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THE MANY FACES OF DIVERSITY IN MILITARY EMPLOYMENT

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The many faces of diversity in military employment
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The many faces of diversity in the military and the need for culture change

The 2017 Canadian defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE), put military personnel at the forefront, signifying an important shift in tone, but also a noticeable change in the orientation of personnel policies within the Department of National Defence (DND) and the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).[1] The stakes are high, as personnel costs are a sizable portion (approximately half) of the defence budget, and personnel well-being is a key indicator of organizational health and performance for the defence team. This defence team, reflective of a total defence force, including the armed forces and defence civilians, must therefore find innovative ways to recruit and retain talented people. Moreover, for its military members, the principle of unlimited liability taps into unique motivations in individuals, given the commitment to risk their lives, if and when necessary.

This special issue of the *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* (*JMVFH*) examines the many faces of diversity in military employment by exploring both demographic diversity, such as race, gender, and LGBTQIA2S+ perspectives, and less recognized aspects of diversity, such as generational differences and distinctions among Regular Force, Reserve Force, and civilians within the defence team. Understanding the unique experiences, perspectives, and concerns of specific sub-groups of personnel is important in tackling integration challenges as the DND and CAF strive to become more diverse.

The benefits of this diversity within DND/CAF are often presented through the prism of operational effectiveness. Indeed, there is no doubt an organization will work better if it removes barriers for under-represented groups, tackles unconscious biases in personnel selection processes, and sets targets to better reflect the diversity of the Canadian population. However, DND/CAF should continue to make clear that this is a core value, in addition to being an organizational and operational requirement. Improving diversity is the right thing to do and sets the conditions for a culture that is more inclusive and respectful. The lack of diversity and inclusion affecting specific sub-groups, most notably women and racialized service members, has caused people harm. Therefore, to study diversity entails examining personnel policies and their effects, and also entails a recognition that culture is at the heart of DND/CAF dynamics.

Based on the various analytical requirements of this topic, we are pleased this special issue features researchers from different professional and disciplinary backgrounds. The special issue touches on two important aspects of diversity: DND/CAF personnel requirements and how to better achieve them, and the role culture plays in binding different sub-groups together as part of the same team. The CAF has embarked on a journey of culture change that will evolve over the long term. To this end, our contributing authors have identified specific initiatives and strategies that can contribute to improvement at the institutional level. In this short introduction, we provide additional background on why diversity is such an important consideration and how culture change can ultimately support greater diversity within the defence team. Ultimately, diversity needs to be fostered in a positive organizational culture, one characterized by dignity and respect, to realize its potential.

DIVERSITY AND CANADIAN SOCIETY

The question of to what extent a country's military should stand apart as a distinct organization with its own system of values and priorities has long been a point of reasoned discussion. Nonetheless, it is incontrovertible that defence and security forces are comprised of an array of individuals with differing identities, and the defence force as a whole is influenced in terms of structure and composition by the social context of the population from which it is drawn.

The CAF must continue working to ensure all personnel are respected and treated with dignity, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, or religion. The simple reality is that societies in Canada, and its closest allies, are changing, with both demographics and social structures undergoing profound shifts. If the defence and security apparatus is to thrive through recruiting and retaining the right people, these are changes to which we need to react. While it is necessary to maintain focus on the core mission and capabilities required to be effective, infused within this process

must be an awareness of the way in which social changes and society's perceptions of the defence enterprise shape the ability to recruit and retain personnel. A career in defence represents a small number of the broad and varied gamut of available career options. Unless it is seen as a worthwhile and rewarding profession, the ability to maintain mission readiness and operate effectively in the twenty-first century security environment will be eroded.

Alongside the demographic and social shift is a similar change in the roles and responsibilities that DND/CAF is required to perform. The classic and most straightforward example is the emergence of cyberspace as a genuine threat vector. Responding to threats in and throughout cyberspace requires both military and civilian personnel to engage new ways of thinking. However, the skill sets required to operate effectively in this space may not always align fully with those that have traditionally been valorized in the defence world. Consequently, there is a growing understanding of the need to effectively integrate a range of services, knowledge bases, and lines of authority to ensure the ongoing security of the state, and the support of its allies — Canada's Pan-Domain Force Employment Concept represents an interesting example of this change.

Considering and reacting to the new force requirements means also thinking about how the military can work seamlessly alongside civilian agencies and departments that support, enable, and complement its actions. Recognizing that the military is simply one component of the total defence force also has a significant effect on the way in which the defence and security of a state is understood. This acknowledgement heightens the need for a more robust understanding of what diversity means in the context of defence and security.

Yet, there is a growing awareness and understanding about the often damaging challenges that have existed in respecting and encouraging diversity in the armed forces. This special issue sets the foundation for developing a better understanding of how different identities and practices have shaped cohesion and integration (both positively and negatively), as well as offering fresh insight into how the total defence force can adapt and leverage the benefits of diversity through a healthy organizational culture.

CULTURE CHANGE

This special issue not only broadens our understanding of diversity but also encourages readers to consider diversity at an individual level so as to recognize the unique backgrounds, perspectives, and subcultures of CAF soldiers, sailors, and aviators, both Regular and Reserve Forces, as well as those of public servants working in defence. This approach aligns with CAF direction, as delineated in the CAF Diversity Strategy,[2] which moves away from a minimal compliance with the legal obligations of the Employment Equity Act, toward a values-based approach focused on a deeper appreciation and inclusion of individual differences. This shift is quite ambitious for an organization that has traditionally been homogeneous in its composition and uniform in its culture.

The CAF must continue working to ensure all personnel are respected and treated with dignity, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, language, or religion. Foundational culture change will be difficult, however, because DND is a large, unique, and extremely complex organization. In addition to demographic diversity, the CAF and DND have a diversity in personnel dynamics, including those between and among military and civilian personnel, Regular Force members and reservists, members of different military services, officers and non-commissioned members, rank differences, distinctions between those serving in operational and support occupations, as well as differences in the culture of those working in headquarters and on bases — not to mention the intersections among these. What is needed, therefore, is a deeper analysis of diversity in the organization that can inform a culture change that appreciates individual diversity and establishes respect, inclusivity, and a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel.

Cultural change requires paying attention to specific sub-groups with unique backgrounds, identities, perspectives, lived experiences, and challenges within the CAF and DND. Without this nuanced understanding, the organization will be challenged to meet the physical, psychological, spiritual, and emotional needs of its people. At the same time, all individuals need to feel safe and welcome to be their authentic selves at work, regardless of their individual characteristics. This values-based approach is more conducive to achieving a diverse and inclusive workforce and culture through the promotion of values and an ethos that embraces diversity and inclusion. It is through this lens that the DND and CAF will most effectively minimize unconscious biases, eliminate discrimination, and remove systemic barriers to create an inclusive organizational culture in which everyone feels a sense of belonging and purpose.

DND/CAF recognizes the gap between its aspirations for the organization's culture and the reality on the ground. Owing to a myriad of factors, including significant demographic changes, evolution in the nature of work, changes in the types of threats and approaches to operations, not to mention recent revelations of sexual misconduct, hateful conduct, and other types of problematic behaviour, it is clear that action is needed to create a more respectful and inclusive institution for all members in uniform, and the defence civilians who serve alongside them. We hope this compendium provides useful insights, as the DND and CAF, as well as other militaries, navigate the institutional and societal imperatives to grow and create a workplace characterized by the meaningful inclusion of all members.

As Maj.-Gen. Lise Bourgon notes in the Foreword to this issue, embarking on culture change and enhancing standards of professional conduct represent an opportunity to think ambitiously about the factors that run counter to a culture of dignity and respect. In this way, DND and CAF can foster the cultural change that supports its dedicated members as they serve Canada, a culture that reflects the core values of Canadian society and rebuilds the public trust critical to the success of the institution and the morale of its members. The profession of arms must recognize, embrace, and actively promote diversity as a core organizational value that contributes to members' health and well-being. This focus is exactly how diversity ultimately intersects with culture.

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FOREWORD

The year 2021 was a challenging one for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) following allegations of sexual misconduct, including at the highest levels of leadership. Yet, CAF members continue with their exceptional day-to-day work, supporting domestic operations, such as the pandemic response, international operations, such as United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa and capacity-building efforts in the Middle East and Ukraine, as well as enhanced forward presence in the Baltics to uphold NATO's deterrence posture.

Our professional soldiers, aviators, and sailors are highly dedicated and resilient, able to carry on with their work while dealing with the internal turmoil precipitated by recent events, and the stated need for culture change. But CAF members, civilian members of the defence team, and Canadians deserve better. Military Personnel Command, along with the Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture, supported by every Level One organization and, indeed, all members of the defence team, bear the responsibility of resolving the personnel strains that can corrode the will to serve and the morale of the organization, as well as erode public trust in the institution.

As we embark on this journey of culture change, we also need to meet CAF force generation requirements that have been made more difficult to achieve because of disruptions within our recruitment and training systems caused by the global pandemic. How then can the CAF, as an organization striving to retain its employer-of-choice status, optimally harness and retain the talent it has and continue to attract the best Canada has to offer? Some of the answers to this question are found in the articles that follow.

Before becoming Deputy Commander of the Military Personnel Command, I had the privilege of spending one year at the Centre for International and Defence Policy at Queen's University, as a Visiting Defence Fellow, to study some of these military personnel challenges. What struck me from that year of research was the importance of not solely looking inward when the CAF is facing internal challenges but also looking outward to see how those who are outside the organization can help. Culture change is hard and takes time; we need help from not only the entire defence team, but also from external experts who can contribute to an ongoing dialogue about how the CAF can enact critical culture change and maintain the trust of Canadians while remaining a world-class fighting force tasked with defending our interests and values both domestically and internationally.

This special issue reflects the kind of partnerships that are critical to overcoming traditional professional divides and silos and to harnessing knowledge and insight from a range of perspectives. The authors featured in this special issue of the *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* have all directly contributed to what I hope will be an ongoing and multi-disciplinary conversation about optimizing CAF culture. A dialogue that, as this special issue's title suggests, will build on the many faces of diversity the CAF is meant to embody.

The CAF will work to better recruit, employ, support, and retain members from under-represented and equity-seeking groups so the military can keep pace with the changing demographics, and employment approaches, of Canadian society. We know that diversity contributes to operational effectiveness, in turn, improving our success on operations. We will be a better and more capable force, able to respond domestically and throughout the world, when we achieve our diversity and inclusion goals.

This special issue also underscores the importance of diversity in the professional sense, what has been termed a Whole Force Perspective, a Total Defence Force, or in Canada, the defence team. This pursuit entails examining the institutional distinctions related to Regular and Reserve Force personnel, military members, and defence civilians, as well as cultural differences among the military services. Embarking on culture change and enhancing standards of professional conduct represents an opportunity to think ambitiously beyond the various elements that run counter to a culture of dignity and respect. This collection of original articles showcases important empirical work that offers evidence in support of the challenges I have alluded to here, offering some paths forward.

We have a long way to go from here, but when we tap into a diversity of expertise, of people, and of professional backgrounds, we are — no doubt — well positioned to come up with the best available solutions, to honour those who serve and fellow Canadians who trust us to serve.

