.

This section will briefly unpack and summarise each of these key findings.

More militaristic agencies more proportionally represent women

A core conclusion of this research is that more militaristic agencies more proportionally represent women than bureaucratic agencies do. These findings represent a core contribution to the literature given that much contemporary research highlights that more militaristic agencies are correlated with greater gender inequalities[303] – in instances, with militarism positioned as antithetical to feminism[304]. In fact, one of the central arguments of this thesis has been that militaristic, enforcement-based agencies in particular remain patriarchal strongholds as the most male-dominated spheres within the state (Towns and Niklasson 2017;

[303] See Chapter Two.

[304] For instance, Duncanson and Woodward note that "anti-militarist feminists have argued that women's military participation (however manifested) merely legitimizes an institution that is antithetical to the goals of feminism" (2016, p. 4). Further, prominent IR feminist researcher, Cynthia Enloe, notes:

> (s)o long as the military is an instrument of coercion designed to uphold a political-economic and ideological order that rests on the subordination of women, the military must not be seen as simply one more institution – like schools or business firms – where women will try to gain access (1982, p. 331).

Tickner 1992; Enloe 1989, 2014; Wadham, et al 2016). This is true, based on the proportion of women employed overall in these agencies, of which women remain least represented in the most militaristic and para-militaristic agencies – particularly, in the ADF, AFP (sworn) and ABF[305]. Yet, provided women can endure the challenges of these more militaristic agencies, their progression to leadership and deployment follows at a rate roughly comparable to their male colleagues[306]. An enduring gap remains for women in more bureaucratic agencies – while women represent a majority of these agencies, they have the lowest opportunity for leadership and international representation (proportional to opportunity). These findings would have remained obscured without the comprehensive trend and comparative data obtained and analysed throughout this research.

As discussed, both structure and visibility explain women's better representation in militaristic agencies. Firstly, militaristic agencies tend to have more structured and concrete career paths than bureaucratic agencies. The nature of employment opportunities and ranks in Defence and the AFP provided clearer leadership pathways and opportunities than those in Home Affairs and DFAT, where careers were considerably more fluid, flexible, and opportunistic[307]. Secondly, the visibility of gendered rules affected how navigable agencies were for women. Not only do more militaristic agencies tend to be more male-dominated, 'bolshie', and 'blokey' environments underpinned by masculine ideals and traditional archetypes, but this is well known. There are considerable agency reviews[308] that go into depth about gender discrimination and harassment, as well as high-profile sexist incidents, which have made gendered challenges visible in these agencies. On the other hand, the bureaucratic agencies tend to be less researched, with fewer instances of overt sexism and discrimination in the public eye, and no reviews[309] of a similar depth as those in Defence and the AFP to help reveal the gendered challenges. The gendered challenges in bureaucratic agencies in particular are covert and fluid. Further, perhaps because of women's status as a (marginalised) majority of overall employment in these agencies, a narrative existed that the gendered issues in these agencies had already been 'solved'. This in turn has made it more difficult to have enduring challenges recognised.

[305] As set out in Chapter Five.
[306] With even the 2019 Women in the ADF Report finding women and men spend comparable time at rank.
[307] Opportunities are further limited by efficiency dividends, mentioned earlier, and the ASL Cap. As ABF and Home Affairs increasingly orient to a para-militaristic structure, similar trends may be found.
[308] As canvassed in Chapter Five.
[309] Particularly, public reviews.

'Genteel' toxic masculinities dominate in bureaucratic agencies

The consequence of this invisibility of gendered challenges in bureaucratic agencies included that a novel form of toxic masculinity rose to the fore. Toxic masculinity, as earlier mentioned, is defined as an extreme form of 'hegemonic masculinity' that promotes masculine supremacy, strict gender roles, and the systematic and systemic devaluing of women and men (and other genders) who do not fit the hegemonic archetype (Webster 2019). Toxic masculinity has typically been associated with militaries[310]. However, the second surprising finding is that a novel form of 'genteel' toxic masculinity came to dominate more prestigious, elite, bureaucratic diplomatic service.

In more militaristic agencies, gendered challenges were often immediately obvious and illuminatingly overt. But, many participants pointed out that at least they knew where they stood (and therefore how to work around the challenges faced) in these particular male-dominated fields. They might have traditional forms of toxic masculinity, but at least it was visible, able to be labelled, and therefore called out.

For the elite and prestigious diplomatic corps, the 'rules of the game' seemed intangible and more opaque. The genteel nature of diplomacy seemed to change the shape, but not nature, of gendered challenges women face. Genteel toxic masculinity was reported by participants where high levels of diplomatic norms and training existed. It was defined by instances where men in power could be seen to do and say the right things, yet were *still* found to engage in discriminatory, biased and sometimes explicitly abusive behaviour towards women. It was described as a feeling of women being listened to by colleagues, but not heard; of being placated, rather than reports of misconduct taken seriously; and of being reminded that women had already achieved equality, even when they clearly had not. Women were often praised for their organisational skills, yet left with the menial note-taking duties or organisational housework. They were seen as having an affinity for negotiation and consensus-building, often placing them in difficult roles that had little prestige nor opportunities for advancement. Women were often painfully *invisible* when it mattered – putting hands up for opportunities or being recognised for work – and painfully *visible* in the

[310] See Chapter Four section on Defence.

case of organisational or media scrutiny – emblematic of having reached the 'glass cliff'[311].

Particularly given the progress made, participants found that it was sometimes harder to have the enduring inequalities recognised or even seen. Poor behaviour by colleagues was often far more covert, pushed underground, and subdued – but remained 'toxic', ultimately affecting women and anyone else who did not 'conform'. Their experiences were marked by slower career trajectories and systemic exclusion from power (in small ways, and larger, formal ways) that ultimately resulted in bureaucratic cultures seemingly marked, on occasion, by covert 'forms of toxic masculinity as much as militaristic agencies remain marked, on occasion, by overt toxic masculinities. This identification of more covert, genteel forms of toxic masculinity is significant for understanding enduring gendered institutions despite formal institutional change, and has wider implications for other industries.

International affairs relies on externalised costs borne mostly by women

The third key finding is that Australia's representation on the world stage is only possible by externalising costs onto spouses and families. While justifying the costs of international representation to domestic constituents is not always easy, as it currently stands, the brunt of these costs are borne by women, regardless of the gender of the diplomat or attaché in question. This is because the majority of domestic work, caring work (of children, elders, or other dependents), and diplomatic 'housework' is carried out by women – with little difference in what is expected of them at home, regardless of whether they are the trailing spouse or the head of a mission.

This concept of 'externalising costs' in international affairs helps to conceptualise and give a framework to the 'diplomatic double burden' and unpaid spousal labour documented across the literature – and is in itself another contribution to the literature. However, the result of this externalisation of costs and the third novel finding was therefore that queer women (specifically, those who currently have women partners) appeared to fare better than their straight female colleagues in terms of meeting the demands of international deployment and the extraordinary requirements of diplomacy. It was not that participants whom had same-sex relationships were inherently equal, sharing paid and unpaid labour. Rather, female spouses tended to be more engaged in managing diplomatic households and the informal functions

[311] Whereby women are more likely to achieve leadership in periods of crisis or uncertainty (Sabharwal 2015).

that are a mainstay of international negotiation, than male spouses tended to be. Female spouses of the participants who were interviewed were also more likely to undertake the burden of unpaid domestic labour or primary child and eldercare responsibilities, to allow their spouses to dedicate more time for their paid deployed role. A considerable number of heterosexual women noted that the most successful deploying partnerships they witnessed were "women with wives", a quip that highlighted a theme that if they could choose it, they would have a 'wife' to help them carry out the tasks required of international deployment.

Despite this, queer women's experiences demonstrated a deeply entrenched marginalisation and isolation from within the field and their agencies – demanding more whilst simultaneously subjecting them to greater forms of discrimination and harassment. The inability to be visible, or the requirement to be visible only in certain circumstances, placed a heavy burden on those women who were perhaps most able to perform the duties required of a diplomatic couple. The analysis of queer women's experiences in international affairs represents a significant addition to the literature, particularly given diplomacy's historic focus on men, and LGBTI+ accounts' focus on gay men[312].

