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The Diplomatic Glass Cliff: Women's Representation and Diplomacy's Decline

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Summary

For the first time in history, women in Australian diplomacy have equal or near-equal representation in leadership whilst the institution they represent is shrinking — in funding, footprint and status. Even if simply a natural shift in policy priorities, this diplomatic 'glass cliff' has specifically gendered effects. Indeed, 'hard' militaristic agencies — where funding and prestige flow — remain pockets of gender resistance in Australian international affairs. This article employs a combination of qualitative interview analysis as well as quantitative longitudinal data on gender representation and agency funding across four case agencies to argue that women are gaining positions of diplomatic leadership just as diplomacy's relative power, influence and funding decreases. It contributes to women's leadership research in finding that women's increased opportunities in leadership are therefore constrained by the declining status or shrinking nature of the institution to which they are gaining access.

Keywords

glass cliff – diplomacy – women's leadership – international affairs – gender

1 Introduction

Women's functional power in leadership positions is constrained by the state of the institutions they occupy. This puts women in Australian diplomacy

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in a difficult position, as for the first time in history women in Australian diplomacy have equal or near-equal representation in leadership whilst the institution they represent is shrinking — in funding, footprint and status. Diplomacy's decline is not new, with Hocking noting that ministries of foreign affairs (MFAs) are losing their gate-keeping role in diplomacy following a 'state of relative decline' over the past decades.[1] Additionally, globalisation has widened diplomatic action for other actors and communication channels that do not always require the involvement of the MFA. Coupled with the trend towards militarism in some countries globally, and an erosion of power, prestige, status and influence, MFAs' role at the forefront of statecraft and diplomacy is in question.

Whilst these processes have been well documented, what has not been documented is the impact this has on women or on diplomatic and other international affairs institutions' aims for equality. Women's greater presence within MFAs is increasingly evidenced, with the gradual opening up for women in diplomacy following the lifting of bans on women in the foreign service in many countries, a gradual reclassification of roles, shifting social norms, the introduction gender targets and specific hiring and promotions processes, and a wider push within international affairs to demonstrate leadership in gender equality.[2] From representing roughly 15 per cent of ambassadors globally, women in some regions are marching far ahead.[3] In Australia, women are approaching or have reached parity in diplomatic leadership for the first time in history,[4] and despite potential impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic,[5] opportunities appear to be increasing for women seeking a diplomatic career.

While the decline of diplomacy and rising gender parity have been studied in isolation from each other,[6] this article seeks to understand what — if any — relation can be drawn between the two trends using the case study of Australia. Attributing causation is not possible, yet this article seeks to have a first go at describing several empirical trends that relate to gender composition, material resources/funding and symbolic status across Australia's core international affairs agencies. It is beyond the scope of this article to tease out the causal relations between these trends, even though this is ultimately what motivates the study. However, the article does cover crucial groundwork, empirically mapping a) gender composition, b) material resources/funding

1 Hocking 1999, 1.
2 Aggestam and Towns 2019; Bashevkin 2018.
3 Towns and Niklasson 2017.
4 Stephenson 2019, 2020b.
5 Towns et al. 2020.
6 See, for instance, Manfredi-Sanchez and Hare 2021; Conley Tyler 2021; Cassidy 2017.

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and c) symbolic status (prestige and power) of the institutions and how these have shifted over time. In examining diplomatic funding and status trends in parallel to women's rising representation, I argue that 1) an erosion in the status and prestige of diplomacy and 2) the decline in the relative importance and funding of traditional diplomacy in favour of 'hard' defence and security-led Australian international affairs have specifically *gendered* ramifications. Indeed, Towns notes that 'diplomacy may be particularly prone to feminisation in such contexts of masculinised militarism', which has implications for power and opportunities for women in the field.[7] The findings from this article suggest that more women are gaining positions of diplomatic leadership just as diplomacy's relative power, influence and funding decreases. Building on devaluation and glass cliff theory, if found more widely, this indicates that women's newly made gains in representation are constrained by the shrinking functional power of the roles and institutions they occupy.

This article seeks to contribute empirically and theoretically to research on women in shrinking institutions and add to the research fields surrounding gender representation and diplomacy. Whilst prior research has focused on how the decline of diplomacy has changed the role of diplomats, what they do and how they do it, it has not analysed this current development from a gender perspective. This article therefore adds empirical knowledge on how the changing status, prestige, power and/or influence of MFAs occurs in parallel to the feminisation of diplomacy.

The article also draws on feminist institutionalist (FI) and gender inequality theories, with concepts of devaluation and the glass cliff applied to qualitative and quantitative data collected on gender and diplomacy from the last 30+ years within the Australian context. Utilising a feminist mixed methods approach, the article will analyse data on gender and diplomatic appointments, as well budgetary data on agency resourcing across four case agencies in Australian international affairs. By tracing institutional 'shifts' — subtle changes/adaptations/movements in symbolic status, material resources and so on — this article demonstrates women's increasing prominence in diplomacy occurring in parallel to the shrinking, stalling and stagnation of diplomacy and the amplification of more militaristic international affairs.

In the first section of the article, theoretical tools and prior scholarship are explored. Methodology is then explained, before the article covers the main data and discussion: 1) establishing the increase in women in diplomacy, 2) exploring trends in prestige associated with the profession and 3) outlining the funding decreases diplomacy has experienced in the Australian context.

7 Towns 2020, 575.

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Finally, the conclusion highlights how the devaluation of diplomacy (decline in prestige and funding) and institutional shifts resulting from securitisation and other trends are coinciding with women's increased representation in the field. I argue that this diplomatic 'glass cliff' puts women seeking leadership in diplomacy in a difficult position. I contribute to FI literature through arguing that the status of an institution has a constraining (or, perhaps for some, enabling) effect on women's functional power in leadership. The article concludes with directions for future research to extend the concept of the glass cliff to diplomacy in other contexts, and research findings around constraints on women's leadership in other institutions.

2 Theoretical Tools: Understanding Gender Representation in Shrinking Institutions

Feminist institutionalism allows us to explore how international affairs institutions, norms, rules and behaviours are gendered, based on the assertion that institutions matter.[8] The study of institutions encompasses both the study of large-scale institutions of government or other organisations, as well as the institutional norms, rules and behaviours that guide their make-up. Whilst there is great debate around the stability or fluidity of institutions, institutions are enormously important for guiding what is done, by whom, when and how. Mackay et al. note that 'to say that an institution is gendered means that constructions of masculinity and femininity are intertwined in the daily life or logic' of its actions.[9] To say something is gendered therefore refers to both cause and effect — and only infrequently are the two absent from any institutional change.[10] The potential of the FI approach is therefore more encompassing than this study can allow; however, it is nonetheless useful to trace gender and institutional change and lay the groundwork for additional research to come around cause and effect.

In this article, FI theory is employed to trace power shifts in international institutional arenas, the coinciding representation of women within these institutions and the implications of these trends for women and MFAs' aims for gender equality. The article draws on Mackay, Kenny and Chappell's arguments that gendered institutional change may be resisted by moving the locus

8 March and Olsen 1984.

9 Mackay, Kenny and Chappell 2010, 580.

10 Waylen 2017.

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of power to new institutional arenas,[11] which seems apparent when studying diplomacy's material resources and symbolic status in relation to more militaristic international affairs. It indicates that women may gain descriptive representation but not substantive power or the ability to wield that representation towards the needed ends. Coupled with the devaluation and glass cliff theories (covered in section 3), FI is applied to understand women's rise in shrinking/shifting institutions.