Maj.-Gen. Lise Bourgon
A/Comd Military Personnel Command &
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Canadian Armed Forces Women, Peace and
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REVIEW

Integrating civilians into military organizations: Linking micro and macro levels of analysis

Ryan Kelty[a] and Richard E. Niemeyer[a]

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Western nations have increasingly moved to a blended military-civilian (mil-civ) workforce for their armed forces. Much attention to the use of civilians in military organizations focuses on a macro perspective (e.g., policy, military doctrine). This article addresses the paucity of micro-level analyses of American mil-civ blended armed forces organizations and develops a theoretical model to link these findings to macro-level outcomes important to military readiness. **Methods:** A systematic search of sociological literature was conducted to examine several key mil-civ integration micro-level outcomes. Results of this review are situated in a theoretical model that specifies how micro-level findings link to macro-level outcomes. **Results:** Connections between civilian contractors' social identities and pro-military values and behaviours is present but limited. Perceived contractors' effects on military culture indicates they are believed to have numerous benefits, but also key negative effects on elements such as clarity of mission, accomplishing mission, and maintaining good order and discipline. Mil-civ social comparisons were found to decrease organizational commitment and retention among uniformed personnel but not civilians. Finally, mental health issues for deployed civilians and mil-civ differences in mental health were identified. Systematic application of a proposed theoretical model illustrates how these varied findings can be understood in a more holistic way by linking micro and macro levels of analysis. **Discussion:** Significant challenges are examined across key domains that have relevance for military readiness at the macro level, but also important micro-level implications for health, safety, perceived cohesion, and satisfaction of military and civilian personnel.

Key words: American, armed forces, civilian contractors, civilian integration, cohesion, mental health, military culture, readiness, retention, social identity, theoretical model, United States

RÉSUMÉ

Introduction : Les nations occidentales font de plus en plus appel à une main-d'œuvre mixte militaires-civils (mil-civ) pour leurs forces armées. Beaucoup de l'attention accordée aux civils dans les organisations militaires est axée sur une macroperspective (p. ex., politiques, doctrine militaire). Cet article se penche sur le manque de microanalyse des organisations mil-civ de forces armées américaines et élabore un modèle théorique pour lier ces conclusions aux résultats à une macro-échelle pertinente pour la disponibilité militaire. **Méthodologie :** Une recherche systématique de la littérature sociologique a été effectuée pour examiner plusieurs résultats clés d'intégration mil-civ à une microéchelle. Les résultats de cet examen sont situés dans un modèle théorique qui précise la façon dont les conclusions à une microéchelle sont liées à des résultats à une macroéchelle. **Résultats :** Des connexions entre les identités sociales et les valeurs et comportements promilitaires des entrepreneurs civils sont présentes, mais limitées. Les effets perçus de la présence d'entrepreneurs sur la culture militaire indiquent qu'ils sont jugés comme apportant de nombreux avantages, mais qu'ils ont aussi des effets négatifs clés sur des éléments comme la clarté de la mission, la réalisation de la mission et le maintien de l'ordre et de la discipline. Selon l'étude, les comparaisons sociales mil-civ diminuent l'engagement organisationnel et la fidélisation chez le personnel en uniforme, mais non chez les civils. Finalement, des problèmes de santé mentale pour les civils déployés et des différences dans la santé mentale des mil-civ ont été notés. L'application systématique d'un modèle proposé théorique illustre la façon dont ces conclusions variées peuvent être comprises de façon plus holistique en liant les microanalyses et les macroanalyses. **Discussion :** Des défis significatifs sont examinés

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dans divers domaines clés pertinents pour la disponibilité militaire à une macroéchelle, mais il est aussi question d'importantes répercussions à une microéchelle pour la santé, la sécurité, la cohésion perçue et la satisfaction du personnel militaire et civil.

Mots-clés : Américains, cohésion, culture militaire, disponibilité, entrepreneur civil, États-Unis, forces armées, identité sociale, intégration civile, modèle théorique, rétention, santé mentale

LAY SUMMARY

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan changed how civilians are integrated in military units, which has key implications for both personnel and the larger organization. Examining micro-effects is important because they reveal unintended consequences of personnel policies based on macro-level goals and assumptions. This article reviews 15 years of sociological research on micro-level outcomes across several key domains. Extant literature presents consistent findings of negative impacts of civilian integration on social comparisons, retention, cohesion, and mental health. Conversely, mixed results are found on military-civilian (mil-civ) integration on military culture and customs. This article also proposes a novel theoretical model to explain how these micro-effects affect macro-level military readiness. Accordingly, this article provides a framework to organize extant literature and identify new research linking micro-macro levels in military organizations. It is clear mil-civ blended forces produce unintended challenges for military readiness and individual personnel. Moving forward, more research is needed to examine unintended effects based on race and gender representation in a mil-civ blended force. There is much still unknown about the micro-level effects of systematically integrating civilians — for both military and civilian personnel — but what is clear is that it produces numerous unintended challenges for military readiness and individual service members.

INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on a review of micro-level analyses (individuals and groups) of American military-civilian (mil-civ) blended armed forces organizations, and how these findings link to macro-level (institutional) outcomes important to military readiness. The article first presents a theoretical model that demonstrates how outcomes at an individual level influence institutional outcomes. In doing so, the authors show how mil-civ integration in military organizations serves a key diversity function. Once the model is presented, its utility is demonstrated in bridging micro-macro outcomes by reviewing literature across the domains of social identity, relative deprivation through social comparisons, perceived unit cohesion, and mental health as examples of the utility of the model. This study concludes by highlighting new lines of research suggested by the proposed integrated framework.

Mil-civ blended military organizations

Civilians have been incorporated in military organizations across the globe for a very long time. For example, the word contractor derives from the Italian condottieri who sold their military skills throughout Europe in the Middle Ages. Further back, private warriors fought for the Greek and Roman city-states, and for kings in Mesopotamia more than 2,000 BCE. Recognizing the broad historical record of civilian integration, the example of the U.S. military is taken as the empirical focus of this article.[1-3]

Civilians have been part of America's total force structure since before the Revolutionary War. Accordingly, the contemporary use of civilians is not novel. What is new in recent conflicts is the expansion in scope of duties civilians are performing.[4,5] They are no longer restricted to rear detachment service-support roles. For example, for several decades now, civilians have been on the front lines in logistics, aviation, security and patrol, intelligence, and engineering roles. Since 2001, the U.S. military's official position identifies civilians as part of its total force, referred to civilians as force multipliers, and makes the argument that the U.S. Armed Forces depend on civilian personnel for operational effectiveness.[6,7]

Over the last 20 years, there has been a lot of attention paid to the shift in emphasis and scope of civilian work in the U.S. total force from a macro perspective, highlighting issues related to civil-military relations, development of doctrine, and organizational effectiveness.[8-10] Much less attention has been given in the scientific literature to the micro-level effects for mil-civ personnel on the increasing reliance on civilians. This article focuses on this under-studied, yet critical, area of civilianization of the military. It shows how these micro-level effects are connected to key macro-level military outcomes, including readiness and retention. In this pursuit, data from a range of civilian types are examined: federal civilians, civilian contractors, and civilian mariners. Findings are situated in a holistic theoretical model. While the article focuses on the American case to substantiate the model, its general principles can be used to examine military organizations across socio-cultural contexts.

This article addresses three key questions: 1) What are some key micro-level outcomes for civilians serving in military organizations? 2) To what extent do military and civilian personnel have similar experiences, perceptions, and outcomes across a range of domains? 3) What implications do these micro-level findings have for macro-level outcomes important to military organizations?

METHODS

Review of the empirical literature

This article focuses on the synthesis of micro-level analyses in mil-civ blended military organizations. Results of this review are then situated in a theoretical model that specifies how micro-level findings link to macro-level outcomes. A search for articles was conducted using the criteria of being micro level in focus, empirically based, sociologically focused, analyzing the American military, and published within the last 15 years. The literature search was conducted across Google Scholar, JSTOR, and the RAND Corporation. Additional search criteria focused on the key outcomes identified in several of the initial articles that met the above criteria. Key words used included civilian contractor and department of defense/army civilian, deployed civilian, defense civilian, social identity, military culture, cohesion, retention, social comparison, and mental health. A total of 19 articles were found that were directly relevant. They are included in this review and model application.

Theoretical model

The aim of this review is to create an analytical framework that can generate holistic explanations for the causes and consequences of collective military power (i.e., readiness). To accomplish this, the theoretical framework presented is an adaptation and integration of Turner[11-13] and Mann[14] (Figure 1). Following Mann,[14(p. 6-7)] general collective power is defined broadly as occurring when "humans enter into cooperative, collective power relations with one another" in order to "enhance their joint power over their parties or over nature."

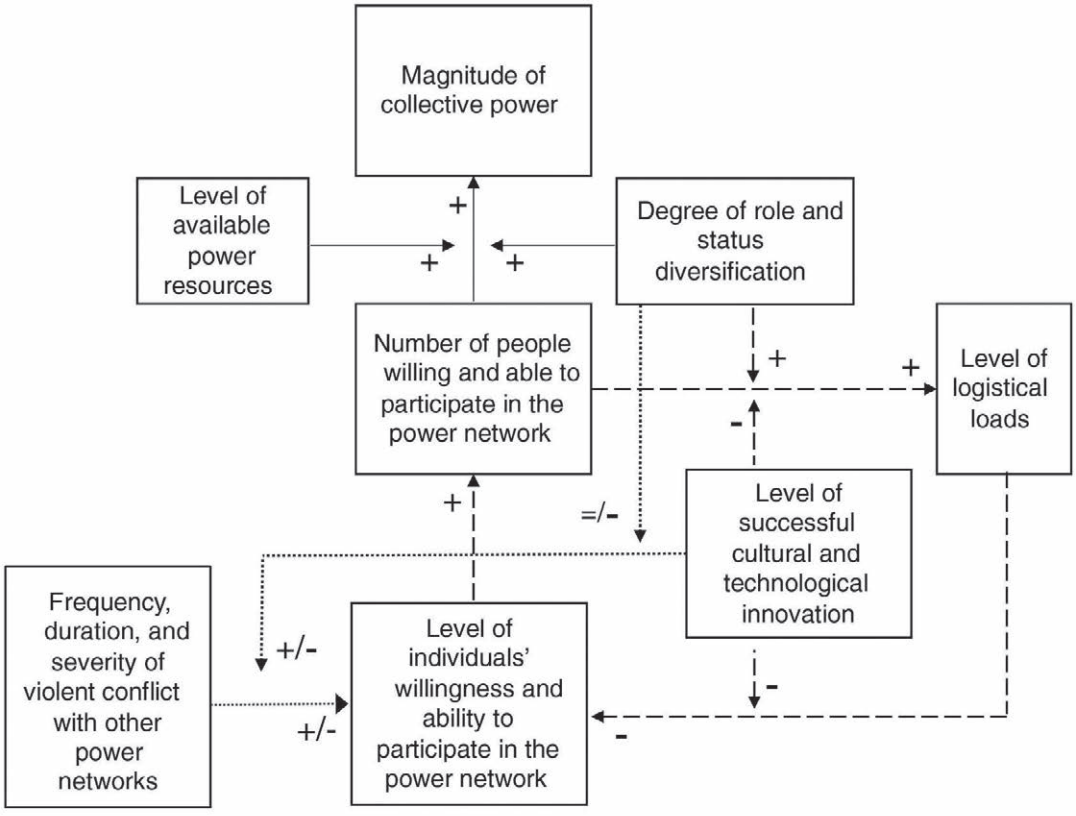

Figure 1. Model of micro-to-macro linkages in military organizations

The model is divided into three parts. The model's first argument focuses on the macro level of analysis (depicted using solid lines). It argues that the magnitude of collective power is a positive function of 1) the number of people willing and able to participate in the power network, 2) the level of available power resources, and 3) the degree of role and status diversification within the power network. The term positive function refers to a positive association, such that an increase or decrease in the value of one variable correlates with a corresponding increase or decrease in the value of another variable. Specifically, the greater the number of people willing to participate in the network of cooperative and collective power relations, the greater the magnitude of power the network can generate.

