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Understanding Social Barriers and the Diffusion of Acceptance of Women in the Infantry: A System Dynamics Approach

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Author Note: Cadet Delainey Stokes is a student within the Department of Systems Engineering at the United States Military Academy (USMA). This paper presents research performed in pursuit of Honors distinction for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Systems Engineering. This work was performed under the advisement of Major Jillian Wisniewski, an instructor of System Dynamics within the Department of Systems Engineering at USMA.

Abstract: This study uses system dynamics simulation to explore structural and socio-psychological dynamics associated with the United States Army's gender integration initiatives for its infantry branch. In 2015, the Army's Training and Doctrine Analysis Center (TRAC) published the "Gender Integration Study" and the "Ranger Assessment Study," providing findings that helped shape the Army's gender integration initiatives across its combat arms branches. The focus of these and many other gender integration studies predominantly focus on whether gender differences, physiological and/or psychological, affect one's ability to meet requisite performance standards in combat arms branches. As an essential complement to the existing and ongoing performance-focused research, system dynamics modeling will provide a basis to assess social barriers that exist with the Army and American culture, inhibiting broad acceptance of women in the infantry.

Keywords: Infantrymen, Social Acceptance, Women in the Infantry, System Dynamics