Australia-based gendered challenges trump those of international representation

Fourthly, as highlighted throughout this thesis and the literature, international affairs work is understood as more complex, and therefore more difficult to negotiate, than domestically based work, simply by virtue of requirements to relocate internationally for work *and* to represent the state internationally. The presumption that different cultures, gender norms and expectations would present more gendered challenges for women has underpinned historical justifications for excluding women from international affairs (McCarthy 2015; Stephenson 2019). Yet surprisingly, the gendered challenges of international deployment did not stand out above what was already being experienced domestically. While women did have gendered experiences overseas and at times experienced sexual harassment and discrimination, participants were quick to shrug these experiences off as part of working with different cultures. The data indicated that women's worst experiences of gender-based discrimination, harassment or differential treatment was experienced within their agencies in

[312] Most LGBTI+ histories of diplomacy focus almost exclusively on gay men (Stephenson, forthcoming).

Australia rather than internationally[313]. Four salient explanations were found for this, including: (1) the women's level of seniority, (2) diplomatic norms, (3) the women's representational status, and (4) women's expectations of gendered treatment at home versus abroad.

Firstly, participants were at a senior level of leadership when interviewed, and therefore had a stronger role in setting the agenda and workplace culture[314]. Secondly, participants' colleagues internationally were often highly educated, worldly and more progressive than the general population of either host or home country[315]. The people and organisations participants were exposed to were often well-versed in diplomacy and had a high degree of intercultural understanding and awareness that minimised overt gender discrimination[316]. Thirdly, participants deployed internationally were often principally judged according to their rank and role. Participants noted that because they were chosen as the representative for Australia, their host countries and colleagues generally just accepted that – the privilege of role and/or rank was more important for distinguishing their treatment than their gender[317]. One DFAT representative summed up the feeling of many, when she noted that:

> I do find as a diplomat or as representative of your country, you don't have gender, because you're representing Australia. So even in places where they don't normally deal with or they don't have women in their own service, it's okay, you're a foreigner and you're representing your country (Participant 8, DFAT, 18 October 2018).

One representative from the Army further commented that no one questions why you are there, expressing that while women's voice may not be equal, they could dismiss this perspective as a cultural issue, rather than a personal issue. Lastly, as in Chapter Six, many participants noted that they expected to experience gendered difficulties in some postings overseas, and so were prepared for it. In Australia, participants relied more on the progressive formal policies mandating equality – which inevitably, did not deliver as intended. The result

[313] These experiences of agency-based gendered challenges intensified with other forms of intersectionality women experienced, such as their sexual orientation, which combined with associated homophobia and entrenched heteronormativity across their agencies.
[314] Similarly, when they deployed, they were generally part of small cohorts at post, which seems to have been a benefit over larger workgroups, which may carry more entrenched gendered practices with them.
[315] See for instance, participant education covered in the Chapter Five section on demographics.
[316] This is particularly so, given that most significant international governmental organisations or forums which diplomats interact with, such as the UN, evidence formal policies and commitments around gender and representation.
[317] As noted prior, uniform also added greatly to participants ability to meet with their counterparts on an equal footing in uniformed roles.

was that women reported greater sexism, discrimination and harassment from within their own agencies, not from countries in which they were hosted, which has important ramifications globally on gaining and retaining women in international affairs leadership.

Women's experiences of international affairs are consistent across agencies

While it might be assumed that the gendered experiences of police officers, Defence Attachés, ambassadors, immigration counsellors, border protection officers, and surveillance and intelligence envoys would vary, overall participants' experiences were broadly homogenous[318]. Given the varying nature of their work and requirements of their service, this is a surprising finding, indicating that gendered institutions in the field of international affairs are pervasive enough to infiltrate a range of difference portfolios and types of work. This suggests that the findings of this research may have broader application beyond just the four case agencies studied.

Implications of these findings

These five novel empirical findings add nuance to what is known about women's representation in Australian international affairs and the field globally. All five findings reinforce a need to ensure that gendered issues within international representation are firmly dealt with domestically. They also provide a deeper understanding into why women may remain under-represented. If women have the highest chance of reaching leadership (proportional to overall representation) in what many would consider our most militaristic, male-dominated agencies of Defence and the AFP, then it suggests that achieving true gender *equality* in international affairs is far more than just achieving gender *parity*, as in DFAT and Home Affairs. If gendered challenges are pushed underground or obscured by gentility and the diplomatic craft of the field, it suggests that even agencies that appear to be doing 'well' regarding women's representation are still affected by gendered institutions and at times. If the most successful women who are deployed internationally are those with wives, then it suggests that the unpaid labour required by spouses and 'externalised costs' of international affairs are a key reason why many women experience burnout and fatigue and leave their agencies and the field. If women's worst experiences of gender discrimination and

[318] All experienced similar challenges in preparing for posting, on posting, and on return. The most significant differences were based around career progression, where, generally-speaking, women had better opportunities for progression in the more militaristic agencies.

harassment occur at home, and not overseas, then it is clear that domestic challenges remain the main impediment to women's equal representation overseas. Finally, if women's challenges are relatively homogenous across the four agencies studied, then it suggests a damning narrative for Australian international affairs more broadly.

The historical legacies of gendered institutions

Over the course of this thesis, the stability and fluidity of institutions has been analysed, concluding that many of the 'old' gendered institutions across the agencies and the field endure through fluidity and adaptation. Recent gendered changes across the agencies, including the introduction of formal gender policies, have begun to change participant experiences, with most participants expressing how much better represented women now were in their agencies, and that they thought that general experiences were improving. However, also in all cases, gendered institutions remain, or have been reinstated across the agencies, often covertly and without planned intent (Mackay, Kenny & Chappell 2010; Goodin 1996). This occurred even though all agencies were actively working to dismantle any formal gendered challenges that limited women's leadership and representation. This highlights the primacy of informal institutions to maintaining gendered divisions across Australian international affairs agencies. Informal institutions reflect a historical status quo, often seen as "natural" and "immutable', reinforcing historical legacies that continue to shape women's contemporary experiences in leadership, despite their growing numbers and (in cases) improving experiences (Chappell & Waylen 2013, p. 600; Waylen 2017). As Chappell and Waylen note:

> (w)ith the weight of history on their side, defenders of the gender status quo– those advantaged by existing power arrangements – have often defeated attempts to subvert the existing regime (2013, p. 603).

In DFAT, formal institutions[319] were successful at reaching initial targets for women's overall representation and representation in EL and SES roles. As noted in Chapter Four, the Women in Leadership Secretariat had power, as part of the executive, to enforce these formal institutions, resulting in women now verging on parity in international leadership for the first time in history. This can be seen as a formal institutional success, reliant on DFAT's will and

[319] Such as the *Women in Leadership Strategy* (2015) and *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* (2016).

power to enforce new gendered institutions, as well as the leadership of critical actors to advocate and reinforce gendered changes.

However, the enduring gap between overall representation and SES ranks in particular, as well as women's reported experiences, does suggest 'nested' change – institutional change that is 'nested' within old institutional structures and norms (Kenny 2013). Informal gendered norms of diplomacy remain important to the agency, giving primacy to men as the diplomats. These norms are also somewhat outside the realm of the agency's control – they are negotiated, enforced and reinforced not only by individuals within DFAT, but also those in the diplomatic field, and home and host society. Because of the pervasiveness of these informal norms, there is therefore tension between the rules within DFAT and those in the wider field and society.

Given that women do form the majority of the agency now, it is particularly interesting that many of the expectations around 'trailing spouses' and unpaid labour continue to dominate agency behaviour internationally, especially since women remain more affected by this 'diplomatic double burden'. Yet, perhaps this highlights the limits to the powers of critical actors, particularly while Frances Adamson remains as Departmental Secretary *and* there remains notions that she cannot be 'a woman who only cares about women'. Additionally, this continued reliance on women's unpaid labour internationally highlights the fact that much of the paid work of the wider economy relies on the unpaid work of predominantly women – it is simply too big of a reality to change these norms through one agency. Internalising these 'externalised costs' would seem prohibitive. Nevertheless, it means that gendered institutional change within DFAT has been only partially successful.