This direct relationship is moderated by the amount of power resources controlled by the network and the network's degree of role and status diversification. The former association stems from the fact technologies of violence (e.g., guns, bombs, tanks, planes) dramatically increase the scale and scope of the network's lethal violence. The latter association stems from the fact complex divisions of labour and diverse stocks of knowledge, experiences, and perspectives increase a network's ability to innovate and engage in complex social actions.[15]

The second part of the model accounts for how the above macro-level dynamics interact with micro-level processes (depicted using dashed lines). Specifically, it argues that increases in the number of people in the network increase the magnitude and severity of the network's level of logistical loads — that is, the problems associated with the production and distribution of resources, and the motivation, coordination, and regulation of pro-organizational and goal-oriented behaviour.[15] This positive association is positively moderated by the degree of role and status diversification as the number of different roles and the potential for role-based and status-related conflicts increase.

This second part of the model also argues that an increase in the level of logistical loads is negatively associated with the level of individuals' willingness and ability to participate in the power network, which is positively associated with the network's population size. In other words, the more individuals experience negative emotions and other negative experiences because they participate in the network, the less likely they are to be willing to continue to participate.

Over time, this lowered participation can lead to these individuals reducing effort on behalf of the network — or increasing desire to leave the network, thus reducing its size. In either case, the result is reduced organizational readiness. However, this second part of the model acknowledges the ability of successful cultural and technological innovation to create norms, values, beliefs, procedures, and physical technologies capable of minimizing the magnitude and severity of the level of logistical loads. This is depicted in the model via the moderating effect of level of successful cultural and technological innovation on the positive association between number of people willing and able to participate in power network and the level of logistical loads.

The third part of the model (depicted using dotted lines) considers the effect of exogenous influences — that is, the positive and negative effects or the frequency, duration, and severity of violent conflict with other power networks on the level of the individual's willingness and ability to participate in the power network. According to this third part of the model, external conflicts initially increase the individual's willingness and ability to participate in the military's power network due to patriotism and collective identity. However, as the frequency, duration, and severity of conflicts increase, there comes a point when the association becomes negative due to excessive negative emotion (e.g., fear, anxiety, hopelessness), and increased rates of physical disability and death.

The level of successful cultural and technological innovation can negatively moderate this association by creating norms, values, beliefs, behaviours, and technologies to mitigate these harmful effects. However, the effectiveness of these cultural and technological innovations may be negatively moderated by the power network's degree of role and status diversification if the level of diversity precludes the development of standardized interventions. In other words, the greater the number of unique statuses and roles within the power network, the lower the probability a cultural and technological innovation will adequately address every individual's needs. For example, institutional innovations developed to help military members deal with stressors of military deployment may not be as effective for deployed civilians, requiring new cultural innovations targeting civilians' needs.

In the following sections, the model's second argument is applied to show how several of military sociology's micro-level research programs related to mil-civ integration (i.e., identity, mental health, cohesion, military culture, order, and discipline) help to form a cohesive body of knowledge that links micro-to-macro levels of military organizations. While this article focuses on the

micro-to-macro linkages, the model also allows for work that examines the macro-to-micro linkages and, as such, may be used to address a wide range of research questions across myriad topics within military sociology.

RESULTS

Social identities

Within blended mil-civ organizations, military and civilian statuses have important implications for perceptions and expectations individuals have of themselves and others.[16,17] Identities tied to mil-civ statuses are highly salient in the rank-conscious institution of the military. In this model, developing and cultivating identities tied to the military institution (both military and civilian) is a form of cultural innovation that moderates the negative effect of logistical loads on the level of the individual's willingness and ability to participate in the power network by increasing the member's emotional connection to the network.[18] According to Turner,[12(p. 93)] individuals experience positive emotions when one or more of their basic identities is verified. When individuals experience verification of one or more identity, they experience positive emotions that they then attribute to the groups, networks, and organizations of which they are a part.[12(p. 93)]

Over time, repetition of this process will increase their identity's perceived legitimacy and their emotional connection to it. The positive effects of this emotional connection will continue even after individuals formally leave the group, so long as they continue to identify with the group and experience vicarious rewards whenever the group succeeds.[12(p. 97)]

In recent years, arguments have been made that the socialization of a military identity serves as a mechanism of social control in an age of blended mil-civ staffing of the military. The idea is that, since many civilian contractors and Department of Defense civilian personnel previously served in uniform, the military identity they established as service members will continue to motivate desired attitudes and behaviours now that they are civilians. The key set of interests in this set of issues is facilitating ethical behaviour, orientation toward service, and commitment to the organization.[18,19]

A study of more than 200 private military and security force contractors found there was a general sentiment that "security contractors' identities and operational responsibilities resemble largely those of constabulary or postmodern peacekeeping soldiers."[18(p. 283)] Other studies found a less strong connection between prior military service and continuation of military identity among civilians working with military organizations.[17,20] While the military continues to focus intensely on establishing and enhancing military identity among those in uniform as an informal mechanism to foster desired pro-organizational attitudes and behaviours, the same emphasis is not present among civilians within the total force. To the degree that military identities (for military and civilians) can be successfully innovated and established, the model suggests this micro-level outcome will affect the military's readiness through retention by reducing the negative effect of logistical loads on the level of individuals' willingness and ability to participate in the power network.

Military culture and organizational effectiveness

Several scholars and military operators have argued military culture provides a stabilizing foundation for a mil-civ blended force, especially since many civilians working for the military previously served in uniform. A study of U.S. Army soldiers and Department of Army civilians (DAC; federal civilians) found several potentially concerning outcomes of the integration of private military contractors on the unit's culture and organizational effectiveness.[21] More than 40% of military and DAC personnel reported that contractors negatively affect the military's ability to maintain its customs and traditions. Approximately 30% of each group indicated civilian contractors decrease the ability to maintain good order and discipline. A quarter of service members and nearly one-third of DACs indicated contractors made identifying the mission of the unit confusing. In addition, more than one-third of soldiers and DACs reported decreased unit morale as a result of contractor integration. Finally, approximately one-fifth of military and DAC personnel reported the civilian contractors they worked with had decreased the unit's ability to accomplish its mission.

These seemingly contradictory findings can be accounted for in this model by acknowledging the countervailing influences the degree of role and status diversification and level of successful cultural and technological innovation have on the power network's emergent logistical loads. According to the model, a shared military culture could stabilize interactions between active duty members, civilian members with prior military experience, and civilian members with no prior military

experience by standardizing norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours and reducing logistical loads.[11,13] However, the nature of the status and roles filled by both civilians with, and without, prior military experience inevitably create logistical loads within the power network to the degree the positions themselves require novel norms, values, beliefs, and behaviours that differ from those regulating the larger military network.[13]

Social comparisons and retention

Differentiation within the division of labour and its effect on social interactions can also affect logistical loads through social comparisons. One of the critical contributions of the seminal work *American Soldier*[22] completed during the Second World War was the development of the concept of social comparisons and its application to issues of satisfaction and cohesion in military units. In contemporary military organizations, this concept has been effectively applied in examining the effect of mil-civ comparisons on key outcomes such as cohesion, job satisfaction, and retention.[21,23-27] Service members report the civilians (i.e., civilian contractors and civilian mariners) they worked with were better off than they were across numerous work-related items (e.g., pay, leave, work/family balance, how hard they work). Civilians' social comparisons mostly replicated the findings from their military peers — they, too, thought civilians have better work conditions and benefits.

The social comparisons service members made between themselves and their civilian counterparts had significant negative effects on service members' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and retention attitudes. This set of findings was robust across numerous military organizations (e.g., combat aviation, security forces, deployed naval ship, and logistics units). According to the model, service members reported relative deprivation based on comparisons with civilians elevates logistical loads by increasing the effort required to motivate, coordinate, and regulate pro-organizational and goal-oriented behaviour. Failure to secure desirable resources not only generates negative emotion per se, but also reduces commitment to the group and role distancing if the reason for the failure can be attributed to the group, organization, or institution.[28(p. 142)]

Cohesion

Many have questioned the effect a mil-civ blended organizational context might have on unit cohesion — a critical variable for military readiness. Despite the concern raised on this issue, as of the writing of this article, only two empirical studies were published that assess this relationship.[23] Service members' social comparisons with civilians were found to significantly reduce perceived unit cohesion among service members. Further, this perceived reduction in unit cohesion drove more negative outcomes for both job satisfaction and commitment to the organization — both of which, in turn, negatively affect the willingness of those in uniform to remain in service.

Once again, the model predicts negative emotions associated with the feeling of relative deprivation will increase logistical loads by increasing the effort required to motivate, coordinate, and regulate behaviour. Specifically, individuals will become increasingly angry with, and prejudiced toward, other group members in a blended force — and, thus, less willing to cooperate with them — if they perceive these individuals are responsible for the failure to secure desired resources (e.g., not completing their work).[28(p. 142)] Given that cohesion has been empirically established as a buffer against negative health outcomes (e.g., anger, anxiety, depression) among deployed personnel[29] (see next section), this finding has implications beyond retention that can affect military readiness.

Mental health

As depicted in the third part of the model, mental health is a final key set of micro-level findings with institutional-level implications related to mil-civ integrated organizations. Numerous studies have established threats related to deployment in a theatre of active hostilities are a significant stressor.[5,30-32] Additionally, several studies have determined that perceived threats lead to various adverse mental health disorders, independent of whether or not the threats are related to combat exposure.[33-35] Though extant literature confirms connections between deployment threats, stress, and negative mental health,[36-38] scant research has focused on civilians, and little is known about the extent to which military and civilian personnel may differ on deployment-related mental health outcomes.

Despite some evidence civilians have rates of diagnosable mental health issues at least as high as their military peers, they do not appear to have adequate resources to deal with the stressors of deployment.[5] A study of deployed contractors showed only a quarter reported adequate mental health support during deployment in Iraq and Afghanistan.[5] In studies using data from federal civilians in logistics units deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan, psychological resources used to deal with the ambient threats associated with deployment to theatres of war

found the presumed benefit of coping mechanisms are not always realized. Both cohesion[28] and mastery[39] (sense of control over one's life) were shown to have inconsistent moderation effects on the relationship between threats/stressors and negative mental health (i.e., anger, depression, anxiety) among deployed civilians.

An additional study focused on differential mental health outcomes between deployed federal civilians and military personnel.[40] Among civilians, there was no evidence social support moderates the relationship between stress and mental health (i.e., anger, anxiety, depression). However, among service members, social support was found to be a significant moderator for this relationship, though these effects were non-linear. At low levels of stress, high social support is most effective in reducing service members' mental health issues. However, at moderate and high levels of stress, this psychological benefit disappears.

Collectively, these studies focused on the mental health of deployed civilian and military personnel indicate a complicated relationship among variables assumed to promote psychological resilience. According to the model, increases in the frequency, duration, and severity of violent conflict with other power networks eventually reduce the level of an individual's willingness and ability to participate in the power network. In short, this association occurs as the excessive negative emotions associated with the experience of conflict accumulate to impact the individual's mental health. As this toll increases and more individuals become unwilling or unable to participate, military readiness is undermined as the number of people willing and able to participate in the power network decreases. Although the model acknowledges the military's ability to innovate cultural and technological solutions to mitigate the adverse mental health effects of conflict, the solutions must be tailored to the specific needs of the affected members. The reviewed research demonstrating different mental health outcomes for military and civilians indicates existing interventions do not provide civilians with the same level of salutary benefit seen among their military peers. Even among military members, benefits are likely not maximized.

DISCUSSION

The micro-level effects of mil-civ integrated military organizations are important for many key macro-level outcomes. One take away from the analytical model presented is that the military-as-a-macro-social-institution is subject to numerous internal and external social forces. Some of these social forces act to promote social cohesion and effectiveness, while others increase the chance of disintegration. However, interventions to improve military readiness must account for possible unintended consequences because these social forces unfold and interact in complex ways, that is, via direct and indirect effects and through reciprocal feedback loops.[15] For example, while it is true an increase in role and status diversification magnifies the effect of population growth on the military's logistical loads, the positive effects on the military's collective power associated with increased diversity (e.g., broadened perspectives, greater skill-sets, flexibility, and enhanced creativity or innovation) are equally real. Consequently, reducing mil-civ integration is not an effective solution for reducing the military's level of logistical loads, even if increasing mil-civ diversification is partly responsible for increasing logistical loads in the first place.