3 Prior Scholarship on Prestige, Power and Gendering of MFAs

Whilst the focus of this article is on mapping an Australian diplomatic institution's material resources and symbolic status relative to women's functional power in leadership, it is pertinent to first explore how these key correlations have been studied before in the literature: how women's increased representation in diplomacy is related (or not) to the decline in funding, power and prestige within diplomacy. Additionally, theories around devaluation and the glass cliff are studied in this section as two theories that combine with FI to triangulate findings and lay the foundations for future, more detailed research on implications. Part historical review and part review of the literature, this section seeks to establish the context for understanding gender and the major institutional shifts discussed in the article.

There are two key findings underpinning this research. The first is that the power, prestige and funding of diplomacy is declining, whilst the second is that women's representation is increasing. Addressing the first point, Hocking notes MFAs' 'state of relative decline' over the past decades,[12] with Dittmer arguing that they are 'less an all-powerful agent of world politics and more like a tail being wagged by two different dogs' — the state and the global diplomatic community.[13] States' international affairs are increasingly reliant on multiple agencies implicated in international affairs to carry out its objectives — not just the MFA.[14] No longer is diplomacy just the preserve of foreign ministries and diplomatic service personnel, but it is 'undertaken by a wide range of actors, including "political" diplomats, advisers, envoys and officials from a wide range of "domestic" ministries or agencies'.[15] Additionally, it is changing

11 Mackay, Kenny and Chappell 2010.
12 Hocking 1999, 1.
13 Dittmer 2019, 156.
14 Barston 2019; Stephenson 2020b; Commonwealth of Australia 2017.
15 Barston 2019, 1; Cooper and Cornut 2016, 2019.

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not just out of necessity, as has been the case under COVID-19,[16] but also due to other influencing factors such as globalisation, technological changes and new security threats.[17] In some cases, such as Australia, the trend towards military-led diplomacy has increased post-9/11,[18] further undermining the tenuous position of MFAs at the forefront of international decision-making.

Not only has this resulted in Australia's defence and security agencies undertaking a greater role in international affairs, but it has also resulted in the development of police-led and defence-led diplomacy initiatives that increasingly encroach on territory previously controlled by MFAs, as well as resourcing ramifications and underfunding that further restrict diplomatic action.[19] In the United States, McGlen and Sarkees attribute the increased funding and strategic power for defence (and decline in both for diplomacy) to politics and the functions of the departments, 'with [foreign affairs'] relatively passive role of observation, reporting, negotiation, and advisement', as compared with the military's primary function of action.[20] Yet gaps remain in the literature around whether these strategic power and funding shifts are gendered — in Australia and more broadly.

Power is one thing, but prestige is another. Gilpin notes that 'prestige, rather than power, is the everyday currency of international relations'.[21] From a field traditionally steeped in prestige and the 'elite', involving only those with the requisite finances and influence, foreign services in many countries are undergoing greater professionalisation — diluting 'eliteness' and in cases eroding the prestige indicators of past employment.[22] Professionalisation is entwined with bureaucratisation and describes a suite of actions to 'professionalise' government — from changes to legal structures, to the emergence of MFAs institutionalising diplomacy, and to recruitment and training.[23] It is entwined with the idea of bureaucratic neutrality and a belief that through recruitment and training, appointments should be made on merit,[24] rather than personalised appointments based on patronage — where elitism typically thrives, and prestige is maintained through exclusion.[25] Professionalisation has the impact of

16 Gülmez 2020.
17 Cooper and Cornut 2016.
18 Tanter 2018.
19 Colvin 2017; Young and Meli 2019; Taylor et al. 2014.
20 McGlen and Sarkees 1993, 12.
21 Gilpin 1981, 31.
22 McCarthy 2015.
23 Spies 2019.
24 Burton 1988; Parliament of Australia 1998.
25 Santana 2016.

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widening pathways and opportunities for women and diverse groups.[26] For example, in Australia, a prohibition was placed on patronage and favouritism in the Australian Public Service (APS) in 1999.[27] Yet, prior to this, staff selection in the public service exemplified 'social closure', particularly based on educational credentials or lack thereof, as well as gender, in part due to the legacy effect of horizontal and vertical segregation stemming from the Marriage Bar, social attitudes and legal barriers.[28]

The trend towards professionalisation and departmental reform in Australia's MFA — the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) — was largely initiated under departmental secretary Arthur Tange in the 1950s and 1960s, who sought to establish a professional foreign office and diplomatic service.[29] 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.[30] This professionalisation within diplomacy has had a gendered impact, widening the pool of applicants for various roles and ultimately increasing women's opportunities, which has resulted in women now verging on parity in leadership and representing more than half of the overall diplomatic workforce.[31] Diplomacy was once amongst the highest-prestige jobs of the state, and yet, in Australia, this is shifting.

Addressing the second finding of women's increased representation in diplomacy, Australia's MFA is in a distinct stage of transition and is far from being the patriarchal stronghold, as the most male-dominated sphere within the state, that it once was.[32] Australia is now following 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.[33] In 2021, women represented over 45 per cent of senior diplomats, and in recent years Australia appointed its first female foreign minister (2013) and shadow foreign minister (2016), marking the first time in history women have held these portfolios — and at the same time. These portfolios continue to be held by women, including Australia's first

26 McCarthy 2015; Parliament of Australia 1998.
27 Parliament of Australia 2010.
28 Matheson 2001, 43.
29 Edwards 2015.
30 Edwards 2015, 238.
31 Dee and Volk 2007; Stephenson 2020b.
32 Towns and Niklasson 2017; Enloe 2014; Tickner 1992.
33 Stephenson 2019; Rossetti 2015.

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Asian-Australian and lesbian senator, Penny Wong, elected in 2022. Australia had its first female departmental secretary for foreign affairs and trade in 2016, its second in 2021 and third in 2022, and women continue an unbroken upward trajectory in representation. Australia has even been recognised as having a 'feminist turn' in foreign policy — or having integrated pro-gender norms by stealth.[34] Progress in the other international affairs agencies is to far less effect, with women remaining a crippling minority in many cases, particularly across national security and intelligence, with Defence noted as one of the largest agencies with the lowest representation of women.[35]

Women's ability to gain leadership while they are at the same time restricted by the precarity or riskiness of their positions has been well studied by Michelle Ryan and Alex Haslam, and is described by the concept of the glass cliff.[36] Glass cliff research highlights that women are more likely to achieve leadership roles when the risk of failing is highest and has often been applied to private and public sector appointments and politics. There are core reasons to extend the concept of the glass cliff to diplomacy, with a few novel contributions. In particular, this article is interested in not just precarious roles or organisations, but institutions. In FI research, institutions can refer to organisations, or rules and norms of behaviour, or wider cross-organisational, sectoral/industry-wide established fields or practices. Therefore, the status of the institution is not just tied to an agency or organisation (although it can be) but can be multi-organisational and field-wide, as in this research.

Additionally, it is not simply that roles in diplomacy, for instance, are precarious or risky. However, this article argues that women are now gaining equal access to diplomacy at a time in which diplomacy lacks both the functional power and the status that it once had, whilst institutional power shifts away from 'soft' forms of international affairs (diplomacy) to 'hard' international affairs (national security and intelligence) — fields that remain deeply male-dominated. In other words, even if it is a coincidence that women's increasing representation is occurring whilst diplomacy is declining — in funding and status — it is a troubling coincidence.