In Defence, the low overall number of women in the agency and in leadership initially indicates an agency resistant to change. Despite the number of high profile reviews on gender discrimination and harassment, and the substantial recommendations issued, it is clear that institutional change does not necessarily follow formal policy intent. In fact, the deeply historical and live nature of past gendered norms and identities have resulted in an agency with perhaps the most engrained masculine norms. The agency remains deeply gendered, a 'man's world' that still relies on tropes about men's strength and physicality as being central to the ability to do the job and advance. These notions were particularly salient in informal conversations with senior leaders, who continually reinforced the *operational needs* of

Defence above improving gender relations. In instances where critical actors did stand for institutional change, informal enforcement mechanisms sent the clear message that challenging the gender order in Defence amounted to sacrilege.

Within this context, the more proportional representation of women across the agency challenges the simplicity of McGlen and Sarkee's (1993) (and others') arguments that military institutions remain the most masculine and male-dominated spheres of the state. The structure of Defence had an effect here – the ability to 'pull rank' in a heavily hierarchical system, plus partake in the highly developed paths to leadership, ensured that Defence did offer women considerable opportunities and credibility. However, the visibility of gendered institutions is also significant – and is one of Defence's main historical legacies. Defence has always been gendered. It has maintained gender-segregated units more consistently and publicly than any other agency of government. It has demonstrated the powerful and complete ways in which women remain marginalised throughout the agency. It has been public and exposed in the face of allegations of gender harassment, discrimination and mistreatment. However, as a result, the agency and those in it *know* that it is gendered in a way in which many of the other agencies insist they are not. The visibility of challenges aid in navigating them[320].

In Home Affairs, the historical predominance of women has resulted in a very different institutional context over the past few decades. Despite representing over two thirds of the agency in 1996, women have been declining in their representation, overall and in leadership, ever since. At no point did women represent a majority of the SES – the highest and most prestigious positions of power. The lack of formal institutions in Home Affairs (until recently) can be easily seen as a positive – the fact that they were not there to institute positive gendered change is because they were not needed. Yet, the reality was that without formal institutional support, gender equality was not instituted at the highest levels[321]. Additionally, there was a tendency for Home Affairs (and DFAT) to adopt a 'lowest common denominator' approach to institutional structuring, resulting in gendered institutions that *regressed* with each successive merger. Not only is this shown by the falling representation

[320] The obvious point is that women can only get so far: no woman has occupied position of Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) or the service lines yet, which suggests that absolute limits to women's progression endure.

[321] Particularly as each of merger had a progressively more male-dominated and para-militaristic influence.

of women in leadership, but also by women's reported experiences.

Finally, in the AFP, formal institutional change has made progress at transforming historical gendered enforcement cultures. The fact that women are most represented in the SES in AFP sworn roles (proportional to opportunity) is significant – in no other agency has this been so starkly achieved. Yet, inconsistency, and therefore instability, in the new formal institutions has hampered their application, their credibility, and their ability to be enforced. This is evident in the stagnation of women's overall representation, and in EL and international posts, as well as in women's experiences, which highlighted enduring discrimination and harassment. Participants' expressed confusion as to what the new (often-unstable) rules were, and the application of new rules was often up to individual discretion of managers or dominant cultures, some of whom continued to perpetuate informal rules. The result was an institutional context that was unstable, fostering an environment that has reverted to, and become more reliant on, informal rules. Again, institutional change across the AFP appeared to be 'nested' within 'old' institutional structures and norms (Kenny 2013).

Change is occurring in all of the agencies studied. Women continue to make the most impressive gains in DFAT, AFP sworn SES roles, and Defence, which show consistent growth in women's representation in leadership. But representation is falling in Home Affairs, and stagnating more generally in the AFP. Gaps between overall representation and leadership are particularly stubborn in DFAT, and the progress made in Defence seems inadequate given the depth of formal institutional interest in gender equality. Historical legacies of male-domination and women's subordination across the field continue to influence the agencies, highlighting how gendered institutions in Australian international affairs endure through fluidity – changing from time to time in shape, but not overall in nature, ensuring that gender inequalities remain.

Layering and duplication of gendered institutions

The institutionalisation of gender inequalities is particularly troubling in international affairs, which remains a complex sphere influenced by domestic, international and 'intermestic' factors (Byrne, Conley Tyler and Harris Rimmer 2016). There are few fields that are so amorphous in shape, rapidly changing, and inherently international by nature. Gendered scripts operate across many different institutional contexts, and are reinforced on so many

levels it is difficult to combat them in one institutional context, without addressing the rest. This research has focused more closely on agency context as a critical factor enabling or constraining women. Yet it is clear that even with very progressive and gender equitable formal policies and rules, institutional contexts across other spheres continue to enforce often informal rules that restrict or are in direct opposition to gendered progress. This section therefore argues that institutional layering and duplication has strengthened gender equality moves in some spheres, and yet acted as a point of tension and inconsistency in others, enabling resistance to institutional change. Layering (Waylen 2014; Nazneen 2017) has almost exclusively been used in the literature to highlight the layering of new (progressive) gendered institutions on top of already existing ones. In this section, layering refers to the layering of (regressive) gendered institutions, and is a perspective overlooked in explaining resistance to progressive gendered change.

The theoretical framework, established in **Figure 1 in** Chapter Two (see p. 59) highlights these different sites of institutional resistance. **Figure 1** highlights that asides from the agency context, the diplomatic field more generally is one of the primary sites of gendered institutions affecting women leaders, as is the host and home country contexts and individual context.

Characterising the diplomatic field is difficult: it is a unique point where international governmental norms, diplomatic charter norms, plus local and national norms all meet. Power shifts between not only states and intergovernmental organisations, but also within states' agencies too, as can be seen in power and funding fluctuations in Chapter Four. Interactions in 'the field' include those with fellow diplomats or counterparts, plus their agencies and governments, and the complex sets of rules, protocols and orders of behaviour that fluctuate according to context. Often, these rules, protocols and behaviours worked to reinforce gendered divisions through language, silencing and behaviour, and often had little to no visible enforcement mechanisms or protocols for when things went wrong[322].

[322] For instance, the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961), as already mentioned, is specifically and overtly gendered in language, which appears to reinforce ideas of 'who' is the ideal diplomat or attaché. The erasure of women in the Vienna Convention gives permission, at the highest level governing 'the field', to marginalise and 'other' women. While this may be unintentional, in its modern application, language is inextricably connected with power. In fact, language often highlights power hierarchies in an overt manner by its omissions and inclusions (Bailey, LaFrance & Dovidio 2019).

Gendered norms in ‘the field’ occur outside of the realm where most agencies have significant influence, which leads to a ‘norms clash’ between the agency and the outside world. For instance, Participant 7 noted that:

> last year I worked on the Foreign Policy White Paper and we held consultations all over Australia including with all of the big international relations think-tanks like the Lowy Institute or ASPI [Australian Strategic Policy Institute]. I was absolutely shocked [at] how male dominated the conversations were. Not only did men self-select in some of the more public forums – we invited an equal number of men and women – but the women didn't come, and the men were there in greater numbers. Also, the ones where we didn't control who was invited – those big policy think-tanks – they are dominated by men. At the ASPI [Australian Strategic Policy Institute] roundtable we had 24 people and 22 of them were men (Participant 7, DFAT, 5 October 2018).

Particularly given that international affairs involves working with myriad different organisations and agencies all part of the ‘field’, this norms clash results in a context ultimately more resistant to change, than not – an outside environment still marked by high levels of gender imbalance, and often, misogyny (Westendorf & Strating 2020).

Home and host country dynamics, plus individual circumstances, were sites of further institutional layering and duplication. Each family and individual circumstance was different; however, there was a trend across participants that despite progress at work, participants often had to return to the same gendered institutions in the home that had not progressed at the same rate. In fact, one Defence woman commented that most of her female colleagues’ husbands are also deployed in Defence, which can be extremely taxing on families, doubling the misogynistic effect of workplace and home. Further, women were often deployed in countries that reinforced traditional gender roles that affected their work.

Each case demonstrated this duplication of rules across individual, home and host society, agency and diplomatic field contexts. Returning to the mixed methods approach to research canvased in Chapter Three, the deeply grounded analysis of women’s experience and the triangulation of data across multiple forms allows us to better understand institutional layering and duplication, and represents a significant contribution to FI methodological approaches. The layering and duplication of gendered institutions is best illustrated by an exemplar from each agency context.