Instead, military officials and other vested parties should focus on increasing cultural and technological innovations that directly target either the logistical loads themselves or the moderating effect of diversification on logistical loads.

Notably, the model highlights how macro-level and micro-level dynamics within institutions reciprocally influence one another and how these interactions impact military readiness. For example, the level of successful cultural and technological innovation is a macro-level property of an institution. From a top-down perspective, cultural innovations that define situations, status, roles, and identities will organize micro-level dynamics by structuring individual courses of action, norms and values, expectations, and commitments. However, as this model illustrates, once these definitions are in place, modifications to cultural innovations occurring at the micro level can cause feedback that destabilizes the institution by increasing diversification.

The degree and distribution of role and status diversification within an institution is also a macro-level institutional property that affects micro-level processes. Specifically, the more diverse a population is, and the more uniformly distributed the diversity is, the higher the probability individuals will have an opportunity to engage in the social comparison process. As the proposed model indicates, these social comparisons can cause feedback that destabilizes the institution by increasing logistical loads.

Future research

While the examples in this article focus on a micro-level phenomenon, the model provides a framework

for identifying research questions across micro-macro levels that allow researchers to address policy level (i.e., macro) implications of micro findings, as well as testing micro-level effects related to institutional level changes in staffing, use of forces, or issues related to mil-civ relations. In particular, the authors urge the application of the model presented in future research to generate more holistic understandings of the causes and consequences of diversity and inclusion policies that span micro- and macro-organizational levels.

The review of literature for this article highlighted specific gaps in the literature on mil-civ blended organizations. More research is needed to understand mil-civ differences across various outcomes with an eye toward specifying the degree to which outcomes vary across different types of civilians in military organizations. The proposed model can also be generalized to frame future research examining the causes and consequences of increased diversity beyond a simple mil-civ dichotomy.

As one example, the model argues: 1) individuals experience positive emotions whenever one or more of their basic identities is verified, and 2) experiencing these positive emotions will increase a network's legitimacy in its members' eyes and their emotional connection to it — positively affecting retention and readiness. To examine how other identity (dis)confirmation processes affect military readiness (e.g., social identities related to the racial, ethnic, gender, religious, sexual, and class-based identities), one need only to instantiate the model for such cases. Specifically, one could examine the diversification of the military to include people with transgender identities. On one hand, the model would predict this inclusion will increase the magnitude of the military's collective power by increasing the diversity of ideas, experiences, and so forth at the network's disposal. However, the model also predicts this change would increase logistical loads as the military adapts to integrate transgender members into the network. While these logistical loads can be addressed with cultural and technological innovations, the model predicts gaps in service may emerge elsewhere in unintended ways. For example, innovations to offset the effects of conflict may not adequately meet the needs of transgender or cisgender members.

Given that military organizations take great care to try to recruit and retain a diverse workforce of uniformed personnel to reflect the societies they defend, a systematic effort should be undertaken to determine effects of civilian integration on retention of women and racial minorities in both the military and civilian components of the total force. Gender and racial differences are also important to examine with respect to mental health outcomes, and the establishment and enactment of military related identities since the model presented suggests varying outcomes due to these key characteristics.

Conclusion

This article presents a theoretical framework to analyze micro-level outcomes and link them to macro-level effects in the larger military. By focusing on the abstract relationships between degree of role and status diversification within the military, the military's level of successful cultural and technological innovation, logistical loads, and level of individuals' willingness and ability to participate in the power network, this model provides a more holistic representation that links micro and macro levels of analysis and highlights critical similarities and differences between military and civilian populations. For example, by acknowledging how the degree of role and status diversification can complicate the effectiveness of cultural and technological innovation to address issues of identity, cohesion, or mental health issues, this model suggests new avenues of research to explain mil-civ differences in the literature.

Overall, the review of the literature across several micro-level outcomes has demonstrated the broad utility of this model to organize extant studies, to trace potential impacts across organizational levels, and to guide future research in military sociology that integrate micro-macro levels of analysis.

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the U.S. Air Force Academy, the air force, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

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REVIEW

Scoping review of mentorship programs for women in the military

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Mentorship is used in various contexts, including in the military, to support career advancement and provide psychosocial supports. Mentoring relationships have benefits for mentors, mentees, and organizations. They are increasingly used to support the success of minority populations, such as women. However, little is known about how gender and cultures within professions, such as the military, inform mentoring and mentorship programs. **Methods:** A scoping review was conducted to answer the question "How does the literature conceptualize and describe mentorship and mentoring programs in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations for women?" The structured methodological approach outlined by Arksey and O'Malley was used to guide this study. Peer-reviewed, English-language articles regarding mentorship in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United States, and the United Kingdom were included. **Results:** A total of 23 articles were included in the full-text review, the majority of which were from the United States. Themes included defining mentorship, how mentorship is used, the role of identity, and the impact of culture on mentorship. **Discussion:** Mentorship is being used to support the career and psychosocial development needs of all members of military and police services; however, there is increasing attention to its use to support women. Identity factors, such as gender and race, and organizational culture appear to affect the engagement and outcome of mentoring experiences. This scoping review highlights gaps in the current body of research, calling on the need for further exploration.

Key words: mentoring, mentorship, military, police, scoping review, women

RÉSUMÉ

Introduction : Le mentorat est utilisé dans divers contextes, notamment dans les forces armées, pour encourager l'avancement professionnel et offrir de l'appui psychosocial. Les relations de mentorat sont avantageuses pour les mentors, les personnes mentorées et les organisations. Elles servent de plus en plus à soutenir la réussite de groupes minoritaires, comme les femmes. Cependant, peu d'information est disponible sur l'effet qu'ont le genre et les cultures dans des professions, comme les forces armées et les services policiers, sur le mentorat et les programmes de mentorat. **Méthodologie :** Un examen exploratoire a été effectué pour répondre à la question « De quelle façon la littérature conceptualise-t-elle et décrit-elle le mentorat et les programmes de mentorat dans les forces armées, dans les domaines connexes aux forces armées et dans les services policiers pour les femmes? » L'approche méthodologique structurée décrite par Arksey et O'Malley a été utilisée pour orienter la présente étude. Des articles en anglais, approuvé par les pairs, sur le mentorat dans les forces armées, les domaines connexes aux forces armées et les services policiers de l'Australie, du Canada, de la Nouvelle-Zélande, des États-Unis et du Royaume-Uni ont été inclus. **Résultats :** Un total de 23 articles ont été inclus dans l'examen complet, dont la plupart provenaient des États-Unis. Parmi les thèmes désignés, notons la définition du mentorat, la façon dont le mentorat est utilisé, le rôle de l'identité et l'impact de la culture sur le mentorat. **Discussion :** Le mentorat est utilisé pour appuyer les besoins en matière d'avancement professionnel et de développement psychosocial de tous les membres de forces armées et de services policiers; cependant on accorde de plus en plus d'attention à la façon dont il est utilisé pour appuyer les femmes. Les facteurs identitaires, comme le genre et la race, ainsi que la culture organisationnelle, semblent avoir un effet sur l'engagement et les résultats en ce qui concerne les expériences de mentorat. Cet examen exploratoire souligne des lacunes dans le corpus de recherches actuelles, ce qui montre la nécessité d'effectuer des explorations plus poussées.

Mots-clés : examen exploratoire, femmes, forces armées, mentorat, parrainage, police

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LAY SUMMARY

Mentorship is used in a variety of professions, including in the military to support careers and personal development. Mentorship is known to have benefits for mentors, mentees, and organizations, and it is being used more often to support minority populations, such as women in certain male-dominated professions. However, little is known about how gender and cultures within the military affect mentoring and mentorship programs. A review of the literature was completed to answer the question "How does the literature conceptualize and describe mentorship and mentoring programs in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations for women?" A total of 23 articles were included, the majority of which were from the United States. These articles discussed defining mentorship, how mentorship is used, the role of identity, and the impact of culture on mentorship. This review highlights gaps in the current body of research, calling on the need for further exploration.

INTRODUCTION

Mentoring and mentorship programs are well studied topics in multiple contexts and are generally thought to improve an individual's organizational adjustment, lead to career advancement, and provide psychosocial support. Models of mentorship abound and range from strict assigned mentor-mentee relationships with a template for how interactions should occur to informal mentorship outside of organizational programs.[1-3] Generally, both mentors and mentees report positive experiences from mentorship relationships. Positive experiences of mentorship can also help under-represented populations to better integrate into workplaces. Better workplace integration is key to work-life balance and other mental and physical health concerns that may arise from workplace relationships. Under-represented populations tend to have greater health strains in their places of work, and mentorship could serve as a mechanism for support.[4] However, issues can also arise, especially in the balance of power between mentors and mentees,[5-7] that may be particularly pronounced in highly formalized structure- and rule-based cultures found in military, military adjacent (in our study, this includes individuals working in military health care), and policing organizations.

The cultures surrounding these organizations are unique from the civilian world, characterized by their own practices, attitudes, beliefs, language, traditions, and values.[8,9] In addition to their respective professional cultures (i.e., military culture), there exists the overlay of the culture of masculinity. In the U.S. military, women make up 16% of enlisted members and 19% of officers.[10] In Canada, women make up 16% of the Regular Force and primary Reserve Force.[11]

Scholars such as Whitworth and Managhan have documented a culture of masculinity in the Canadian Armed Forces that centres the white Canadian man as the heroic promoter of liberal values abroad and the defender of those same values at home.[12,13] In these institutions, femininity is undervalued and seen as the crucible men must defend and prove themselves against.[12,13] Rawski and Workman-Stark also found similar elements of masculine competition culture in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and other Western policing institutions.[14] This leaves women who pursue careers in male-dominated and militarized fields with few options for expressing themselves authentically and for advancing their careers, because women in these institutions may adopt masculine characteristics to cope and progress in their careers.[15]

Mentorship is seen as a route to women's career advancement, particularly in organizations such as the military where they may be marginalized as a result of their gender in a culture in which masculinity is dominant.[15-18] Marginalization may lead not only to high rates of attrition in these organizations but also to negative impacts on women's mental and physical health as they struggle to feel included and heard in masculine spaces.

Mentorship for military, military adjacent, and policing organizations has also been studied as it relates to career advancement and job satisfaction, as well as its necessity in the field.[19] For example, some studies have explored the positive impact of mentorship on mental health in the workplace, identifying support as an important health-promoting factor that affects mentees.[7,20] Other studies have applied social network theory or models of mentor quality to the military as an institution.[21,22] White male mentors in the military also appear to be open to mentoring women and minorities, and differences are more likely to arise around rank and the organization of the unit.[23]

As the studies reviewed identify — and as this review demonstrates — mentorship can be useful in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations. Literature on this topic comes from multiple different perspectives and disciplines and is therefore hard to

unify, especially with respect to research on women in these organizations. This scoping review addresses the question "How does the literature conceptualize and describe mentorship and mentorship programs in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations for women?" This review furthers efforts to explore how women's mental and physical health could be supported through mentorship in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations.

METHODS

Given the purpose of the study, a scoping review was determined to be the most appropriate method to review existing literature on the use of mentorship in the military and similar professions. Scoping reviews are the preferred method to "examine the extent, range and nature of research activities" as a way to map out a research area where it may be difficult to "visualize the range of material that might be available."[24(p. 22)] The structured five-step methodological procedures for completing a scoping review, as outlined by Arksey and O'Malley and expanded on by Levac and colleagues,[24,25] were used to guide this study. The first step in conducting a scoping review is to determine the scope and focus of the research question. As recommended by Arksey and O'Malley and Levac and colleagues,[24,25] factors of breadth and specificity were balanced when determining the research question as stated earlier.