The relationship between women's representation and the status and funding of a field has been explored in other contexts, but not yet in diplomacy. In occupational studies in other fields, researchers found that the higher the proportion of women in an occupation, the more the occupation is devalued.[37]

34 Lee-Koo 2020.

35 Lowy Institute 2019b; Australian Public Service Commission 2013a.

36 Ryan and Haslam 2005.

37 Cohen and Huffman 2003; Block, Croft and Schmader 2018.

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This is known as the devaluation of female-dominated occupations and consists of gender bias resulting in the work of women being perceived as less important, less valuable and easier than the work of men.[38] This has been witnessed across fields such as recreation, which saw median wages fall by 57 per cent as women came to dominate the field.[39] It has also been witnessed in reverse, with computer programming previously a reasonably menial and low-paid job done by women, until it came to be dominated by men, with an increase in prestige and pay to follow.[40]

The link between gender representation and occupational status or prestige is not as well studied, and the results are complex. Prestige is interpreted in the literature as the 'collective subjective consensus concerning occupational status' as well as 'social standing'.[41] Going beyond simply the individual value of an occupation as expressed in earnings, prestige encapsulates multidimensional rewards and a way of socially valuing the comparative status of an occupation.[42] Whilst many studies indicate that female-dominated fields have the lowest prestige, consistent with devaluation theory,[43] the inverse is not strictly true, with mixed-gender occupations often found to have the highest prestige.[44] High-status group members tend to devalue domains where their group is underrepresented, yet low-status group members do not tend to have the effect of devaluing domains inhabited by higher-status groups.[45] Inconsistency in findings highlights what Valentino argues is a need to reject the idea that an occupation's material devaluation (which is well recorded) automatically corresponds to symbolic devaluation (which is not as well understood) with the presence of women.[46] That is, while a widespread finding of women's devaluation in terms of wages, employment opportunities and so on is witnessed across industries, this does not necessarily correlate to the devaluation of prestige of that industry. This might suggest that women's increased representation is unrelated to a decline in status or prestige in diplomacy. Yet it does not preclude the fact that a decline in diplomacy would likely impact on women's ability to substantively *use* their representation in

38 Levanon, England and Allison 2009.
39 Miller 2016.
40 Oldenziel 2001.
41 Garcia-Mainar, Montuenga and Garcia-Martin 2018, 349; England 1979.
42 Garcia-Mainar, Montuenga and Garcia-Martin 2018; Magnusson 2009; Wegener 1992.
43 Bose and Rossi 1983; Beyard-Tyler and Haring 1984; Wu and Leffler 1992; Magnusson 2009; Garcia-Mainar, Montuenga and Garcia-Martin 2018.
44 Magnusson 2009; Gronlund and Magnusson 2013; Garcia-Mainar, Montuenga and Garcia-Martin 2018.
45 Schmader et al. 2001.
46 Valentino 2020.

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diplomacy — particularly given the symbolic power attributed to diplomacy.[47] Existing research around prestige and status therefore reinforces the gap this article explores: that any decline in prestige, funding or status of an institution should have gendered impacts on women in that institution as well as on aims for wider equality.

There are additional important caveats which drive the need to explore this topic further. Firstly, the literature has incomplete coverage of institutions in transition, either those undergoing gender transformation or those undergoing a 'shrinking' of their role in wider society. Secondly, it is unclear under what circumstances prestige changes — and whether it is gradual or proportional. While some research does note that occupational prestige 'evolves and devolves' in times of great social change, it is unclear how, why or when it might change otherwise.[48] Thirdly, it is reasonable to expect that the shift in eminence from MFAs to other agencies involved in international affairs would also impact negatively on prestige — as it demonstrates a move from primacy in international affairs to more of a 'team player' role.[49] Given the literature does not focus on how gender is or is not correlated to prestige during institutional transition, we can only conjecture that they at least occur in parallel, and this will be explored through the discussion.

Whilst this article is unable to prove causation — how and why prestige or symbolic status may shift — the 'critical mass' literature indicates that once women represent a nominal amount, say 35 per cent of an organisation, organisational cultures shift.[50] Others advocate that gendered changes within institutions are more incremental.[51] FI literature highlights a third option: women may increasingly be represented, but as long as the gender order is not fundamentally disrupted, status and prestige also remain the same. As soon as this gender order is altered (for instance, by women moving out of the traditional domains they have occupied, into domains of higher leadership or power), power, status and prestige also shift. In Mackay et al'.s research, they document gender gains in some areas corresponding with a shifting of the locus of power to new institutional arenas.[52] This is echoed by prior research into Australian diplomacy, which found that power shifts in Australia from the traditional MFA

47 Kuus 2015.
48 Camargo and Whiley 2020, 854.
49 Hocking 1999.
50 Kanter 1977.
51 Mackay, Kenny and Chappell 2010.
52 Mackay, Kenny and Chappell 2010.

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to more militaristic agencies is a strategic gendered move that allows inequalities to merely adapt and evolve, not diminish.[53]

While some argue that more women in international affairs might equal less militarised foreign policy more generally,[54] this is not necessarily the case in Australia's international apparatus. Establishing causal relationships between gender and Australia's changing relationship with diplomacy is not possible. However, what is possible to note is that women's representation in diplomacy has rapidly increased in recent years, whilst the funding, status and strategic importance of the traditional diplomatic apparatus has continued its decline — or flatlining — in favour of increased militarism. This shift has gendered ramifications, given that militaries remain the most male-dominated and masculine spheres of the state.[55] Whilst difficult to measure, it highlights critical implications for diplomacy's decline in Australia and the rise of women in this field.

4 Data and Methods: Methodology

Mixed methodologies uncover troubling questions and trends that might otherwise be obscured through a single methodological approach. Understanding gender and shifts from 'soft' diplomacy to 'hard' militaristic approaches to Australian international affairs is undertaken using the combination of qualitative narrative analysis and interviews, as well as quantitative longitudinal data on gender representation and agency funding. The 'qualitative approach … may allow for validation of quantitative findings', whilst quantitative data enables wider generalisations and trends to be identified.[56] The combination of approaches reveals patterns of women's increased representation, as well as relative decreases in MFA funding, which are elaborated on to explore concepts of power and status through interviews and surrounding accounts.

As part of a wider study, the findings arose from analysis of four federal government international affairs agencies representing a spectrum from traditional diplomatic/bureaucratic to para-militaristic and militaristic structures. These included Australia's MFA — the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade — plus Australia's other top three international affairs agencies — Defence, the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs) and the Australian

53 Stephenson 2020b.
54 Broinowski 2017.
55 Enloe 2014.
56 Hesse-Biber and Griffin 2015, 76.

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Federal Police (AFP). Agencies were chosen based on their senior role in state diplomacy — across both traditional and emerging forms of front-line diplomacy. Out of the agencies, DFAT is the agency most aligned with and defined by diplomacy, yet all agencies maintain their own diplomatic attachés and envoys. Out of all the agencies, DFAT's diplomacy is decreasing — in footprint and funding — whilst the other agencies' footprints and funding profiles are all increasing.

This research first presents and analyses raw unpublished data which was sought and gained from the case agencies, as well as data on agency resourcing. The primary quantitative sources analysed include:

1. Australian Public Service Employee Database (APSED) Yearbook Statistics, accessed under an information request which compiled data from 1984 to 2018.[57]
2. Agency annual reports from each agency studied.[58]
3. Agency websites.[59]
4. Data requests on gender breakdown made directly to the agencies.[60]
5. Lowy Institute and other think tank reports.

