

## **Gender Inequality in the Danish Military**

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Scandinavian countries are consistently among those with the greatest gender equality in the world. Denmark ranked fifth among 142 countries in the 2014 World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report, ranking first in female educational attainment, seventh in political empowerment, and twelfth in economic participation. Yet among a smaller subset of 28 NATO countries, Denmark ranked 13<sup>th</sup> with regard to female officers in the military, 16<sup>th</sup> with regard to female enlisted members, and 17<sup>th</sup> with regard to noncommissioned officers. What accounts for this disparity? Utilizing case study methods to account for factors endogenous to the armed forces, I argue that functional imperatives have not constituted the primary barrier to female participation. Societal imperatives regarding gender representation in civilian and military institutions have had contradictory effects that perpetuate unequal representation in the armed forces. These include the unequal application of coercive conscription to males has perpetuated inequality and the low status accorded to the military profession in Danish society, two factors generally absent from studies of gender representation in the armed forces. I conclude that these structural factors have suppressed gender equality in the most gender-equal of liberal, democratic, developed societies and should be accounted for in other polities.