DFAT

> *"In the end, the diplomatic life is very old fashioned" (Participant 10, DFAT, 2 November 2018).*

Participant 10 was employed in DFAT during the introduction of gender equality and women in leadership strategies that had seen her able to take up more opportunities for senior leadership. As a CALD woman of colour however, it was overtly obvious how under-represented other people like her were in the agency, and she expressed frustration at working double as hard as a woman, and double as hard again because of her ethnic background. For her, it was not just the issue of not being taken as seriously as her white, male (or female) colleagues. From her perspective, the CALD inclusion policies in her agency all came from a position of 'helping' those who are 'disadvantaged', rather than recognising the core advantages to the field that came from being from an ethnic background. For her, these included greater cultural understanding, language skills and connections.

Participant 10 also operated within the diplomatic field in her work, where her gender and ethnic background were often a surprise to the counterparts she met in her line of her work. She felt that they were more surprised because she was an *ethnic* woman in leadership, and often her host country counterparts expected her to be more subservient because of her ethnicity. Many colleagues within the agency had experienced decades of discrimination and bias, and it has since driven her to lobby for change within the department.

On the home front, Participant 10 had deployed both when she was married, and later, divorced and single. Both experiences were occasions where she was expected to bear the entire paid and unpaid burden in her role as a diplomat, plus the hospitality and organisational duties of the diplomatic household that usually would have been shouldered by her spouse. She notes that even when she had a spouse, he would not perform these duties, and she wished she had a diplomatic 'wife' to help share the burden of externalised costs, which were not properly compensated for by her agency. Further, balancing diplomatic work and the demands of raising children required long periods at home in Australia, which meant that she progressed to leadership and senior international representation much later than her male colleagues. Since she became single, she dealt with fewer gendered challenges in her personal life; however, she was restricted from going out and socialising in informal settings as many of her male colleagues do, as that was considered inappropriate in the diplomatic

and country context.

When posted internationally, she worked predominantly with other diplomats or senior representatives that were generally quite educated and worldly. Often she did not feel the full extent of gender inequality in the societies she was posted to, even though they generally scored lower than Australia in gender equality measures. However, she did get a number of surprised reactions from locals when they learn of her position, and locals often wanted to know where her husband was, and why she did not have one.

Defence

> *"Work out whether you want to be one of the boys, or, don't want to be one of the boys" (Participant 10, Defence, 4 March 2019).*

In Defence, Participant 10 was the first female DA of any country to be deployed to her host country. She was appointed as DA around the same time that Defence changed the role of DA from a "golden handshake" opportunity for those nearing retirement, to a higher prestige and rewarding post only for those who can combine military expertise with political and diplomatic nous and can continue to work with Defence after completing the post. This meant that she was likely to get more future opportunities than previous DAs. Yet, participant 10 stood out as one of a few women in a sea of older white male DAs, and was still very much in the gender minority in her work. She had developed an attitude to survive and thrive in the agency, and was not easily shaken, having progressed through the agency over decades of particularly well documented sexism and misogynistic behaviour. She was beginning to see much better opportunities for women, following agency reviews and an attitude from the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) that seemed committed to progress for women.

When Participant 10 was deployed internationally, she was keenly aware of military norms and different chains of command. Her rank helped her to establish credibility and achieve the outcomes she needed to. Mostly, she received the curiosity and surprise of her counterparts good-naturedly, and did not let it bother her. Occasionally, she was subjected to lewd comments and behaviour about her gender, which she thought should not be happening even in the relatively conservative society where she was posted. She noted that while her host society were increasingly aware of international norms and standards for gender equality, differential treatment between herself and her male colleagues continued. Frequently she was

the only woman in the room.

As Participant 10 was single, and until recently, did not have any children, she felt relatively protected from many of the extra responsibilities others' reported from home or family. However, since having a child of her own, she felt that she would need extra support going forwards. As a result, she thought that her DA post would be the last major deployment she undertook – the burden of being single, at a post still centred on the ideal of a diplomatic DA *couple*, would be too much whilst also raising a child. The enormous flexibility and mobility required of her role also influenced this decision, particularly given that agency provisions for support were not always there.

Home Affairs

> *"when you get there . . . meet all the ministers' mums and you'll be able to do what you need to for work" (Participant 11, Home Affairs, 18 February 2019).*

In Home Affairs, Participant 11 was part of the ABF, after previously having an enforcement-based career in border patrol and detention centres. Her career path had been operational, however since she reached a higher rank, her international roles had become increasingly diplomatic. She had been at the centre of a number of high profile initiatives, which required her to juggle a high level of responsibility and a high level of media scrutiny. Being in the more masculine side of Home Affairs, Participant 11 was used to the more enforcement, strength-based and 'blokey' culture of the agency, unlike some of her colleagues whom came from the Immigration side of the department and for whom the merger to create Home Affairs was a more difficult transition.

As a CALD woman of colour, Participant 11 felt less out of place in the agency than other CALD women of colour interviewed. She felt appreciated by her agency and useful for the greater cultural understanding she was able to bring to some of her particularly sensitive work in the Pacific. Her cultural background and understanding enabled her to confidently navigate the different gender expectations of the locations where she was posted. Whilst almost all the positions of power in her host countries were occupied by men, she knew that informally, the wives and mothers of these men were very important to their culture, and so was able to work with them to get the desired outcomes she required from her counterparts in-country.

At an international level, much of the work she engaged in involved negotiation around the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers – a humanitarian field more dominated by women than men. Unlike some of her counterparts in the other agencies, she did not speak about the gendered challenges of 'the field' as much, perhaps because her offices were not predominantly based in embassies where diplomatic culture and norms predominate. However, for some of her colleagues who *were* posted in embassies, they reported gendered and racialised institutions – even if their agency was a culturally diverse workforce, often CALD staff who worked in the embassies felt that they were the "token" "diversity hire".

At the home level, her experiences of deployment were similar: deployments were very stressful, demanding long hours, and requiring much more negotiation and commitment than an ordinary nine-to-five job based in Australia. Even when she was not posted overseas, she was often posted to different locations around the country, which meant that mobility was a crucial part of her work. When she was on posting (both domestically and internationally), she returned home every now and then to visit her husband, who remained in the one location in Australia. They partly made this arrangement out of financial necessity, which required them both to be earning in their jobs, partly out of career fulfilment, where it was important that her husband remained gainfully employed and progressing in his career too, and partly out of the operational requirements of her roles, which were often not accompanied postings.

AFP

> *"You can wave the flag of equality all you want . . . [but] it isn't play fighting or anything, there's really deadly consequences" (Participant 5, AFP, 26 June 2018).*

Participant 5 had been an employee for close to thirty years, and had deployed overseas multiple times. She had witnessed dramatic change in the AFP, having experienced firsthand the sexism and homophobia that for decades, together with a tough and sometimes bullying approach, was part of the ingrained culture of the agency. When she deployed overseas, as a queer woman, she was careful not to use the pronouns of her partner in conversation, if she mentioned her partner at all. In fact, she was able to get away with not revealing her partner for sometimes three or four years whilst on deployment. This was a mental burden, and affected her personal relationship with her partner, but she felt was a reality of posting to countries with varying levels of acceptance of homosexuality, and was something she

ultimately had to reconcile within herself. It was easier to keep this part of her life invisible. She was steadily progressing up the ranks, however has witnessed many female colleagues leave over the years or remain stuck at the same level with little career progression.

Most of the police forces she worked with internationally were heavily male-dominated, and she was often the only woman in the room or on a case. The teams she worked with were generally very cooperative, and people had an understanding of her skills and expertise because of her rank, which was formally represented through her title and uniform. Her rank often gave her the credibility she needed to operate successfully overseas, although not all ranks were universally shared. Between her female colleagues and their international counterparts, there was sometimes confusion as to whether they were senior or junior to those they were meeting – and being women, they were often assumed the junior. She learned to be confident in asserting herself. Even so, her colleagues sometimes sent junior male staff in their place to meetings because it was easier than fighting the status quo.