Data collected included data on a gender breakdown by rank and agency from 1984-2021 to show the gradual increase in women, plus federal financing data

57 This data mainly covers DFAT, Home Affairs and the DoD (civilian Defence), including data from 2000-2018 for DFAT, Home Affairs and Defence, and from 1984-2018 for the AFP, due to its exclusion from the APSED data set. DFAT annual reports for 2011-2012 were missing, and AFP annual reports from 1990-2003 were missing and unable to be obtained by the AFP Freedom of Information (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.

58 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 2017, 2018, 2019). 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 2018, 2019). It broke down international representation by gender but not by rank or role.

59 Data on Defence Attachés was requested from Defence's International Policy Division in 2017, and access was granted to previously unpublished raw data from 2017 (International Policy Division 2017). Data on Home Affairs A-based employees was requested twice, once in 2017 prior to the merger with the Department of Immigration and Border Protection into the Department of Home Affairs (Home Affairs), and again in 2019 under the new Home Affairs structure (Strategic Research and Communications Division 2018, 2019). Both data sets 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.

60 Such as Defence and security and intelligence agencies, including the Department of Home Affairs and the AFP.

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from 2010-2019 correlating with the core periods in which major shifts occurred for both women's representation and diplomacy's decline. Although most data was collected up until 2018 (when the bulk of this study was conducted), some additional data has been included up to 2021.

To expand on this data through a more nuanced understanding of the processes in question, in-depth qualitative interviews with 57 senior executive women leaders form much of the qualitative data collected for this article. A further 27 associated informal and background interviews with politicians, managers and associated advisers were conducted to correlate findings. Both university and Defence ethical approvals were sought and gained, with participants consenting to be interviewed and later de-identified as part of the wider study. This was a specific intention of the study and was requested by many in order to protect their anonymity whilst discussing potentially sensitive perspectives on gender relations within the departments.

The main data follows in section 5, which empirically maps 1) women's representation, 2) symbolic status and 3) material resources. It is followed by section 6, which recaps the implications of the findings of women's increased representation and diplomacy's decline, before the conclusion summarises findings and presents future directions for research.

5 Shifts in Diplomacy

5.1 *Women's Increasing Representation*

In the last three decades women have gone from representing a minority of diplomatic roles to now occupying an overall majority of DFAT and a majority of executive leadership (EL) — or leadership pipeline — roles. Analysing the representation of women in DFAT demonstrates a steady upward trajectory of women since 1984, demonstrated by Fig. 1.

Fig. 1 shows that women have represented near-parity (defined as between 40 and 60 per cent of the organisation) for over 30 years whilst remaining chronically and severely underrepresented in EL and senior executive service (SES) positions until more recently.[61] Women have formed the majority of the entire department since 2006 (50.3 per cent) and a majority of EL positions since 2014 (51.8 per cent). Women's representation in SES leadership continues to lag behind the most, with data in 2021 showing women's representation at 45 per cent (up from 34.5 per cent in 2018, when the bulk of the following data

61 Executive level refers to 'pipeline' leadership positions, whilst senior executive service represents the highest levels of public sector employment.

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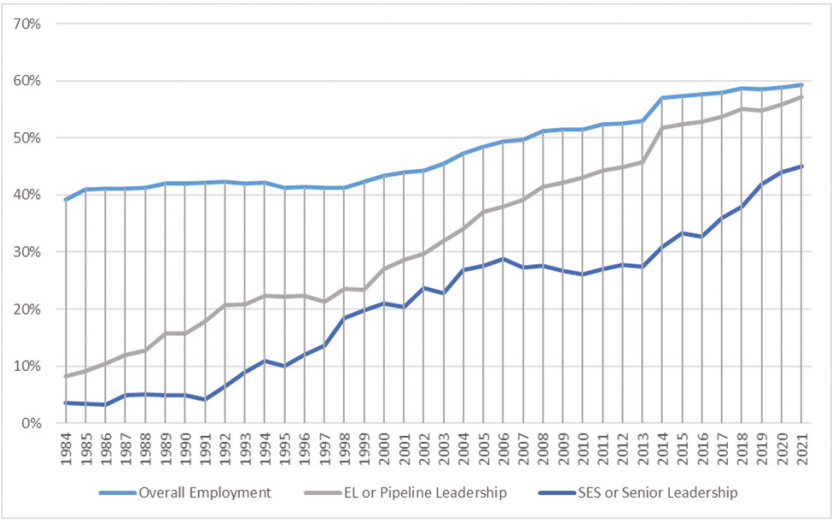

FIGURE 1 Representation of women in DFAT, 1984-2021
DATA SOURCE: *APSED, RFI 763 — STATISTICAL YEARBOOK (1984-2021)*

was collected). This is expanded on in Fig. 2, which, in addition to 1) overall representation, 2) EL leadership and 3) SES leadership, also looks at 4) overall representation internationally and 5) overall representation in head of mission (HOM) or head of post (HOP) roles for 2000-2018 (the period for which I had access to most of this detailed data).

Fig. 2 highlights further changes over the period 2000-2018,[62] showing several key periods of rapid progress for women. Firstly, in consolidating an increasingly stressed foreign affairs portfolio, the incoming Abbott government restructured Australia's overseas aid and development initiatives in 2013, abolishing the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) and merging many of the previous AusAID staff with DFAT. AusAID was a more female-dominated portfolio, which had the effect of increasing the proportion of women. This is clear from Fig. 2, where women's overall representation increased rapidly from 2012-2013.[63] Secondly, 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 — began to close. This aligns with strategic policy at the time: DFAT

62 Fig. 2 covers women in overall employment internationally — all ranks, EL roles, SES roles, and HOM or HOP.

63 Although it is interesting to note that an increased proportion of women in leadership and international representation was delayed, and in some cases was not as substantial.

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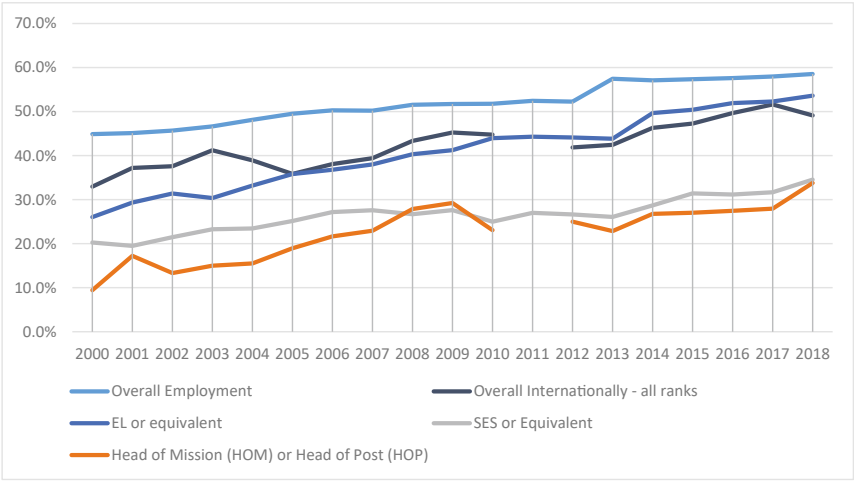

FIGURE 2 Representation of women in DFAT, 2000-2018
DATA SOURCES: *APSED, RFI 763, STATISTICAL YEARBOOK* (*1984-2018*); DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (2000-2010, 2012-2018). DFAT ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2011 WAS MISSING, HENCE 2011 DATA ON WOMEN'S OVERALL INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATION AT ALL RANKS, AND REPRESENTATION AS HOM OR HOP, IS ABSENT.

introduced the Women in Leadership Strategy in 2015, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy in 2016 and Foreign Policy White Paper in 2017, all launched with specific focuses on improving gender relations both internally to DFAT and more broadly in Australian international affairs. A number of these policies included tangible targets for women's representation (at least 40 per cent in leadership) as well as commitments around gender-focused resource spending (80 per cent of overseas development assistance). Further, Julie Bishop was foreign minister at the time — the first female foreign minister.