Next, the search, identification, and retrieval process involved in accessing relevant databases was determined in consultation with a social sciences librarian to ensure a robust search across a wider range of databases. Canadian and international research was electronically searched in July and August 2020 using the following databases: OMNI, Academic Search Complete, Academic OneFile, JSTOR, Gender Studies Database, and Google Scholar. Hand searches of lists of eligible literature were also conducted to yield any additional sources. Database searches were completed by combing key descriptor terms related to mentorship programs in military, military adjacent, or policing organizations aimed at supporting women (e.g., military, police, women, females, mentorship program, mentoring).

Articles included in the study were limited to those that were peer reviewed, published in the English language (because of the lack of translation capacity) in one of the Five Eyes nations (i.e., Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand), and published between January 2001 and August 2020. The Five Eyes nations were chosen because of similarities in socio-economic climate and national and international geopolitical positions. In addition, the Five Eyes nations have been involved in comparable peacekeeping missions since the 1990s, with increased involvement in combat operations after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, that also saw increased participation of women on the front lines of both military and police services. In practice, most articles were from the United States.

The next stage was study selection. An iterative process occurs as decisions are made about inclusion and exclusion criteria.[25] For the current study, selection criteria were developed by the authors, and studies were retrieved using key search terms as a guide. The literature included reports on studies that used both qualitative and quantitative methods, as well as position or perspective articles, all from peer-reviewed publications. All articles included from 2001 to the present described the use of mentorship in military, military adjacent, or policing organizations. More specifically, the included literature either discussed a study examining the effect of mentorship on military or police careers (e.g., program evaluation) and any gender differences or presented a position regarding mentorship in the military or similar professions.

The process of charting the data in a scoping review includes reviewing, documenting, and sorting information obtained by key issues and themes.[24] An analytical data extraction tool was developed by the authors and used to guide and organize documentation of the key features of each of the included articles. Information extracted was the title, authors, journal, year of publication, research location, key focus of the article, type of article (i.e., study, perspective), organization, specific population described in the article, article's stated objective, results or recommendations, definition of mentorship, and definition of culture (i.e., military, civilian).

The final stage of the scoping review required the implementation of an analytical process to identify and compare key themes across the extracted data.[25] Thematic analysis was supported by using MAXQDA, 12.3.2 edition (VERBI Gmbh, Berlin, Germany), a qualitative data analysis software program. Key themes consistent with the purpose of the review were collated and summarized.

RESULTS

The initial search yielded 42 distinct articles related to mentorship and mentorship programs in military,

military adjacent, and policing organizations. References were mined, and one other possible article was identified. Primary review of titles and abstracts was completed independently by the authors and a third individual, an undergraduate student, using Covidence Systematic Review Software (Veritas Health Innovation, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia). After a secondary review, 23 articles were selected for full analytic data extraction, with nearly all publications coming from the United States (n = 20). The remaining 3 articles were from Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom, respectively. The sources were predominantly research studies (n = 15), including a range of methods such as survey (n = 9), program evaluation (n = 3), case study (n = 1), literature review (n = 1), and multi-method (n = 1). The remainder of the sources were perspectives or calls to action (n = 7). The literature included in this study represented a range of contexts: army (n = 7), air force (n = 1), navy (n = 2), military academy (n = 6), police (n = 4), military health care (n = 4), and military not specified (n = 1).

The following themes were identified: descriptions of mentorship, use of mentorship in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations, role of identity in mentorship, and impact of culture on mentorship.

How does the literature describe mentorship?

First and foremost, mentorship in the literature was described as a relationship between two individuals,[26–35] and it was characterized as being voluntary, developmental, mutually respectful,[27,36-38] and even transformational.[38] One individual, the mentor, is more experienced and serves as a coach, cheerleader, confidant, role model, devil's advocate, and counsellor and, when possible, helps open professional opportunities for the less experienced mentee.[26-28,30,34,36-40] Using the definition of mentorship found in the mentoring and leadership literature, some authors grouped the role of mentors in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations into two functions: career and psychosocial.[30,34,39-42]

Of interest is that several reviewed articles did not present a clear definition of mentorship, likely assuming that readers were aware of how mentorship is understood in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations.[43-45] The absence of a definition of mentorship is consistent with observations made by Johnson and Andersen, who stated:

> ... the term mentoring is used so cavalierly and applied to such a wide array of command programs and initiatives that service members ... may have little idea what mentors are supposed to "do" and what these dyads are supposed to accomplish; this of course, may elicit a range of reactions to formal programs, from enthusiasm to cynicism.[46(p. 118)]

Adding to the potential confusion caused by inconsistent definitions of mentorship is the synonymous nature in which leadership is used when describing mentoring.[29,30,38,47]

How is mentorship used in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations?

The review identified many sectors that have explored the use of mentorship, including police,[31,39,41,45] air force instructors,[43] military leadership,[29,40] health services,[27,47] and military education.[26,30,35,38,42,48,49]

Times of transition — such as when cadets are beginning their service careers or when military members are rejoining the civilian workforce — were times during the career trajectory when mentorship was identified as being most useful. For former service members beginning work in a non-military environment, the shift in role and work environment was seen as an opportunity for mentorship engagement and support.[27] The transitional phase of joining the military is also identified as an ideal time to provide mentorship, as supported by the number of articles describing mentorship in military education (n = 7).

In combination with coaching and counselling, Allen and Galvin suggest that mentorship should be taught in military education.[38] Although the skills of coaching, counselling, and mentoring are an expectation throughout the military, Allen and Galvin argue that people first need to be trained so that military educational institutions can be viewed as centres of excellence on mentorship as well as counselling and coaching.[38] A survey study by Johnson and colleagues that examined the experiences of mentoring relationships among students at a naval service academy found that only 40% of respondents indicated receiving mentorship,[30] despite earlier studies highlighting that some of the most important mentoring experiences occur early in mentees' careers. In the context of mentoring medical students at the Uniformed Services University, Scott and colleagues described a near-peer mentorship program for medical students,[35] with the majority indicating positive experiences with their mentors. Early career students were able to obtain support from mentors on a host of issues, including academics, military lifestyle, medical school pathways, and specialty selections.

How does mentorship support under-represented groups?

The use of mentorship to support the careers of under-represented populations (e.g., gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity) in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations has been identified in the literature. Identity, for the purposes of this study, is understood as qualities or expressions that make up a person or group.[50] Identity considerations made in the discussion of mentorship include race and ethnicity,[28,44] age,[28] sexual orientation,[41] and gender.[28,31,33,36,39,45,49]

Ethnic and racial identity appear to be factors in military mentoring relationships. The work of Cho shows that there is a preference among mentors and mentees to engage with individuals who share their background.[44] In an effort to support increasing calls for greater diversity within the ranks of the U.S. Army, Cho identified several keys to success for cross-race mentorship,[44] including mentors actively learning about the backgrounds of their mentees, honest and effective communication between mentors and mentees, the ability of the mentor to be self-aware, and open-mindedness on both sides of the relationship. The challenges arising with increasing opportunities to mentor ethnic and racial minorities were also highlighted in an article by Crapanzano and Cook that discusses a phenomenon known as "cultural bias."[28(p. 12)] Cultural bias describes the preference among mentors, regardless of their ethnicity and gender, to have mentees who are white and male, which is viewed as a manifestation of the "good old boys" network.

The Crapanzano and Cook article was also the only one in the review to discuss age as an identity that played a role in mentorship.[28] Specifically, they spoke about the Millennial generation (individuals born between 1980 and 1996) and the greater value this generation places on mentorship and job satisfaction compared with older individuals.[28] Knowing the general perspectives of this generation on mentorship is seen as beneficial to the military and was echoed in an article by Nakamura and Nguyen.[33]

Sexual orientation as an identity affecting mentorship was discussed in the context of law enforcement in a U.S. survey study of members of the organization Women in Federal Law Enforcement.[41] The purpose of that study was to examine the relationships among gender role orientation (e.g., masculinity, femininity), sexual orientation, and mentorship for women. It concluded that masculinity was positively related to career-based mentorship (e.g., promotion opportunities) and role modelling, whereas service members who were part of a sexual minority (such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual plus [LGBTQIA+] individuals) had fewer career mentoring opportunities. Although these findings can only be generalized to the participants in that study, the findings are an important step in understanding how sexual orientation enables, or prevents, progression in a policing career.

The role of gender identity in mentorship matching and influence on mentorship relationships were two common discussions in the literature. There are arguments advocating for both same-gender and mixed-gender mentor-mentee matching.[31,33,36,48,49] Using conditional random assignment of cadets to tactical officers at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Kofoed and McGovney found that female cadets mentored by women were 5.9% more likely to choose their tactical officer mentor's branch of service.[49] The findings of the study, which examined the role of both gender and ethnicity on service branch choices made by cadets, led the researchers to conclude that "if the Army would like to increase gender or racial diversity in certain branches, then selecting female or black officers of these branches to serve as tactical officers may prove effective."[49(p. 464)] A perspective article by Felix and Thomas highlighted the shared experiences of gender in the military as a reason for same-gender mentorship of early career women.[36] However, the potential harm of single-gender mentorships to individuals, and the institution as a whole, was raised as a concern because it could create diminished trust by reinforcing negative gender biases and hindering professional development.[36]

Identity factors were broadly discussed as important factors in the nature of mentorship relationships in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations in the identified literature. It is clear from the literature that mentorship can help under-represented populations feel more included in their workplace, but it is not clear exactly by which mechanism this occurs.

How does organizational culture affect mentorship?

Various types of organizational cultures were identified throughout the reviewed literature as having a role in the success and failure of mentorship, as well as in influencing individual mentorship relationships. Culture, at the systemic level, was also examined from

the perspectives of health professional culture,[27,32,47] navy culture,[30,40] army culture,[28,36] military culture,[38,46] police culture,[31,39,45] leadership culture,[30] civilian culture,[27,36] culture of masculinity,[31] work-life balance culture,[33,45] and mentorship culture.[40] Some articles expressed the position that mentorship is already part of military culture;[28,40] however, many others argued that current military culture is not conducive to the true tenets or definition of mentorship.