At home, she felt her relationship was equal, which made her job easier. It was difficult to keep her partner hidden, and she was angry about the unequal treatment she received compared to some of her straight and male counterparts. However, she learned to self-select out of particular appointments where she felt she would not have been able to bring her partner, as she felt it was important to have her spouse there for support. Having her partner supported and recognised at an agency level was a key factor in making her deployments possible.

Implications

These four short vignettes exemplify institutional layering of a regressive nature. Gendered institutions were enacted on multiple levels across multiple sites, often at the same time, reinforcing international affairs as a place where women can only 'make it' through careful negotiation[323]. Participant narratives highlighted that, perhaps more than any other field, the gendered institutions in Australian international affairs are layered, duplicated, and complex. Institutional layering may strengthen institutions, such as in the case of introducing targets on

[323] Interestingly, there was generally at least one sphere – the individual context, home and host society context, agency context, or diplomatic field context – where participants experienced less gendered institutions in each of these stories. This indicates that gendered institutions could be negotiated to a degree, depending on participants' personal circumstances, place of employment, and where they were posted.

top of equal opportunity policies, yet institutional layering across multiple contexts also highlighted tensions whereby there appeared no ‘complete’ set of institutions to ensure gender equality. These gaps and points of tension were powerful sites of institutional resistance and informal institutional dominance. Additionally, the mixed methods approach, providing multiple points of analysis, has aided in the identification and characterisation of these layered regressive institutions.

Compounding effect of gendered institutions

Flexibility and mobility underpin international affairs, and are a core reason why gendered institutions have a compounding effect on women at different stages of their career. Gendered institutions intersected with personal challenges at any given point of participants' careers, posting cycles and lives, which, when combined, had a compounding effect on women's experiences. While the analysis of gendered institutions has often remained focused on one particular set of institutions or one institutional context, the reality for many women across international affairs is that the field is particularly complicated by gendered challenges that affect women at every turn, and have a compounded effect on women over a lifetime of posting and progression cycles.

Enormous flexibility was required of participants, from flexible work hours that required participants to maintain communication with headquarters in Australia, to flexibility in cases of disasters or extreme emergencies, particularly where participants represented the most senior Australian on the ground. Flexibility was required in terms of determining their role, which on any given day may have involved administrative and logistical work at many scales below their level of employment, or key negotiations with international representatives and world leaders many leaps above their level of responsibility. Flexibility was also required in order to deal with: different cultural norms; organisational norms; chains of command; political requirements; diplomatic protocol; gendered expectations of their colleagues; gendered expectations of their counterparts; gendered expectations of their family; education systems for children; workplaces for spouses; transport systems; safety requirements in countries with varying levels of social and political safety, especially for LGBTI+ women and women with children; and, the externalised costs of the whole system that continued to depend on the unpaid labour of women and institutionalised forms of feminised sacrifice.

Mobility was also a key part of women's experiences, determined by the logistical ability to deploy in the first place, as well as the need to travel in-country and across regions with little notice when emergencies broke out. Mobility placed extraordinary demands on individuals and their support systems.

These demands of flexibility and mobility are combined with the layering and duplication of rules and institutions across multiple contexts – individual, agency, field, home and host

contexts – which are combined *again* with individual timing. Gendered challenges are experienced differently for women on the pathway to posting, compared to being on posting, and returning from posting. Similarly, gendered challenges are experienced differently at each of the stages of women's careers – with women often at the mercy of institutions *most* when their power is *least*. Early career postings typically occurred when children were younger and the needs of families were likely to be greater. Senior postings tended to occur later in life when adult children were more likely to have left the home, but care for aged parents was more likely to be part of the picture.

This compounding effect of gendered challenges was evidently too much for some women, at some points. Key periods when women left their agencies, or were considering leaving their agencies, were after returning from posting (sometimes involving returning from post early to do so). This was both a good career move in terms of leaving after completing an international posting that added to their skills and experiences, and a pragmatic move indicative of women coming to the end of their ability to cope with the extraordinary demands that international representation placed on them.

Summary

The legacy effect of historical gendered rules and norms continue to influence women's experiences of international representation today. The layering and duplication of gendered rules across multiple contexts highlights international affairs as a workplace particularly contextual, fluctuating, and complex for women to navigate. The compounding effect of rules at different stages of career, life and posting cycles also helps to explain why women continue to be under-represented in the field – the gendered challenges are often confronting, sometimes crushing, and remain to be constant.

There are considerable consistencies across the case agencies, in which all women studied were employed in organisations that should be the 'gold standard' in employment opportunities and conditions: an important part of forming a legitimate government service. Yet, the agencies are evidently still not reaching this standard. It is clear that gendered institutions endure through fluidity and adaptation – remaining not only to explain women's enduring under-representation in international affairs, but also explaining women's considerable challenges despite more women overall in the field and a more feminist turn in

Australian foreign policy.

Chapter Eight: Institutions endure through fluidity

Introduction

> *I am optimistic that with that degree of thoughtfulness we will continue to see more and more women in high level appointments in foreign affairs (Julia Gillard, pers. comm., 21 May 2019).*

> *Whether it's in Afghanistan or Iraq, wherever, you have to have women involved in these nations, building a nation, making decisions. It's not just at the highest diplomatic level. It's at the grassroots level that women must be included (Julie Bishop, pers. comm. 3 April 2019).*

Women may no longer be severely under-represented across most of the international affairs agencies studied. However, gendered norms continue to affect women's representation and experiences, sometimes with devastating consequences in terms of career and personal development. Feminist Institutionalist (FI) theory demonstrates the deep pervasiveness of gendered challenges across international affairs – a field teeming with complex and multifaceted formal and informal rules that challenge women at every turn. Despite recent shifts in Australian foreign policy and an overall rise in women's representation, it is clear that gendered rules and norms continue to impact on women. This is a leading reason why women remain under-represented and experience government differently. It is not simply that institutions, once made, are enduring and difficult to change (Mackay, Kenny, & Chappell 2010). Rather, drawing on Cornut's (2019) notion of liquid institutions, gendered institutions endure through fluidity, at times proving to be infuriatingly adaptable in the context of Australian international affairs.

In this thesis, comparison has proved a strong method for understanding how gendered institutions are experienced across national and international contexts. Comparison has demonstrated factors that may aid or hinder institutional change, and demonstrated that international affairs agencies do not easily lend themselves to 'tried and true' strategies because of the reality of posting cycles, operations and international deployment. Additionally, statistical analysis from multiple points of view has revealed that depending on *what* statistics are analysed, quantitative data can actually obscure women's real

circumstances. This form of statistical structural inequality highlights the need for both multiple points of statistical analysis and analysis and observation of individual experiences.

In fact, understanding the effect of gendered institutions would have been impossible without the mixed methods approach to research and critical feminist friend methodology. This overarching approach enabled understanding of gendered institutions from different perspectives, at different points in individuals' postings and lives, and from a grounded perspective in the field. Given the "hidden" and often difficult nature of studying informal institutions in particular, this methodological approach provided important FI insights and has wider applicability for other research, allowing analysis "beyond just the inputs and outputs" of institutions (Waylen 2017, p. 3). This adds to the significant methodological, theoretical and empirical contributions this thesis makes to the fields of diplomacy, international relations (IR) and FI. This chapter concludes this thesis by summarising the key findings, exploring the research ramifications and highlighting suggested areas for further research.

Chapter summary

Chapter One introduced the Australian international affairs context, revealing an increasingly feminist turn and women-informed era of Australian foreign policy, coinciding with the key leadership of Australian female foreign and defence ministers and departmental secretaries in relevant portfolios. Highlighting Australia's place at the forefront of gendered institutional change in international affairs, Chapter One also established the significant and original contributions of this study as the most comprehensive research to date on women's representation in Australian international affairs, and a leading study internationally focused on comparing different agencies across the field. I argued that not only were institutions an important lens for understanding women's under-representation, but that different militaristic and bureaucratic agencies could help us to understand how agencies change or resist change over time – producing key insights and methodologies not only for the scholarly field of IR, governance and diplomacy, but also for the agencies themselves.

Chapter Two rigorously analysed the literature on gender and international affairs, demonstrating how institutions are conceptualised both as enduring and as fluid. Exploring FI

as a theoretical concept, this chapter established international affairs as inherently gendered, and outlined the implications for women's experiences and representation using global analyses and the few existing Australian cases. The lack of in-depth qualitative and quantitative research to test and substantiate theory was identified as a key gap in IR and diplomatic literature both in Australia and globally. This thesis has therefore added gendered and multi-case study accounts to the field, and provided a unique opportunity to identify diplomatic action across different international affairs agencies.