Both figures demonstrate that women's representation is increasing in DFAT in a steady upwards trajectory. Women remain least represented in the most senior ranks of leadership, yet initial progress in the years since the introduction of formalised targets in the Women in Leadership Strategy in 2015 highlight the agency's early success at beginning to close gaps in women's senior representation.

In comparison, Fig. 3 explores how DFAT ranks alongside other core international affairs agencies — a comparative sample taken from 2017-2018 when the bulk of this data collection was undertaken.[64] Fig. 3 breaks down women's rep-

64 More up-to-date data is only available for some agencies/indicators.

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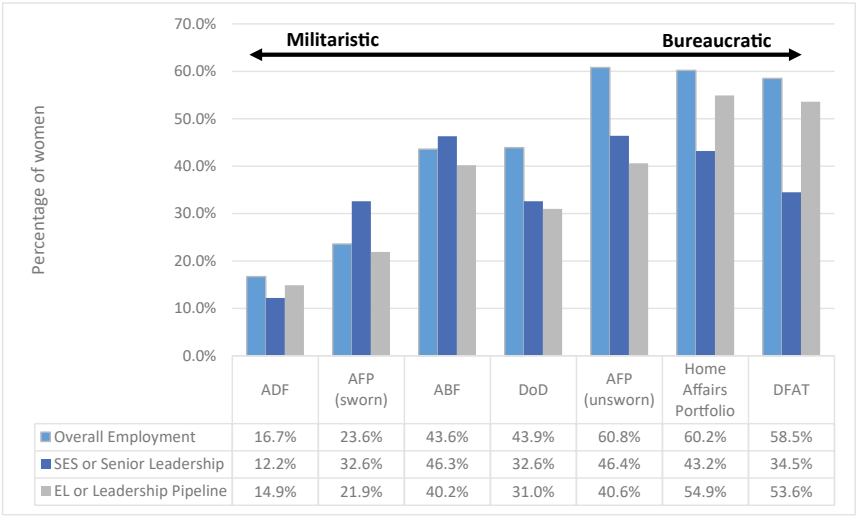

	ADF	AFP (sworn)	ABF	DoD	AFP (unsworn)	Home Affairs Portfolio	DFAT
Overall Employment	16.7%	23.6%	43.6%	43.9%	60.8%	60.2%	58.5%
SES or Senior Leadership	12.2%	32.6%	46.3%	32.6%	46.4%	43.2%	34.5%
EL or Leadership Pipeline	14.9%	21.9%	40.2%	31.0%	40.6%	54.9%	53.6%

FIGURE 3 Representation of women in the agencies (disaggregated, with trend lines), 2017, 2018
DATA SOURCE: AGENCY ANNUAL REPORTS AND *APSED RFI 736* DATA

resentation in Defence into the ADF (military) and the Department of Defence (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 and 'soft' portfolios), and DFAT remains undivided. All professional, civilian or unsworn divisions are characterised as more 'bureaucratic' than their relevant military or sworn divisions — and more female-dominated. In other words, Australia's international affairs remains gender segregated, with women dominant in 'softer' unsworn and civilian positions/agencies, as opposed to 'harder' sworn agencies and divisions. The ADF is characterised as the most militaristic, followed by the AFP (sworn), the ABF, the Department of Defence, the AFP (unsworn), the Home Affairs Portfolio and lastly DFAT — following delineations developed in earlier research according to their structuring and culture.[65]

The data in Fig. 3 demonstrates that the more militaristic and paramilitaristic international affairs agencies evidence lower levels of women both overall and in leadership as compared with more bureaucratic agencies. Defence remains one of the most masculine and male-dominated portfolios within Australian government service.[66] Attraction and retention of women in

65 See Stephenson 2019, 2020b.
66 Australian Human Rights Commission 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014.

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the AFP make it one of the agencies with the lowest overall representation of women in Australian international affairs.[67] Women's representation in Home Affairs has decreased since 2009, where the agency (specifically, its historical predecessor) stopped short of reaching parity in senior leadership at 49 per cent before falling almost ten years later in 2018 — paralleling the greater shift in emphasis to counter-terrorism and border control.[68]

Additionally, while the bulk of this data was collected in 2018, women's representation in more militaristic international affairs remains problematic. In the most recent 2020-2021 *Women in the ADF* report, women comprised 19.7 per cent of the ADF workforce (an increase of 3 per cent since 2017-2018). The report notes that 'the recruitment of women remains problematic', women remain overrepresented in 'soft' roles around health and administration, and women's representation in leadership remains low (hovering around 15-20 per cent of positions).[69] Further, the AFP continues to have substantial recruitment and retention issues for women, with sworn women in 2021 comprising only 22 per cent of the AFP (a 1.6 per cent decrease since 2017-2018),[70] and women in Home Affairs remain stratified and horizontally segregated.

Overall, this section provides evidence that women's representation in DFAT is increasing. It also shows that Australian women in diplomacy are generally better represented overall and in leadership compared with in more militaristic or para-militaristic international affairs agencies, where in some cases they remain critically underrepresented.

5.2 *Symbolic Status Shifts: 'Eliteness' Eroded*

It is more difficult to establish shifts in the prestige and 'eliteness' of diplomacy, although it is still possible through process-tracing institutional changes and understanding women's narrated experiences. Australia established its first diplomatic missions to foreign countries in 1940. Prior to then, Australian representation internationally was led by British legations and staffed almost exclusively by 'new' Australian men of European background. 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. Early Australian diplomacy was characterised as high prestige but, by the turn of the 21st century, also as out of touch with changes across wider

67 Stephenson 2020b.
68 Stephenson 2020b.
69 Department of Defence 2021, iv.
70 Australian Federal Police 2021.

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society.[71] 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, helping to abolish the 'perception of an exclusive caste'.[72] In recent years this professionalisation of DFAT has been built upon further,[73] in alignment with wider Australian Public Service (APS) values.[74] Professionalisation has levelled the playing field in terms of employment by reducing factors that in the past excluded individuals from diplomacy — such as gender, upbringing, wealth and education.[75]

Professionalisation has specifically gendered outcomes for DFAT. Besides more strictly committing the public service to bureaucratic neutrality, merit and professionalism, it also increased opportunities for women's participation in foreign service. Indeed, Australia was the first nation to lift the Marriage Bar (which demanded that women diplomats leave the profession if they married) in 1966.[76] And while the change in policy did not result in an automatic change in attitudes,[77] Australia is now a global leader in terms of gender representation.[78]

Professionalisation has also had ramifications around the perceived prestige of the field — abolishing the 'perception of an exclusive caste', as Harris argues.[79] The feminisation of DFAT has therefore occurred in concurrence with institutional shifts in diplomacy which have lessened some of the status and prestige of the work. In fact, whilst Essex and Bowman note that 'official diplomacy is still a world of high politics inhabited by globe-trotting power brokers exercising political autonomy as agents of the state', this is increasingly less the case in Australia, where total spending on diplomacy, aid and trade

71 Edwards 2015; Harris 2002.

72 Harris 2002, 230.

73 As opposed to personalisation, professionalisation is entwined with the idea of bureaucratic neutrality; in terms of appointments, it often refers to employment and promotion being more intimately linked to 'merit' — an attempt at more objective, gender-neutral employment practices than a subjective, personalised process where there is greater potential for bias and discrimination to influence appointments (as was more so the case in the past) (Burton 1988). Despite merit being problematic — it is a process that is still subjective and at times biased (see, for instance, Burton 1998) — according to the 1999 Public Service Act (Cwth), merit is the overriding factor determining employment decisions below the level of head of department.