Military and police services are characterized as socialization organizations with a highly coordinated, singular identity.[38,41,43,46] On the basis of existing evidence that supports the use of mentorship for minority populations such as women and ethnic minorities, the military and similar professions have created opportunities for members to participate in mentoring by integrating mentoring programs and initiatives into the existing culture of the services, quite often with little success. For example, a literature review by Johnson and Andersen identified several challenges with implementing mentorship,[46] as defined by mentorship literature,[51] within the structure of the military. Johnson and Andersen found that varied definitions of mentorship are used across the military, which increases confusion regarding mentorship in a historical context in which mentoring has been equated with "exclusivity, unfairness, cronyism, ... and favoritism."[46(p. 119)]

Other authors stated that not only does the traditionally masculine-dominant culture characterizing the military require careful examination, but effort is also required to create a different culture that is supportive of the diversity brought by women. One of many challenges identified by women in these services is the balancing act many must perform between their career and family. For example, Nakamura and Nguyen advocated developing a work-life balance culture that emphasizes the importance of personal and family time by encouraging leaders to take time off and to "avoid implicitly promoting a culture of working on leave or during off-duty time."[33(p. e377)]

DISCUSSION

This study examined how mentorship is understood and used with under-represented populations in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations. The findings contribute to the growing body of knowledge of how this method of professional and organizational support is used. Consistent with the larger body of mentorship literature is the variability in the definition of mentorship in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations; however, this variability appears to be contingent on the context in which mentorship is used. Although some scholars discuss how the imprecise nature of the definition of mentorship impedes creating solid explanatory frameworks,[52] others believe flexible terminology is important for organizations.[53]

Most models of mentoring view it as an activity centred on a person's development through the advice of another person in career or personal areas.[54] Many more modern models centre on a flexible idea of mentorship that positions the mentor and mentee as learning from each other.[53] Most mentorship studies from the wider scope of the mentorship literature call for some form of structure in the mentorship experience, encouraging adaptable but somewhat standardized models, supported by management, in which mentors offer quality time regarding advice and guidance.[18,55] Some studies found that formal mentorship is particularly important to a mentee's perception of support from their organization.[7,20] Most studies on mentoring also focus on professional environments, such as the private sector or academia, but some focus on mentorship in personal environments and personal development outside of a career, such as in a study by Sheran and Arnold on mentorship in the gay community.[56]

This scoping review identified mentorship is used by people in a range of roles in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations, which is consistent with how mentorship is used outside of these professions. A life course approach was evident in the literature review, where early career military members, military students, or both, were provided with opportunities to engage in mentorship. The use of early career mentorship described in a study conducted in the context of undergraduate medical education explored the experiences of mentors and mentees in a mentoring speed-dating event.[57] Researchers found that, after a year, individuals involved in the event were more likely to have a mentoring relationship than those who did not participate, leading to the conclusion that such events have a role in matching mentees with potential mentors.[57]

In the literature reviewed, mentoring often took a greater toll on women who are already overlooked in many professional settings, and women expected

more drawbacks to becoming a mentor.[58-60] This trend could point to women's mental and physical health being negatively affected by mentoring, because it is one more responsibility in an already difficult environment. For example, Rockwell and colleagues' study found that women tend to take on more empathetic styles of mentorship,[18] whereas men tend to stick to facts-based advice and keep mentees at arm's length. Following this logic, women would be more emotionally invested in their mentees and feel personally responsible for them, which could lead to further mental health struggles. Women who had positive experiences with mentors were more likely to become mentors;[61] however, more generally, men and women were open to becoming mentors at a similar rate.[59,62]

There is evidence in the civilian world that mentorship is a useful tool to enhance recruitment of diverse groups into organizations, and supports retention efforts by helping integrate new members of a team into the organizational culture, improve communication and knowledge transfer, and support diversity initiatives.[63] Although mentorship has been used in militaries to ensure the success of all joining individuals, efforts are increasing to discuss the use of mentorship for specific minority populations, such as visible minorities,[64] LGBTQIA+ personnel,[64] and women.[65] Same-race and same-gender mentor-mentee pairings were found to increase commitment to career and satisfaction among mentees.[66] In one specific study, Black mentors seemed to better relate to Black mentees because they were able to help them navigate through primarily white institutions.[60] Some studies found that, although Black women face barriers, even when organizations focus on diversity, mentorship was a positive predictor for career success.[67,68] There is no consensus on whether mentorship can change organizational culture, with Banwell and colleagues claiming benefits are felt on an interpersonal, not organizational, level.[69] However, others, such as Thomas and colleagues,[70] claim that mentoring could be a facilitating factor for organizational change.

Limitations

As a result of the inclusion criteria and methods, this review has some limitations. For example, it did not follow a citation trail, which may have limited the articles included in the study. The findings of the study may also have been enhanced through the inclusion of more databases. Articles behind paywalls and chapters in academic books were not accessible. Other articles may have been published since this review was conducted. Also, because of a lack of translation capacity, only English-language sources could be included. Finally, it should be noted that the intent of a scoping review is not to assess the quality of the research. When the results are reviewed, quality of research should be kept in mind and appraised.

Conclusion

The purpose of the scoping review was to examine the literature to understand how mentorship is conceptualized and described in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations. This scoping review also placed emphasis on how mentorship could help integrate and support women and other under-represented populations in such organizations.

As revealed in this scoping review, there is no uniform description of mentorship in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations; however, the literature does begin to identify some general findings and avenues for future research. There is no agreement on one model of mentorship, but most authors emphasize the need for some structure, as well as flexibility to fit within organizational frameworks and mentor-mentee needs.

Mentorship programs should be specific and targeted because general models are unlikely to work in the unique settings found in military, military adjacent, and policing organizations. The literature also points to the importance of considering the labour mentors must put into being a mentor. In the design of mentorship programs, guidance on how to interact effectively and compassionately for both mentors and mentees benefits everyone. Both sides of the mentorship relationship must be able to manage expectations to interact in productive ways.

Although there is little research on identity in mentorship, the theme of cultural awareness and literacy emerges from the literature. Mentors and mentees often feel more comfortable mentoring someone like them, because mentors can pass on knowledge that was important for their journey and will likely affect the mentee as well. The masculine nature of military, military adjacent, and policing organizations can be an issue for both mentor and mentee when mentoring under-represented groups. As mentioned earlier, guidance for both mentors and mentees on the nature of the mentorship relationship can help combat this.

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Role of mentoring for women in the Canadian Armed Forces

Linna Tam-Seto[a]

ABSTRACT

Introduction: In Canada, mentoring has been used in the armed forces to support women's careers and personal development, but little is known about those mentorship experiences. The current study aimed to explore the career and psychosocial reasons why servicewomen use mentorship in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). **Methods:** A qualitative study was conducted that included semi-structured, in-depth interviews with subject matter experts in the area of mentorship in the military and mentors and mentees in the CAF. **Results:** A total of 28 individuals (21 women and 7 men) from across Canada, excluding the territories, and one international deployment participated in the study. Regular Force, Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian and international Veterans, and a not-for-profit Canadian organization working with women in defence and security were represented. The participants connected with the CAF also represented a range of ranks. Women in the CAF use mentorship for career development and psychosocial support functions. **Discussion**: Men are more likely than women to seek mentorship to specifically address career development. For women, career development also includes obtaining advice on managing personal responsibilities and career objectives. Psychosocial support from mentorship is most often sought by women to address issues related to gender and military culture, kinship and visibility, and surviving sexual trauma in the workplace. The current study provides a foundation for ongoing research and forms a basis on which future mentorship work can be built.

Key words: CAF, Canadian Armed Forces, diversity, gender, inclusion, leadership, mentorship, military culture, qualitative study, women

RÉSUMÉ

Introduction : Au Canada, le mentorat est utilisé dans les forces armées pour soutenir la carrière des femmes et leur développement personnel, mais on sait peu de choses de ces expériences. L'étude actuelle visait à explorer la carrière et les raisons psychosociales pour lesquelles les femmes militaires font appel au mentorat dans les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC). **Méthodologie :** Les chercheurs ont effectué une étude qualitative qui incluait des entrevues semi-structurées et approfondies avec des spécialistes du mentorat de l'armée et avec des mentors et des mentorés des FAC. **Résultats :** Au total, 28 personnes (21 femmes et 7 hommes) de partout au Canada, à l'exclusion des Territoires, et les membres d'un déploiement international ont participé à l'étude. Les Forces régulières, l'Académie canadienne de la Défense, les vétérans canadiens et internationaux et un organisme à but non lucratif canadien qui travaille auprès des femmes dans la défense et la sécurité étaient représentés. Les participant(e)s des FAC occupaient également divers grades militaires. Les femmes des FAC font appel au mentorat pour leur développement professionnel et leur soutien psychosocial. **Discussion** : Les hommes sont plus susceptibles que les femmes d'obtenir du mentorat expressément pour leur développement professionnel. Pour les femmes, le développement professionnel incluait également des conseils sur la gestion des responsabilités personnelles et les objectifs professionnels. Le soutien psychosocial que les femmes tirent du mentorat est surtout lié au genre et à la culture militaire, aux affinités et à la visibilité ainsi qu'à la survie après un traumatisme sexuel en milieu de travail. Cette étude jette les bases de futures recherches et de mesures possibles pour stimuler le travail de mentorat.

Mots-clés : culture militaire, diversité, étude qualitative, FAC, femmes, Forces armées canadiennes, genre, inclusion, leadership, mentorat

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LAY SUMMARY

In Canada, mentoring has been used in the armed forces to support women's careers and personal development, but there is little evidence that the unique experiences of being a woman in the military have been considered in mentoring efforts. The current study aims to find reasons why servicewomen are using mentorship in the Canadian Armed Forces and to identify the gender and cultural factors that may play a role in those mentoring experiences. This article presents some of the findings from 28 interviews that explored the experiences of mentorship for women in the military. For women, career development advice includes learning how to manage personal responsibilities along with career objectives. Women are also looking for support to address issues related to gender and military culture, kinship and visibility, and surviving sexual trauma in the workplace. The current study provides a foundation for ongoing research and forms a basis on which future mentorship work can be built.

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Canada's 2017 Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, has committed to targeted recruiting, thus "capitalizing on the unique talents and skill sets of Canada's diverse populations."[1(p. 12)] More specifically, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has articulated the goal to "increase the number of women personnel by 1% annually, with the target of reaching 25% by 2026 … through engagement and outreach, advertising and social media, media partnerships, and one-on-one recruitment efforts."[2] Outside the CAF, mentoring opportunities are being used to support the well-being and retention of minority populations, such as women, Indigenous Peoples, and racial-ethnic minorities, in similar male-dominated organizations.[3,4] Although the CAF acknowledges the differences in women's experiences, by ignoring the effect of gender and intersecting identities, as well as military culture, in existing mentorship efforts, support networks may be created that are inadequate in addressing the unique career and psychosocial needs of women.

The military community is united by shared experiences of living within a distinct culture characterized by its own practices, attitudes, beliefs, language, traditions, and values.[5] The universal impact military culture has on engagement and interaction has underscored the increasing attention to and implementation of military cultural competency in the area of health and well-being.[6] Simply put, military cultural competency is the degree to which individuals are sensitive to the unique needs and relevant concerns of the military population.[7]

Mentoring is understood as a dyadic relationship between individuals, a mentor and a mentee, in which the mentor uses their own knowledge and experiences to provide advice and guidance to augment the development of the less experienced mentee.[8] According to mentoring theory, mentors can provide mentees with two types of support: career and psychosocial.[8] Career-oriented functions of mentoring include providing mentees with sponsorship, increasing their exposure or visibility in an industry, coaching, enhancing job satisfaction, and creating opportunities for challenging assignments.[9] Psychosocial-oriented purposes of mentoring include providing mentees with role modeling and giving mentees acceptance and confirmation, counselling, and friendship.[10]

One of the hallmarks of mentoring relationships is the mutual benefit it brings to mentees, mentors, and organizations.[11] Mentors have reported experiencing rejuvenated interest in their work, increased knowledge, greater personal fulfillment, increased self-confidence, and an improved professional reputation.[9] The development of the skills necessary to be an effective mentor in a military context often overlaps with the creation of transformational leadership behaviours.[12]

For mentees in the military, mentoring that focuses on psychosocial development may lead to greater commitment to a military career, expanded leadership competency, and an increased likelihood of providing mentorship compared with peers who have not received mentorship.[13-16] There is increasing effort to use mentorship in the military to support specific populations such as Millennials,[17] visible ethnic minorities,[18] LGBTQ personnel,[18] and women,[19] as well as during moments of transition.[20] Identities, qualities, or expressions that make up a person or group,[21] affecting every aspect of their lives and thus efforts within organizations, including the CAF, have increased to create supports that acknowledge these differences and the experiences that arise from these differences.[22]

Literature on women and mentoring has found that mentoring does not necessarily have a positive impact on women's work experiences; mentoring was seen to have a negative impact on women's workloads, and some women did not see the benefits of taking on this new role.[23-25] For example, Rockwell, Leck, and Elliott's study concluded that women use more empathetic styles of mentorship,[26] whereas men tend to stick to facts-based advice and keep mentees at arm's length. As a result, men are less

emotionally invested. Benefits were also noted in the mentorship literature; women who had positive experiences with mentors were more likely to become mentors themselves,[27] and at the same rate as their male counterparts.[24,28]

Women-focused mentorship opportunities are occurring within the CAF, but there is a lack of knowledge regarding the specific career and psychosocial needs that mentorship meets. The purpose of this article is to explore the career and psychosocial reasons why women are using mentorship in the military.