One of this thesis's original contributions is developed from FI theory and insights gained during an initial round of background interviews, thereby informing development of a framework for analysing gendered institutions in international affairs. The framework highlights four main sites as salient to understanding women's under-representation: the diplomatic 'field', home and host society contexts, the agency context, and individual (and often familial) contexts. I also emphasized institutional history, stability, actors (including critical actors), and the timing of change as significant for analysis across subsequent chapters.

Chapter Three outlined my methodological choice to employ a critical feminist friend research approach, to both canvas 'small wins' and highlight enduring challenges across the agencies. I justified my intersectional feminist mixed methods approach, incorporating significant qualitative data from 57 formal interviews, as well as informal background discussions with 27 associated advisors. These findings were triangulated through observation and quantitative data from the last 30-plus years – some of which was gained for the first time from the agencies involved. My critical feminist friend approach and positioning as an 'insider' enabled my access to elites in the four case agencies. This approach proved effective, extending findings, and unpacking similarities and differences through four very different agencies. These methodological choices have produced substantive original findings that are both theoretically rigorous and empirically robust.

By exploring historical forces in Chapter Four, institutional 'stickiness' and resistance to change was found across all of the agencies studied, despite the increasing proportions of women in the agencies. Gendered institutions were found to endure through fluidity, by shifting in shape, but not necessarily nature. Critical actors were highlighted as important for advocating for gendered change; however, several cases demonstrated that even critical

actors met resistance from pre-existing ‘old’ gendered rules and norms. This highlighted a continuing predominance of informal rules that guided these agencies’ cultures. Over this and the prior chapter, a rubric for establishing militaristic, para-militaristic, and bureaucratic structure across the agencies was developed: the militaristic-bureaucratic continuum. This characterisation of the agencies helped the thesis to explore significant original findings in the following chapters around militaristic, para-militaristic and bureaucratic agencies, and their effects on women’s representation and experiences.

By unpacking *who* was given the opportunity to represent Australia internationally in Chapter Five, it became clear that women’s under-representation was highly nuanced. This chapter identified the deceptive nature of measuring women’s progress only by their representation in leadership. While hierarchy and militaristic structuring has resulted in the marginalisation of some women from international affairs positions , the (1) benefits of structured opportunities and (2) visibility of gendered rules acted as a positive for women in the more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies. It was found that women in these agencies were most proportionally represented in leadership and internationally, as opposed to the more bureaucratic agencies that demonstrated significant gaps between overall employment and leadership and international representation – gaps that endured over a 20-plus year period. It was not simply that all women, if employed by these more militaristic agencies, would be more likely to make it to leadership. However, they did have a proportionately higher chance of doing so than those in the other agencies studied. Women in more militaristic agencies demonstrated a kind of uniformity in that they were more likely to be single and these agencies attracted (or retained) women who more closely fit the masculine mould of representative. It was a significant finding that in Australia’s premiere agency for international affairs, DFAT, women had both the lowest chance of gaining international leadership and the lowest chance of gaining SES representation (proportional to opportunity) out of all of the agencies studied.

Chapter Five also explored the demographics of Australia’s international leaders, and the ‘rules of the game’. Ultimately, the chapter highlighted that women’s increasing representation in international affairs is not truly ‘representative’ across other diversity markers. The chapter also demonstrated how women’s ability to be heard, valued and seen was policed and enforced across the agencies, which had a flow on effect on the distribution

of power and resources: not just their vertical segregation, but horizontal segregation internationally, across rank, position and status. Through analysing these 'rules of the game' and what it meant to *be* an international representative, particular 'toxic' masculine norms and scripts came to the fore. Rather than the overt and easily recognisable forms of masculine dominance that were more predominant in Defence, the AFP and the enforcement branches of Home Affairs, bureaucratic agencies in particular evidenced a kind of 'genteel' toxic masculinity and more covert forms of gender discrimination, reinforcing that the overall gendered nature of diplomacy is not necessarily disappearing, but rather changing.

By tracing trend data and listening to, collecting and analysing the narratives of the women participants, it was clear that the centres of power were shifting. DFAT committed to the largest expansion of the diplomatic network in the past 40 years, however compared to the other three more enforcement- and security-based agencies, their funding and strategic importance were considerably diminished. Even though more women are reaching leadership, women remain a stubbornly marginalised majority, and further, women may be gaining representation in diplomacy just as the relative importance of 'soft' diplomacy undertaken by DFAT is decreasing in favour of security-led 'hard' forms of diplomacy. In fact, Defence, Home Affairs and the AFP all provided evidence that they were investing considerable time and energy into their own 'diplomatic' network, a reality of shifting political imperatives and policy decisions. This was demonstrated by the increased importance of Defence Attachés, expanded roles of the AFP internationally to SES roles and more jurisdictions, as well as more 'preventative' streams of work, and the amalgamation of most of Australia's top security and intelligence agencies under Home Affairs.

In Chapter Six, the experiences of women in leadership and international representation highlighted how gendered institutions remained part of women's 'lived' experiences across multiple career stages, and also pre-, during and post- deployment. The return from posting was found to be a particularly challenging time for women, highlighting a gap in organisational support around the post-deployment phase and reinforcing the 'domestic' basis to many of the gendered challenges experienced. Overall, it was clear that international representation and leadership took more than a combination of skills and experiences; it also required a mental attitude and layered support systems that were foundational to women's success. The experience was described as "isolating", "lonely", "exposed", a "24/7 job" that

“strains relationships” and “at some point [just] becomes de-stabilising and absent”. Further, the opportunity to be able to represent Australia overseas remained subordinate to whether the opportunity was even possible, logistically, in the first place – with the field of international affairs remaining stubbornly reliant on externalising costs onto employees, their spouses, and their families.

Chapter Seven brought together the findings of the previous three data chapters in order to answer the research question of why women remain under-represented in leadership, despite the considerable policy changes domestically and internationally. Five core novel and surprising findings were identified. These included findings mentioned earlier around the militaristic-bureaucratic nature of agencies: that despite the impressive gains made by the more bureaucratic agencies, more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies tended to represent women more proportionally, inverting conventional theory on gender and militaries. Further, covert forms of ‘genteel’ toxic masculinity were found to dominate diplomacy, with bureaucratic agencies more likely to evidence covert informal gendered challenges that were often obscured and rendered invisible by progress made. I argued that because of the overreliance on women’s historical unpaid labour and the consistent devaluing of women’s work, women were expected to produce what seemed to be double the output with half the resources. In particular, whilst women with female partners may have been best equipped, logistically, to handle the double burden of diplomatic work, they were also most affected by institutionalised heteronormativity and homophobia in the field. I also argued that while informal and formal rules existed across multiple sites from home to host country and the diplomatic workplace, agencies themselves remain the core enforcers of gendered institutions, leading domestic factors to be the most significant to women’s experiences internationally. Finally, I found that women’s experiences were relatively homogenous across agencies, indicating that the gendered elements of international affairs have far broader implications than the literature has thus far acknowledged.

FI theory was applied to the findings from the previous chapters to underline that women remain under-represented in Australian international affairs due to (1) the historical legacy of gendered institutions, (2) the layering and duplication of regressive gendered institutions, and (3) the compounding effect of rules at different stages of individuals’ careers, posting cycles and lives. The data finds a field teeming with gendered institutions that require depths of

resilience and extra support structures in order for women to flourish – and despite challenges, some do.

Ramifications of findings

Australia's international affairs agencies shoulder a significant task in upholding Australian values and democratic ideals of equality, opportunity, and genuine representation in leadership. Women's under-representation in diplomacy and international affairs is characterised by: (1) the loss of women's equal contribution to international relations decision-making (strategic grounds) (Gilligan 1982); and (2) that women's under-representation undermines the representative nature of Australian democracy and its national interests overseas (moral grounds) (Cass & Rubenstein 1995). As Cass and Rubenstein state,

> in light of Australia's international obligations and the growing international focus on the under representation of women in public life, any deficiency in the Australian constitutional system of representative democracy is unsatisfactory (1995, p. 6).