74 Australian Public Service Commission 2013a.

75 McCarthy 2015.

76 Conley Tyler 2016.

77 It was nearly two decades before women began entering DFAT as graduates in equal or greater numbers.

78 Stephenson 2019; Dee and Volk 2007.

79 Harris 2002, 230.

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had declined to its lowest point at 1.3 per cent of the total budget in 2020.[80] As Conley Tyler and Vandewerdt-Holman note,[81] the underfunding of diplomacy has an impact not only on diplomatic footprint and influence, but also on Australia's perceived prestige. Further, Conley Tyler notes that 'diplomacy is no longer regarded as a special skill', and that whilst 'in the golden age of diplomacy, diplomats were an exclusive club that managed international engagement', some of the norms around diplomacy's status and 'special' positioning have lessened.[82]

This is reinforced across interviews. The foreign service was no longer perceived as the same one that was promised when the participants had signed on. Indeed, Participant 1 notes 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'.[83] Professionalism is partly responsible for this, following a wider Australian Public Service Commission push for DFAT to fall in line as 'one of many' government agencies — not an exception. It is also a consequence of the relative fall in funding (as will be explored next), which has resulted in an agency-based push for careers to be more 'Canberra-based'. This is a distinctive shift from diplomacy of the past: 65 per cent of positions were based internationally in 1984, compared with only 24.9 per cent of positions based overseas in 2018.[84]

Whilst difficult to quantify, there has been a shift in the prestige or standing of diplomacy compared with the past, and this shift has occurred in parallel with women's increased representation. Although it is not possible to establish either causation or correlation, language choices by participants do infer a relationship between the two. In interviews, the decreased status of diplomacy was most highlighted after the 2013 AusAID merger, which had the effect of rapidly increasing the proportion of women in the department — as women represented 63.3 per cent of AusAID in 2013 prior to their merger.[85] At this time, participants reported that concerns flourished within the department that these AusAID staff were 'unskilled' (in the art of diplomacy) and reaching high-level diplomatic postings overseas 'before their time'. Pure foreign affairs was noted as the bastion of prestige, whereas the humanitarian side of international development was female-dominated, defined as 'soft', and was reported to have 'lessened' the exclusivity of the organisation.

80 Essex and Bowman 2021, 310; Conley Tyler and Vandewerdt-Holman 2019.
81 Conley Tyler and Vandewerdt-Holman 2019.
82 Conley Tyler 2021, para. 12.
83 Participant 1, DFAT, 18 June 2018.
84 Australian Public Service Commission 2019; APSED 2021.
85 Corbett 2017.

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Although it is impossible to tie the erosion of the exclusive, 'elite' diplomatic caste with more opportunities for women in diplomacy, the two have occurred in parallel through the process of professionalisation and globalisation, which has instituted shifts that have enabled the inclusion of more women in diplomacy whilst at the same time diminishing the prestige, status and perception of diplomatic 'eliteness'. DFAT now takes its place as 'one of many' internationalised government departments — and not the exception. This ultimately impacts on the power and prestige of the roles women are increasingly occupying in the department.

Next, it is worth considering the final shift in diplomacy, the funding and strategic importance of DFAT within wider Australian foreign policy.

5.3 *Funding and Strategic Importance*

Like many ministries of foreign affairs across the world, DFAT has traditionally held the primary role of policy-making within Australian international affairs. Yet as McGlen and Sarkees found in the US,[86] the last twenty to thirty years in particular have seen an increase in funding and strategic importance of more militaristic international affairs agencies and a decrease in funding for DFAT — a trend that has only been growing.[87] As previously noted, McGlen and Sarkees attribute this to both politics and the functions of the departments — with foreign affairs more passive than action-oriented defence. Yet how much are the gendered shifts and shifting perceptions of diplomacy also implicated in a relative decrease of diplomatic funding compared with the more militaristic international affairs agencies' funding? This section will consider material resourcing in comparison with the other two forces (symbolic status and gender representation) analysed in Australian foreign affairs.

The status of Australia's four most important international affairs agencies is reflected in the allocation of resources in the Federal Budget (see Fig. 4). These include DFAT, Defence (inclusive of the ADF and the Department of Defence), the AFP and Home Affairs (inclusive of most of Australia's premiere security, intelligence, border protection and immigration agencies).[88]

Fig. 4 indicates general funding status in Australia in recent years: Defence is the most-funded agency in Australia's international affairs and Home Affairs has had the greatest funding increase (a 236.13 per cent increase, from A$2,704,405,000 in 2010-2011 to A$9,090,537,000 in 2021-2022). DFAT saw an initial funding decline in the years preceding the introduction of their gender

86 McGlen and Sarkees 1993.

87 Conley Tyler and Vandewerdt-Holman 2019.

88 Note: data prior to 2015/2016 is included from Home Affairs' predecessor, Immigration and Border Protection.

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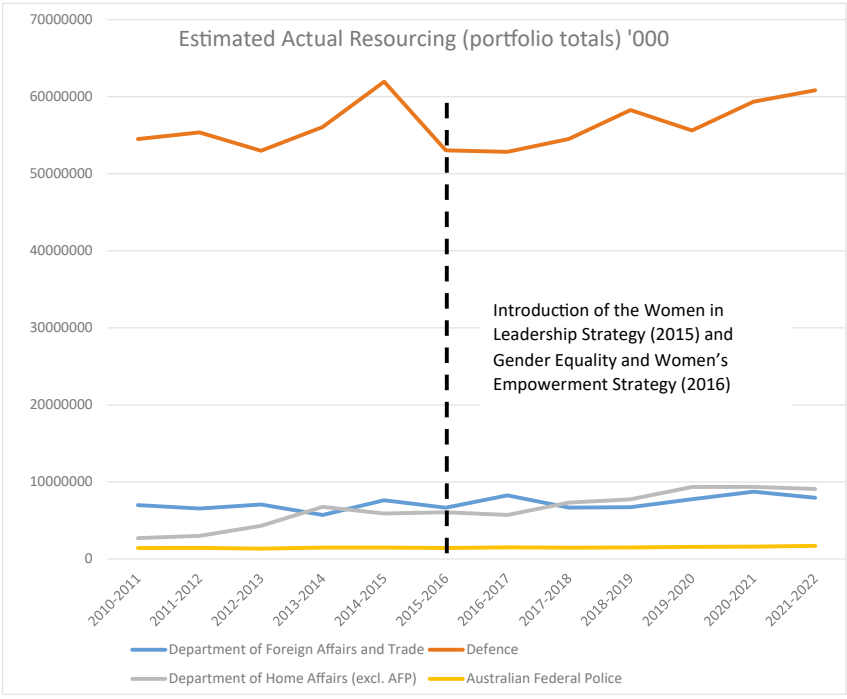

FIGURE 4 Federal budget agency resourcing, 2010-2022
DATA SOURCE: FEDERAL BUDGET (COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA 2010-2022). INCLUDES DFAT; DEFENCE (INCLUDES THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE AND ADF); AFP; AND HOME AFFAIRS.

strategies but then recovered somewhat (although not to the extent of growth witnessed by Defence in recent years). Overall, the fluctuations reflect not only 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 politics. Whilst not enormously helpful for the discussion to follow, Fig. 4 provides a launching point to begin to understand the material status of Australia's four leading international affairs agencies. Compared with Defence's funding bounty and Home Affairs' rapid growth, DFAT's position can perhaps be seen as relatively stable at best, or stagnant at worst.