METHODS

Given the exploratory nature of the study, a data collection method, such as the critical incident technique (CIT),[29] is suitable for qualitative information gathering. CIT is considered an effective means of contributing to emerging bodies of knowledge when little is known.[30,31] CIT allows study participants to describe and reflect on specific incidents or "any observable human activity that is sufficiently complete in itself."[29] An incident is considered critical when its purpose and outcome is clear and there is no uncertainty regarding its impacts. In the current study, participants were asked to reflect on mentoring relationships and interactions to begin to understand the reasons why women engage in mentoring relationships in the CAF.

The CIT approach is also appropriate for ensuring that intersectionality is incorporated into this study. Encouraging participants to tell stories as a data collection method allows them to address gender and other identities as a cultural construct, thus reflecting a key difference between the intersectionality approach and the more traditional and dichotomous additive approach to conducting research.[32]

Data collection

An interview guide was developed on the basis of the study's objectives and the results of a scoping review conducted by the author. The guide was informally reviewed by a mentoring subject matter expert for content validity and refined for further clarification. The questions elicited stories of positive and negative mentoring interactions, with prompting questions to encourage further exploration, which were used only if appropriate. Additional questions inquired about participants' experiences and perceptions of mentorship in the military.

The study protocol obtained ethical clearance from the Queen's University Research Ethics Board (GRHBS-139-20), as well as the Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces Social Sciences Research Review Board (SSRRB Number 1905/20F). All study participants provided written consent after reviewing the study's Letter of Information, which they reviewed again with the researcher just before completing interviews.

With assistance from a member of the CAF Training Development Centre, CAF members were purposely recruited. For individuals not associated with the CAF, social media (i.e., Twitter) and emails sent from the researcher's research institute were used to support recruitment efforts. Recruitment was also supported by study participants using snowball, or chain-referral, sampling. Inclusion criteria included the following: English-speaking adults who had experience or expertise with mentorship of women in a military context. Interviews were conducted in English because that is the language spoken by the researcher. Acknowledging the differences in occupational roles (between Regular Force and Reserve Force members), workplace culture, and effects on daily life,[33,34] only Regular Force members were included in the study.

Interviews were conducted by the researcher over the telephone; they were electronically recorded and transcribed verbatim by a transcription team. Interviews were approximately 45-90 minutes in length and were conducted between August 2020 and January 2021. The researcher maintained field notes containing observations, thoughts, and any other pertinent information.

Data analysis

Data analysis for the current study was completed in two parts. The first part involved rough coding by a research assistant according to an established coding tree based on current literature on the functions and purposes of mentorship, as well as the results of a scoping review that examined the use of mentorship in military, paramilitary, and police services. This initial stage required the research assistant to identify large segments of the transcripts that could be organized into the major themes in the coding tree. The second part of data analysis, thematic analysis, was completed by the researcher in accordance with Hsieh and Shannon,[35] with a focus on the specific career and psychosocial functions of mentorship. Rough codes identified by the research assistant were then uploaded into MAXQDA software (version 12.3.2, VERBI Software Consult Sozialforschung GmbH, Berlin), which allowed for line-by-line review for pattern coding and memoing.[36]

RESULTS

In total, 28 individuals (21 women, 7 men) from across Canada, excluding the territories, and one international deployment participated in interviews. Members of the Regular Force (Canadian Army, Royal Canadian Navy, and Royal Canadian Air Force), Canadian Defence Academy, Canadian and international Veterans, and a not-for-profit Canadian organization working with women in defence and security were represented. The participants connected with the CAF also represented a range of ranks, including Chief Warrant Officer, Captain, Major, Lieutenant-Colonel, Commander, and Brigadier-General.

The results of the current study indicate that mentorship for women in the CAF meets specific career development and psychosocial support functions that are clearly influenced by women's gender identity and military culture.

Career development

For many of the participants, the main purpose of having a mentor is to have someone of higher rank to act as a system navigator, someone who can help a less experienced member learn about the formal and informal promotion and succession processes. One mentor shared some advice she has provided to women and men mentees who turn to her for guidance:

> I [would] ask them, wanna get promoted? Here's what you have to do to get promoted. The system is the system. I can't change that system. I can tell them how the system works and the best way to go forward. There's no one way in the system but [for example] French is a pretty obvious one. ... So, I can help teach them the rules. What I'm doing is I'm teaching them the system. How best to use the system to do what they want to do with it. Not to exploit it but to make it work, I guess, to make it work for them. And the life they want.

Mentorship is described as a lifelong journey; however, there are gaps in providing members with knowledge and education on mentorship in the military. As a result, many participants report turning to their mentoring network to learn what mentorship is and what to do as a mentor. As rising military leaders, participants eagerly shared stories of receiving support and advice from their mentors so that they themselves could become good and effective mentors. For example, one participant shared that she was expected to provide mentorship early in her career with little knowledge of what to do and turned to her mentor to learn how:

> If you wanna call it a closed door opportunity, where I could say "Here's how I'm reading a situation, this is what I think the right thing to do is, [what are the] pieces I'm missing?" and "You don't think I'm totally out in the left field?" We can sort of war game it a little bit without the fear of judgment and then they could give me that sort of [feedback] like "Yeah, you're on the right [path] and that's a good way to approach it" or "Have you thought about this?" Just that bit of a filter to run through a solution before I had to stand in front of my subordinates and own it.

There were scenarios of women participants going to their mentors to problem solve work situations and brainstorm solutions. This appeared to be a common way women have used mentorship to develop their careers. Women participants repeatedly shared experiences of feeling as though they did not quite fit into the military culture and, therefore, looking for opportunities to work out their leadership approaches to be seen and respected in the workplace. One participant described striving to be visible at work:

> I think women want to talk about how to be seen as a credible leader in a system where there are often few of them at the table. We talk a lot about being confident in a situation where you might be the only woman or because of being a logistics officer. We're also a support trade so we have a couple of strikes against [us.] You're a woman, you're a supporter, so how do you find credibility in the system?

Mentors reported that both men and women mentees look to them for career development; however, it appears that men are more likely than women to use mentorship to further their careers. Women mentees are more likely than men to learn from their mentors how they can manage their career aspirations with their personal lives, as described by this participant:

> I think men, from my experience, want the facts. They were very interested in the steps, the logic, of how career management worked and my role and how I would represent them[, whereas] women wanted to know more about "How can I reach my goal?" [and] "How do I operate in a system where not everybody looks like me?" They wanted to know, based on my experience, how I found successes and also how I work through failures. ... Like how can I be a mom and a woman who is an officer and how do I manage those things. Women were looking for more of the work-life balance piece.

Psychosocial support

On the basis of the results, women mentees are reportedly more likely than men to seek support for psychosocial issues (e.g., family issues, co-worker relationships, workplace culture). Although a variety of issues were identified across all the interviews, the vast majority of psychosocial issues were related to gender and military culture, kinship and visibility, and surviving sexual trauma in the workplace.

Gender and military culture

The evidence presented in the results highlights the dominance of a culture of masculinity within the CAF. Accordingly, the impact of women's gender on their ability to manage professionally in the current military culture is often the subject of mentoring discussions, ranging from uniforms and equipment that are not tailored for women to how feminine leadership styles are dismissed or challenged. There is a clear acknowledgement of the importance of mentorship for women; however, how gender plays into mentoring relationships also requires insight from men who have mentored women in the military. One participant shared that his gender may be a limitation to his ability to adequately and appropriately provide support for women, particularly when it comes to psychosocial issues experienced in the military. He stated:

> If we don't have a network [or] have a mechanism out there [like] mentorship where it is a priority, women can't know what other women are going through. And [to be able to] share in a safe manner, share those thoughts, share their problems. If they're not being led by people who get what they're going through, at the end of the day, it's a silo of women [who are] not going to work. We [will have] missed an opportunity. [As a man], I acknowledged my blind spots that there's a lot that I just simply don't understand and I'll never understand and, not to be defeatist, but there's limits of what I can comprehend and what I'll experience.

Kinship and visibility

Many of the woman participants found it important to have a mentor who shares their experiences of being a woman in the military. Women mentors who identified as being in the middle or later stages of their military careers reported feelings of isolation when they first joined, or when they were first working toward promotion, because the number of women available to provide them with the support they were looking for was limited. Now that she is a mentor herself, one participant recognized the importance of having that shared experience:

> When we joined, women, we didn't have anyone to be there for us. During my first posting ... we were all [rank type]; there was one female [rank type] and there was no one else higher than that. There was no one to guide us on things like starting families and stuff like that because it hadn't been done. ... So, over the years as younger people came in behind me they would reach out to me about "How are you balancing with kids?" "How are you doing deployments with kids?" I was kind of mentoring without calling it mentoring all along.

In addition to having a mentor with shared life experiences, women participants expressed the importance of mentoring in creating a platform to increase visibility in the military and provide validation of their experiences. Women shared stories of being invisible and dismissed because of the differences they brought to their teams or because of their caregiving responsibilities. Mentorship helped some women participants feel as though they belonged in their careers and workplaces by creating a support structure, as described by this participant:

> Oh, I think [the benefits are] huge in the CAF. I think we all just want to see somebody who looks like us or who's in a similar circumstance or who has had similar circumstances as us just to validate that we have a place, and our thoughts and feelings are important too. Where I think sometimes women can really feel dismissed or when they're the only woman sitting at the table it can be very intimidating.

Surviving sexual trauma in the workplace

When asked about specific incidents of positive or negative mentoring interactions, a number of participants shared how mentoring has been used to support those who have experience with trauma in the workplace, including sexual misconduct in the military. Stories were shared by mentors and mentees who are survivors. One participant shared how her own experiences of surviving a sexual assault led potential mentees to seek her out:

> I would say the women come to me for different reasons ... They know [that] I was a victim of sexual misconduct ... sexual assault when I was in military college. They heard, reached out to me on that aspect because they too had encountered a similar situation and wanted guidance and help on that aspect and moving forward in their careers. They thought

> that I would be a good mentor to them on how to continue on in your career despite some initial challenges like that.

Understanding the complexity and potentially trauma-inducing experiences of sexual misconduct, another mentor felt it was important for her to proactively engage her women mentees. This participant described how, as a mentor, she felt compelled to support her mentees' health and well-being by providing them with current information about reporting and disclosing sexual misconduct and by sharing her own experiences. The participant shared what she did in hopes of providing mentees with support to move forward:

> I sent [my mentees] an email saying "If you're like me you probably got the email [and] thought it was good that something was being done about it but you weren't planning on joining in yourself and you probably deleted it without even clicking on the link." I said "Here's some of the information that I'd like you to know because it helped me make my decision." ... I emailed out to everyone, and the response has been pretty positive.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to identify and better understand the specific career development and psychosocial reasons why women in the military participated in mentorship. The findings support existing research on the use of identity-specific mentorship programs to support minority populations in male-dominated professions, such as the military. The results of this study are unique in that specific aspects of mentorship support sought by women highlight the role of gender and military culture in these relationships.