Legitimacy is particularly salient in international affairs (Farhang & Wawro 2004), where the key roles of actors are to represent Australia and its interests. While typically foreign policy has not been a major electoral issue, with ministers not traditionally expected to 'look like' their constituents, Conley Tyler (2016) argues that citizens, perhaps increasingly, expect that public-facing agencies should reflect the community that they represent[324]. As Byrne, Conley Tyler and Harris Rimmer state:

> a diverse service is likely to be viewed more favourably by domestic constituencies, and more credibly in the eyes of regional and global stakeholders and interlocutors (2016, p. 586).

Indeed, Conley Tyler (2016) argues that women and other marginalised groups' representation in diplomacy results in improved function and better representation. Peace processes that include women have a 20 per cent increase in the probability of the agreement lasting at least two years, and 35 per cent increase in an agreement lasting at least 15 years (UN Women 2017). Women are instrumental to peace resolution in conflict situations and are often key in preventing international disputes escalating to armed conflict (Asal, et al 2013).

[324] The need for agencies to better reflect the communities they serve was highlighted by the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration (1976), Labor and Quality of Government (1983), and most recently by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) (2018) who issued a renewed commitment to diversity in 2012.

Women contribute to global gross domestic product and have a key role to play in international economic engagement and integration (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade 2016a; Verveer 2012). Women are vital to ensuring that issues of environmental degradation, climate change, bio-warfare, pandemics, and threats of terror are addressed, and solutions are found (UN Women 2016, 2019). Because higher levels of domestic gender inequality are associated with higher levels of interstate violence (Caprioli 2000; Caprioli & Boyer 2001; Caprioli & Trumbore 2003), women's greater gender equality is imperative to outcomes on measures of national security and stability (Charlesworth 2008; Hudson & Leidl 2015).

As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton made history by enshrining women as a cornerstone of foreign policy, concluding that "the subjugation of women is a direct threat to the security of the United States" (Clinton in Hudson & Leidl 2015). With global violence and conflict costing an estimated US$14.3 trillion, women's inclusion in IR leadership goes beyond moral imperatives to pragmatic and strategic decision-making (World Economic Forum 2018). Ultimately, since government makes the laws concerning employment standards, including affirmative action and gender equality, the government, as an employer, is under pressure to deliver on these policies and practices itself.

Theoretical and methodological contributions

This thesis has delivered four core significant and original contributions. It:

1. represents the largest and most comprehensive case study on Australian international affairs to date;
2. has developed a FI framework for researching gendered instituions in international affairs;
3. has delivered five fresh empirical findings, some of which were particularly counter-intuitive; and
4. has contributed a rigorous mixed methods approach to researching 'entangled' and elite international institutions.

The empirical findings represent significant additions to the literature. The theoretical and methodological contributions have wide applicability in future research, and are summarised

here.

The critical feminist friend methodological approach for analysing women in international affairs balanced access requirements, the entangled nature of long-term and embedded research, and the need to produce critical research. It is an important methodological choice, which done well, can be particularly revealing for organisations and sectors of international affairs usually obscured. This approach, combined with the mixed methods approach to research, made a key contribution to this thesis. Early work involving an extensive pilot and background phase of research provided key insights into who and what was important, shaping interview and research questions, negotiating access, and mapping salient factors. Research was conducted in a reciprocal way that enabled me to produce the most authentic answers to the most important questions. In-depth interviews, some of which were conducted multiple times with the same participant, provided a holistic understanding of women's experiences. Gaps were minimised by combining the pilot and background discussions, as well as observation, to analyse the "hidden" life of institutions from different perspectives. The analysis of trend data over a period of decades revealed findings that would have been obscured by a temporal analysis of women's under-representation, and is an important part of conducting research particularly on agencies and contexts where little prior research exists. The ability to undertake research domestically and in international contexts was a further critical addition to the research, allowing the day-to-day realities of women's experiences to be observed and better understood, both in Australia and in their postings.

Additionally, the FI theoretical framework developed to research international affairs agencies has wider application. The framework identifies four core sites as influencing gendered institutions:

- the field of diplomacy;
- the individuals' context;
- the agency context; and
- the domestic and host country contexts.

Additionally, four factors were identified as salient to understanding the gendered institutions: institutional history; stability; actors (including critical actors); and the timing of change. History continues to play a significant role in upholding gendered institutions in

international affairs, particularly given the durability and difficulty to change informal institutions. Stability has implications for ingraining gender equality measures, particularly where progressive gendered change initiatives may be instituted and repealed in quick succession, or may be overlapping and layered in a way in which creates inconsistencies and gaps. The presence, or absence, of critical actors to advocate on behalf of gender equality is important to assess whether new institutional rules are taken up, to what degree, and how quickly. Timing refers to wider social movements and changes that may strengthen (or weaken) gendered change initiatives, as well as the lag between implementation of progressive policy and outcomes. When analysed with the characterisation of militaristic, para-militaristic and bureaucratic agency structures (developed in the militaristic-bureaucratic continuum) in international affairs, this framework represents a new contribution, informed by the literature and reinforced by the thesis findings.

Further research

The primary limitation of this study is its generalisability to wider international affairs. While the sample size for the study represents the largest qualitative research on the topic in Australia to date, it is restricted to the agencies studied, and in some cases, the portfolios or divisions participants were drawn from. Given these limitations, a key area for further research includes extending the framework to a wider range of international affairs agencies, particularly in other security and intelligence fields. Such agencies would be expected to have a high degree of invisibility, and perhaps even lack of accountability, around gendered institutions due to the inherently 'secretive' and classified nature of their work. More research is needed around the achievement of targets, and what substantive affects this has on women in international affairs. Further research directions also include the experiences of LGBTI+ and CALD diplomats and attachés, recognising the paucity of research globally on these topics.

The impact of women leaders in international affairs should also be considered – is the increase in women's leadership in Australian international affairs leading to more feminist policy-making, and how 'lasting' is the effect of these moves for gender equality? How important is leadership, and politics, to the status of women in international affairs? Additionally, research is needed on the gendered impacts of the shift from 'soft' to 'hard' forms of diplomacy and international affairs, the securitisation of the field in Australia, and

the ramifications of rising forms of police-led and military diplomacy.

Theoretical gaps are also identified. Further sites of research include analysis of the effect of the layering of regressive gendered institutions, as well as understanding how institutions may be 'racialised' or explicitly racist, and heteronormative, as well as gendered. Intersectional FI analyses remain a major gap in the literature to which research projects could contribute.

Summary

Gendered institutions endure through fluidity in international affairs, resulting in a context that has proved surprisingly adaptable at maintaining an existing gender order despite more feminist and women-informed foreign policy in Australia, and rising levels of women in leadership. The concept of institutional durability through fluidity has proven one of the key reasons why women remain under-represented in international affairs agencies. Yet, women verge on parity in international leadership for the first time in history. There is considerable cause for optimism, because more is known – about these agencies and the particular way that gender affects experiences – than ever before. Given that the visibility of challenges has been a key theme throughout this thesis, there is hope that the findings of this thesis and future research will help to change the narrative on women's experiences and the gendered institutions that remain.