The constrained environment in which DFAT is currently operating requires more detailed data, which has been analysed by scholars observing DFAT over the past decades. In 2021, Vandewerdt-Holman and Conley Tyler noted that in the previous five years, DFAT had been the subject of 25 per cent of all the cuts made by government across all departments. In 2010, the Lowy Institute highlighted that

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> while the Australia public service grew by around 25-30 per cent from 1996-2008, DFAT contracted by 11 per cent. Over the last twenty years, DFAT's diplomatic corps overseas — the front-line of its operations — dwindled from 870 Australia-based staff overseas in 1989 to 537 in 2009, a contraction of nearly 40 per cent.[89]

As noted in Fig. 2, women are least represented in overseas HOM posts, suggesting this contraction in DFAT has also had gendered impacts.

The Lowy Institute further noted that between 1995 and 2013, DFAT's allocation was reduced by more than a third.[90] To compare, Conley Tyler notes that as of 2019-2020,[91] the Department of Defence budget had increased by 291 per cent since 2011, while the allocation for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation grew by 528 per cent and the Australian Secret Intelligence Service by 578 per cent. In 2019 the Lowy Institute noted that despite being the premiere agency for foreign affairs, out of all the agencies studied, DFAT had the least funding. Their report states that 'since 2009, the Lowy Institute has consistently argued that Australia's Department of 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'.[92] In the most recent 2022 budget, the government will reduce spending on diplomacy and overseas aid by a further 19 per cent in the years to 2026.[93] From representing almost 9 per cent of the federal budget in 1949, Australia's diplomacy, trade and aid budget is now at one of its lowest points — at 1.3 per cent of the total federal budget.[94]

Therefore, when the Lowy Institute argues that 'Australia's budget for diplomacy has wilted, while the budgets for defence, border security and intelligence have blossomed' — they are right.[95] This trend has accelerated since 11 September 2001, when agencies under the current Home Affairs, like the AFP, received their own international operations divisions and counter-terrorism became a focus of Australian foreign policy. Tony Abbott became prime minister in 2013, committing to raise Defence expenditure to 2 per cent of GDP by 2023/2024. '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.

89 Lowy Institute 2010, 16; Conley Tyler and Vandewerdt-Holman 2019.
90 As a proportion of total government expenditure.
91 Conley Tyler 2021.
92 Lowy Institute 2019a, para. 10.
93 Page 2022.
94 Conley Tyler and Vandewerdt-Holman 2021.
95 Lowy Institute 2020, para. 2.

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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 a lone gunman held hostage ten customers and eight staff of the Martin Place Lindt Cafe in Sydney. In other words, the increased funding and securitised approach in Australian foreign policy has many bases.

However, the point of this article is to highlight how these funding and resourcing decisions do not just occur in a vacuum. Women in DFAT have represented a majority of graduate recruits since 1985 and a majority of the department since 2005 (see Fig. 2),[96] meaning the funding shifts have been part of a longer-standing trend for diplomacy. Yet, as women have fought for equal representation across government in the past few decades, they have made the most headway in the one international affairs agency now least resourced — DFAT.

In 2020, the Lowy Institute attributed the trend of diplomacy's decline to the lack of a lobbying force to advocate for diplomatic funding, little concern among the population about the issue, and a dearth of departmental secretary and staff 'political muscle'.[97] Indeed, when Australia's first female foreign minister was in power, and despite the Liberal Party denying gender discrimination, Julie Bishop faced considerable gendered challenges in the party including in gaining and keeping budget resourcing for DFAT, which lost out by comparison with the major funding commitments to the Defence and Home Affairs portfolios during the same period of government. Even if the Lowy Institute do not mention gender, they infer it through their comment on political muscle — as since 2013 the department has been led by two women ministers and since 2016 by three women secretaries as of the most recent 2022 election. In a political landscape that is still dominated by men and masculinist policy-making,[98] it is worth asking whether the growing representation of women in DFAT is working against the department when it comes to advocating for resources and power. To be clear, this is not women's problem, but a potential ramification of working within an international affairs context that continues to reinforce and protect masculinist power and decision-making.

DFAT has now had three consecutive terms of women secretaries (departmental heads), two consecutive terms of female foreign ministers and specific women's leadership and gender equality policies, and women's representation

96 Due to differences in when data is collected or measured, there are some differences between Figs. 1 and 2. Fig. 1 predominantly relies on APSED data, while Fig. 2 reflects DFAT annual report data. The author has chosen to acknowledge 2005 as the year in which women became a majority of the department, as reported by DFAT in its annual report.

97 Lowy Institute 2020, para. 6.

98 Lee-Koo 2020.

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in the department continues on an upwards trajectory. Leadership in Defence, Home Affairs and the AFP has not followed the same path. The AFP has seen backsliding in women's representation, particularly at senior levels: as of 2020, both former Deputy Commissioner Leanne Close and Chief Operating Officer Sue Bird had left the AFP, leaving no women in the most senior roles reporting to the new Commissioner Reece Kershaw at the time. Defence and Home Affairs are still led by some of Australia's most masculinist ministers and secretaries, recently including Peter Dutton and Michael Pezzullo, and are noted for ongoing challenges in retaining women in service. The rising influence of 'hard', more militaristic and para-militaristic agencies and the decline in funding and influence of 'soft' foreign affairs is therefore 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'.[99] As previously mentioned, each of the agencies canvassed in Fig. 4 has its own independent diplomatic forces separate from DFAT. Most of these have developed in the last twenty years, since 11 September 2001, along with Australia's increasingly militaristic stance. Despite varied histories, the agencies are recognised as male-dominated,[100] and to varying degrees they are seen as some of Australia's most sexist and gender-unequal portfolios in public service.[101] Indeed, as Lee-Koo notes:

> Commitments 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.[102]

Whilst it is beyond the scope of this data to prove there are gendered reasons behind the increased funding for militarised institutions (Defence and Home Affairs in particular) and decreased funding for DFAT, it is possible to explore some of the gendered effects and ramifications.[103] Regardless of the reasoning behind Australia's increased militaristic stance, women are least represented in

99 McGlen and Sarkees 1993, 42; Lee-Koo 2020.

100 See Stephenson 2020b for full details.

101 See the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) and Elizabeth Broderick & Co's (2016) extensive reviews into Defence and the AFP, for instance, or Stephenson (2020b)'s research on Home Affairs.