The study of women's under-representation is timely and significant: global challenges are rising, and it is no longer enough to continue with business as usual. International affairs, like other fields across the world, requires innovative solutions, real talent, and flexibility. The need for comprehensive, durable and adaptable decision-making represents an enormous opportunity for Australia – and for women. Yet, as long as gendered challenges continue to impede women's inclusion in international affairs, this damages states' abilities to accurately determine and maintain state sovereignty, as well as represent and decide on matters of national interest. Decisions made at the national level, about who represents the state, affect the quality of international decision-making and permeates international contexts where gender equality is increasingly seen to legitimate governments and their actions internationally (Haack 2014). Leaders at this level act as the filter through which all international decisions are communicated, assessed, implemented, and evaluated. In essence,

who leads, matters.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Additional tables, graphs & figures

Image 1: Organisational structure of DFAT (enlarged)

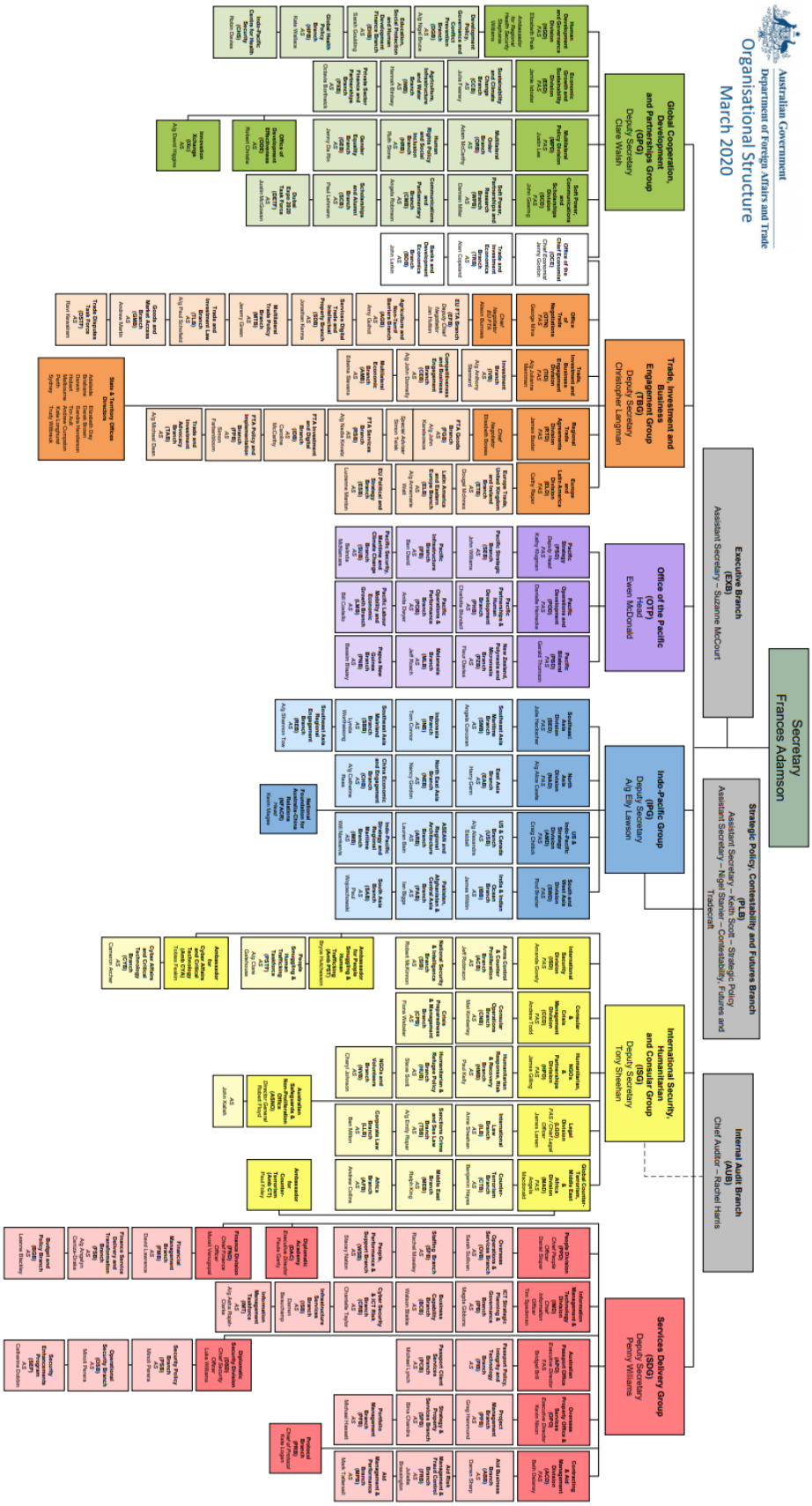


Table 5: Representation of women proportional to overall representation, 1984-2018

	ADF	Defence	AFP	Home Affairs	DFAT
	% point difference between women's overall representation & SES	% point difference between women's overall representation & SES	% point difference between women's overall representation & SES	% point difference between women's overall representation & SES	% point difference between women's overall representation & SES
1984	-	28.3%	-	44.1%	35.7%
1985	-	28.8%	-	29.2%	37.5%
1986	-	28.7%	-	29.9%	37.9%
1987	-	28.4%	-	30.1%	36.2%
1988	-	28.0%	-	26.5%	36.2%
1989	-	28.9%	-	30.6%	37.2%
1990	-	27.9%	-	29.9%	37.0%
1991	-	25.9%	-	27.7%	38.0%
1992	-	24.3%	-	25.3%	36.0%
1993	-	24.8%	-	26.0%	33.1%
1994	-	23.8%	-	43.9%	31.3%
1995	-	21.6%	-	41.6%	31.2%
1996	-	21.1%	-	50.7%	29.4%
1997	-	21.7%	-	44.8%	27.6%
1998	-	23.3%	-	37.1%	22.8%
1999	-	20.9%	-	33.7%	22.5%
2000	-	18.1%	-	22.0%	22.4%
2001	-	18.0%	-	20.2%	23.6%
2002	-	15.4%	-	20.3%	20.6%
2003	-	11.4%	-	18.3%	22.7%
2004	-	13.4%	17.0%	15.0%	20.5%
2005	-	14.1%	18.0%	15.6%	20.8%
2006	-	12.3%	21.0%	13.7%	20.5%
2007	-	11.5%	21.0%	12.3%	22.5%
2008	-	14.4%	16.0%	10.8%	23.6%
2009	-	14.6%	10.0%	9.7%	24.7%
2010	-	14.8%	13.0%	12.5%	25.4%
2011	-	15.7%	14.8%	14.5%	25.4%
2012	-	14.2%	16.0%	16.0%	24.8%
2013	5.7%	11.1%	18.6%	21.1%	25.6%
2014	8.1%	12.9%	16.4%	19.6%	26.2%
2015	4.4%	14.7%	17.1%	12.4%	24.0%
2016	3.8%	8.3%	11.7%	10.9%	25.0%
2017	4.5%	8.6%	7.7%	10.7%	22.0%
2018	4.9%	6.1%	4.2%	13.7%	20.7%

Data source: APSED RFI 736; Australian Federal Police 2011-2012, 2013b, 2014-2015, 2016a, 2017c, 2018e, 2019; Department of Defence 2012a, 2013-2014, 2015a, 2016, 2017c, 2018.

Table 8: Full list of participant countries of deployment

China	11
USA	9
Afghanistan	6
United Nations - New York	6
Hong Kong	5
Papua New Guinea	5
United Kingdom	4
Japan	4
East Timor	4
Malaysia	3
Cambodia	3
Indonesia	3
Syria	3
Thailand	3
New Zealand	2
Chile (Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, Columbia)	2
Singapore	2
ASEAN	2
Philippines	2
Vietnam	2
Egypt	2
Russia	2
Mexico (Costa Rica, Guatamala, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, El Salvidor and Panama)	2
Nauru	2
Germany	2
Lebanon	2
India (Bhutan)	1
Canada	1
Iraq	1
Zimbabwe	1
Solomon Islands	1
Brunei	1
Ireland	1

Sri Lanka	1
Suva	1
Bangladesh	1
Malawi	1
Tonga	1
Serbia (Russia, Slovakia, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Greece, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine)	1
Sudan	1
The Hague	1
Cyprus	1
NATO in Brussels	1

Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Flexible and adaptable per participant / context.

1. Can you tell me about your current leadership role within your agency? And what has been your career path to get here?
2. What drew you to international representation? Can you tell me a bit about where you have been deployed/worked overseas?
3. What has been your experience of leadership internationally compared to back in Australia? Main opportunities, main challenges? Are there specific opportunities or challenges you have experienced within international representation that don't exist in national representation?
4. What factors affect your decision to go for an international posting or role?
5. How do the gender dynamics (for instance greater gender inequality, or greater equality) in host countries you are deployed in/posted to affect you or your female colleagues?
6. Why is having women leaders in international relations important to you? Why is it important that Australia has representative leadership?
7. Can you think of an example in the agency which really catalysed gender issues for you?
8. Can you think of an example where your presence has completely changed a decision or a particular scenario?
9. What changes would you like to see in your agency that would make it international deployment easier or more attainable?
10. What advice would you give to a young woman who was aspiring for international leadership within your organisation?

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