102 Lee-Koo 2020, 237.

103 Conley Tyler 2021.

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more militaristic international affairs agencies where funding is greatest, and most represented in bureaucratic diplomatic agencies where funding is lowest.

6 What these Trends Mean: The Diplomatic Glass Cliff

Whilst symbolic status and material resourcing fluctuate in Australia's international affairs, where the funding is greatest, the proportion of men is highest. As former diplomat and current academic Alison Broinowski notes, 'DFAT prides itself on being close to achieving female parity with men — but where have the men gone? To where the power now is, anywhere called "national security"'.[104]

The power, prestige and funding shifts explored above therefore have a reinforcing effect on gendered norms within the field. Women have now achieved parity (or near to it) in DFAT, at a moment when Australia is 'out of line' with international trends in diplomatic spending, with the Lowy Institute claiming Australia is operating with a 'diplomatic deficit' and Oliver arguing Australia is in diplomatic 'disrepair'. This has real implications for women's career paths and opportunities in foreign affairs, with women remaining least represented overall in more militaristic and para-militaristic security and intelligence agencies — and most represented in diplomacy (with declining power and funding). FI theory argues such shifts are the result of 'male-dominated political elites (shifting) the locus of power … to different institutional arenas'.[105] This certainly matches recent commitments made by the Australian government, such as the additional 18,000 roles announced in 2021 for Defence — more than three times the entire staff responsible for diplomacy and development. However, it is also emblematic of a gradual devaluation of diplomacy and an ensuing diplomatic glass cliff for women, where women's opportunities and power in diplomacy are constrained by the power and status of the institution they represent.

The implications are clear. Just as women are beginning to gain traction in diplomacy, 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

104 Broinowski 2021, para. 7.

105 Mackay, Kenny and Chappell 2010, 583.

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> make a gender story out of that if you wanted to, I think it's actually very significant.[106]

Therefore, this article has so far established that 1) women's representation in DFAT is rising, 2) the prestige factors or 'eliteness' (symbolic status) of diplomacy are eroding, and 3) the funding (and commensurate power) of DFAT is waning. It has also established that the funding for more militaristic, paramilitaristic and securitised foreign affairs is increasing — in some cases rapidly, and most substantially in portfolios that retain the least representation of women. Conley Tyler therefore argues that Australian diplomacy is being devalued, both in funding and in other ways, including 'not being consulted on major foreign policy decisions, not perceived as having "heft" in policy debates within government and the record level of political appointments (rather than career diplomats) to diplomatic posts'.[107]

Indeed, the Lowy Institute has pointed to the shrinking of DFAT's overseas network by over 30 per cent between 1987 and 2013,[108] noting that 'although the government sector as a whole flourished, growing nearly 60 per cent between 1997 and 2013, DFAT staffing remained virtually unchanged'.[109] Whilst exploring causation amongst these trends is outside the scope of this article, the ramifications of diplomacy's decline and women's increased representation in it are significant. Drawing from FI theory, the gendered institutional shifts within diplomacy have enabled women's participation in diplomacy, aided by formal institutional changes (such as the abolition of the Marriage Bar and the introduction of Women in Leadership policies). In other words, institutional changes have been successful at increasing women's formal and descriptive representation.

Yet, highlighting the adaptive nature of gendered challenges,[110] the *substantive* nature of women's representation remains constrained by the institution's wider status and resourcing. Indeed, at a time when women are gaining opportunities in international affairs, the locus of power has shifted away from diplomacy to other institutional arenas of foreign affairs, including the 'harder', more militaristic agencies of national security and intelligence. Women remain least represented in these portfolios, meaning that, as in Chappell and Waylen's research,[111] men's access to power has been reinforced over time. Women are

106 Participant 2, 15 November 2018.
107 Conley Tyler 2021, para. 13.
108 Lowy Institute 2019a.
109 Lowy Institute 2019a, para. 11.
110 See Cornut 2019; Stephenson 2020b.
111 Chappell and Waylen 2013.

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gaining positions of diplomatic leadership just as diplomacy's relative power, influence and funding are decreasing. Women's increased opportunities are therefore constrained by the shrinking nature of the institution to which they are gaining access. This suggests that women's progress to leadership positions in diplomacy will be limited by the declining functional power of those positions — a diplomatic glass cliff.

7 Conclusion

This research has shown how women are increasingly represented in Australian diplomacy. Yet rather than witnessing an erosion in the gendered challenges of diplomatic institutions, gendered challenges endure and evolve. Whilst symbolic status and material resourcing shifts are the result of a confluence of factors, drawing on parallels in FI research, it is clear that this has a gendered impact: power and prestige is shifting to more male-dominated institutional arenas in international affairs. Not only are fewer women represented in more militaristic intelligence and security-based international affairs agencies, but, evidenced by overlapping reviews and research,[112] women continue to experience more overt challenges in representation and leadership. At the same time, women have finally begun to gain substantial ground in traditional diplomacy within DFAT, and yet it coincides with the declining functional power and shrinking resourcing of the agency. Yes, DFAT was already suffering from a loss of prestige and power well before the increase in women's numbers. And yes, the increased spending on defence can be tied to a convergence of security-related events, including dealing with domestic terrorism. Yet the impacts of the decline in Australia's diplomatic institutions and the increased funding and status of military institutions has gendered effects on the nature of Australian foreign affairs — women's opportunities in particular.

States with global mediating diplomatic functions, such as Sweden and Norway, may not see the same decline in MFA status despite the entry of women. Yet we might expect to find some similarities in countries that, as in the case of Australia, have seen an increased militaristic bent to their foreign affairs, as well as a steadily growing presence of women. Whilst McGlen and Sarkees found trends in the US that might indicate similar findings,[113] a

112 See, for instance, the Australian Human Rights Commission (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014) reviews into Defence, Elizabeth Broderick & Co'.s (2016) reviews into the AFP, and Stephenson (2020b)'s research into Australian international affairs.

113 McGlen and Sarkees 1993.

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broader analysis globally is needed to determine the implications of the diplomatic glass cliff.

By drawing attention to the questions and trends covered in this article, it is hoped that further work examining the interactive and complex causal relations between gender composition, resources and status of diplomatic vs military institutions is undertaken. To further substantiate and explore the article's findings, it is worth analysing whether women are making the most progress in institutions in decline and whether the feminisation of institutions is behind their resourcing or strategic power declines, or, rather, is it that the decline in the institution has made it easier for women to gain purchase? Additionally, is the feminisation of diplomacy limiting the MFA's ability to advocate for and gain requisite funding in a masculinised political environment and militarised foreign policy environment? Extending analysis to other states where similar trends in women's representation and diplomacy's decline exist would allow further exploration of the ramifications, which are important to consider in the face of diplomatic power and resource shifts. Beyond cause or correlation, diplomacy's changing position has significant gendered implications for women's opportunities and potential to influence in the future if these trends continue.

Ultimately, the findings of this article have implications for other states globally that may be going through gendered institutional change, as well as increased militarisation in their foreign policy. If the diplomatic glass cliff is further evidenced, then it suggests dangerous implications for women in diplomacy and indicates worrying trends for MFAs themselves. The findings from this article suggest that more women are gaining positions of diplomatic leadership just as diplomacy's relative power, influence and funding decreases. Building on devaluation and glass cliff theory, if found more widely, this indicates that women's newly made gains in representation are constrained by the shrinking functional power of the roles and institutions they occupy.

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