Women experience careers differently than their male counterparts, in large part because of their gender, and they, in turn, seek support to navigate their complex reality. The culture of masculinity in the CAF, one that is grounded in the white Canadian male hero, has been well documented by Whitworth and Managhan.[37,38] As a result, femininity is undervalued, thus informing the reality of the dominant culture.[37-39] Mentorship is viewed as one route to women's career advancement, particularly in organizations such as the military where women may be marginalized on account of their gender and the dominance of masculinity.[26,40-42] Research conducted by Jones on the utilization of mentorship to support women in the male-dominant organization of the Central England Police Force found that "mentoring can provide a huge amount of support to develop self-confidence, self-awareness and positivity: all key ingredients for career success."[4(p. 9)] In the U.S. Army, there have been efforts to create and implement women-centric mentorship programs, such as the Women in Uniform Mentorship Program (WIU).[43] WIU is offered at Fort Bragg (NC) for the military police brigade as a means to contribute to organizational culture;[43] it matches lower ranking soldiers with experienced mentors. WIU serves as an educational program that "teaches new Soldiers to be observant to the potential warning signs of sexual harassment and assault, and how to avoid being a victim of such violence" as well as "learning to professionally reach one's potential, and dealing with work-related and personal issues that Soldiers encounter on a daily basis."[43] Effective mentorship programs that meet the needs of mentors, mentees, and organizations must include conscious consideration of factors such as culture and gender.[9]

The link between gender and the specific types of psychosocial supports identified in this study contributes to the paucity of information currently available in the Canadian military context. Many mentoring conversations supporting psychosocial development were grounded in the work-life balance sought by many women in the CAF. Nakamura and Nguyen advocate developing a work-life balance culture in the military that emphasizes the importance of personal and family time by encouraging leaders to take time off and to "avoid implicitly promoting a culture of working on leave or during off-duty time."[3(p. e377)] The need for greater work-life balance in this line of work was also identified by Ward and Prenzler,[44] who highlighted the importance of organizations leading culture change for greater flexibility. A change in military culture to one that de-emphasizes masculinity may also mean a shift toward a culture of work-life balance.

The desire for same-gender mentorship pairing was evident in the current study, but the existing research supporting this is mixed.[3,4,45-47] A study conducted by Kofoed and McGovney[47] that randomly assigned cadets to officers at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point found that women cadets who were mentored by women were 5.9% more likely to choose their mentor's branch. This study examined the potential role of both gender and ethnicity and concluded that if the military — the army, in particular — aims to increase diversity in specific branches, promoting minority populations,

such as women and Persons of Colour, may be beneficial to the overall goal of diversity.[47]

Felix and Thomas argued that the shared experience of being a gender minority in the military is an important factor to consider when providing mentorship to women early in their careers, because it provides mentees with women to whom they can look up.[45] However, they cautioned against the use of single-gender mentorship pairing because it may "reinforce negative perceptions and biases of gender [and therefore] hinder professional development and diminish trust"[45(p. 3)] and thus harm individuals and the institution.

Turning to a mentor for support related to sexual misconduct was cited in the study as another, not exclusive, reason why mentorship is being used by women in the CAF. There is acceptance that sexual misconduct experienced in the military affects the whole individual, thus requiring a collective healing process that may involve the support of mentors who have an understanding of the context (i.e., military service) in which the misconduct occurred.[48] The benefits of going to someone who is familiar with workplace culture was found to have protective or buffering effects for women living with traumatic experiences, such as military sexual trauma (MST). A study by Smith et al. of women Veterans who reported being sexually harassed during their time in the military reported that they had higher levels of posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms and impairments in social functioning than individuals who did not report MST.[49] The study also found that supportive peers seemed to protect against some of the negative outcomes. The benefits of having support from peers were also identified in a study by Azevedo and colleagues.[50] Although this particular study examined a pilot program of a peer support group for Veterans living in rural communities facilitated by a peer support specialist, it found that a peer-based relationship can create trust that enables Veterans to speak freely about their traumatic experiences. Although these studies may not necessarily use the term mentor in their description of relationships, it is well understood that mentors can serve in the role of friend and peer.

Limitations

Some important limitations of this study need to be considered. Although the sample was heterogeneous, officers and senior non-commissioned members were over-represented, highlighting the need to capture the experiences of junior members. The sample size was limited to those individuals who volunteered to participate in the study and, therefore, cannot be generalized to the larger Canadian military population. Also, the sample size limited the ability to fully understand the role of intersecting identities such as age, ethnicity, sexuality, and language, among others. This study should be replicated with French-speaking mentors and mentees within the CAF to identify differences and similarities in mentoring experiences compared with their English-speaking counterparts. Although the study's focus was examining women's experiences, the representation of men was limited, thus lacking their experiences with mentoring women. Finally, to ensure inclusivity of mentoring work in the CAF, future work should include exploring the mentorship experiences of women in the Reserve Force.

Conclusion

Mentorship is being used in many male-dominated organizations and professions to address challenges in recruiting and retaining minority populations such as women. It is well documented that women's experiences in the military are different because of their gender and the culture of masculinity that dominates the military. As a result, gender and culture should be considered when providing mentorship support. Until now, little has been known about the mentorship experiences of women in the CAF and, more specifically, the reasons why women seek out mentorship. The current study confirmed both career development and psychosocial reasons why many women use mentorship in their military careers. More important, this study identified some of the effects of gender and military culture as reasons why women seek mentoring support. The results of this study will be significant in informing the development of a mentorship program that is sensitive to the unique experiences of women in the CAF, as well as considering the role and impact of culture on mentoring efforts. This work provides a strong foundation for ongoing research and development of mentoring resources that is relevant to the CAF.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The author has nothing to disclose.

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Making military and Veteran women (in)visible: The continuity of gendered experiences in military-to-civilian transition

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: This study explores how gender and sex shape the military-to-civilian transition (MCT) of women. **Methods:** Semi-structured, in-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted with Canadian women Veterans. **Results:** Thirty-three women who served in the Canadian Armed Forces, and had since released or retired participated in the study. Participants had heterogeneous military service backgrounds but were fairly homogeneous in terms of their identity backgrounds (cisgender, and primarily white and heterosexual). More than half had a present or past relationship with a military or ex-military member. **Discussion:** Whereas the MCT literature tends to emphasize discontinuities between military and civilian life, women Veterans' accounts highlight continuities in gendered experiences. Women are expected to fit the male norm and masculine ideal of the military member during service, but they are rarely recognized as Veterans after service. Women experience invisibility as military members and Veterans and simultaneously hypervisibility as (ex-)military women who do not fit military or civilian gender norms. Moreover, gendered caregiving expectations are placed on them as spouses and mothers during and after service, making it hard to balance military work and family life or to focus on their MCT. Women encounter care and support systems set up on the normative assumption of the military and Veteran man supported by a female spouse. Study findings point to a needed redesign of military and Veteran systems to remove sex and gender biases and better respond to the sex- and gender-specific MCT needs of women.

Key words: Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, gender, health, military, military-to-civilian transition, qualitative study, sex, transition, Veterans, women

RÉSUMÉ

Introduction : Cette étude explore l'influence du genre et du sexe sur la transition de la vie militaire à la vie civile des femmes. **Méthodologie :** L'équipe de chercheurs et chercheuses a organisé des entrevues semi-structurées et approfondies et des groupes de travail auprès de vétéranes canadiennes. **Résultats :** Trente-trois femmes qui ont servi au sein des Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) et ont depuis quitté la vie militaire ou ont pris leur retraite ont participé à l'étude. Les participantes possédaient une expérience hétérogène du service militaire, partageaient une expérience identitaire relativement homogène (cisgenres et surtout blanches et hétérosexuelles). Plus de la moitié d'entre elles entretenaient ou avaient entretenu une relation avec un(e) militaire ou un(e) ex-militaire. **Discussion :** Les publications sur la transition de la vie militaire à la vie civile tendent à souligner les décalages entre la vie militaire et la vie civile, mais les témoignages de vétéranes rendent compte d'expériences genrées récurrentes. On s'attend à ce que les femmes se conforment à des normes et à des idéaux masculins pendant leur service, mais elles sont rarement reconnues comme des vétéranes après leur service. Les femmes sont invisibles dans leurs rôles de militaires et de vétéranes, mais deviennent hypervisibles dans celui d'ex-militaires qui ne correspondent pas aux normes de genre de la vie militaire ou civile. De plus, en raison de leurs rôles de conjointes et de mères, elles font l'objet d'attentes genrées en matière d'éducation et de soins pendant et après le service, ce pour quoi il leur est difficile de concilier leur vie militaire et familiale ou de se concentrer sur leur transition de la vie militaire à la vie civile. Les femmes doivent composer avec des systèmes de soins et d'appui créés selon le postulat normatif d'hommes militaires et vétérans soutenus par une conjointe. Les résultats de l'analyse démontrent qu'il est nécessaire de réaménager les systèmes destinés aux militaires et vétéran(e)s pour en éliminer les

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biais de genre et de sexe et mieux répondre aux besoins des femmes sur le plan du sexe et du genre lors de la transition de la vie militaire à la vie civile.

Mots-clés : étude qualitative, FAC, femmes, Forces armées canadiennes, genre, militaire, santé, sexe, transition, transition de la vie militaire à la vie civile, vétéranes

LAY SUMMARY

This study explores how gender and sex shape the military-to-civilian transition (MCT) for women. Thirty-three Canadian women Veterans were interviewed about their military service and post-military life. MCT research often emphasizes discontinuities between military and civilian life, but women Veterans' accounts highlight continuities in gendered experiences. Military women are expected to fit the male norm and masculine ideal of the military member during service, but they are rarely recognized as Veterans after service. Women experience invisibility as military members and Veterans and simultaneously hypervisibility as (ex)military women who do not fit military or civilian gender norms. Gendered expectations of women as spouses and mothers exert an undue burden on them as serving members and as Veterans undergoing MCT. Women encounter care and support systems set up on the normative assumption of the military and Veteran man supported by a female spouse. The study findings point to a needed redesign of military and Veteran systems to remove sex and gender biases and better respond to the sex- and gender-specific MCT needs of women.

INTRODUCTION

At 15% of the Veteran population, women are the largest and fastest-growing minority Veteran group in Canada.[1] The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is actively seeking to recruit and retain women, which will lead to a further increase in the population of women Veterans.[2] In light of these trends, researchers in Canada began turning their attention to women's military-to-civilian transition (MCT).[3,4] They found military and Veteran women experience additional risks to health and well-being compared with military and Veteran men, as well as with women in the general population.[5] Women face higher rates of medical releases and musculoskeletal problems,[5] a less "easy adjustment to civilian life,"[6(p. 6)] a steeper decline in post-release income,[7] a greater risk of dying by suicide,[8] and more.[9,10] Although it is now established Canadian women experience MCT in sex- and gender-specific ways, what role gender in particular plays in women's MCT is not well understood.

Drawing on a critical feminist approach, this article uses gender as the primary category of analysis.[11,12] Gender denotes the social construction of masculinities and femininities in contrast to sex, which refers to biological classification into male, female, or intersex. Gender is about the norms, expectations, and roles associated with what it means to be a man or woman in a particular time and place. In critical feminist scholarship, analysis of gender goes beyond individual gender identities to uncover power hierarchies that inform women's subordinate social status. Masculinities, especially hegemonic masculinities, are associated with power and defined in opposition to, and privileged over, femininities (and subordinate masculinities). Feminists argue gender is an organizing principle of societies, centrally shaping institutions such as the military, legal system, or family life.[13,14]

Drawing on such a critical feminist approach, this article seeks to understand how gender and sex shape women's military and post-military life. On the basis of a qualitative study with Canadian women Veterans, the article finds a continuity in gendered experiences across MCT. Women's accounts point to military and Veteran systems rooted in a male and masculine norm. The woman service member and Veteran is expected to fit this norm while also supporting men (and the military) as spouse. The military and family are both "greedy institutions" that create conflicting demands on women during service and continue to shape the experiences of women in dual-service couples after release.[15] These gendered contexts leave military and Veteran women invisible and lacking in adequate sex- and gender-informed supports and, at times, make them hyper-visible as targets for discrimination.

METHODS

These findings are part of a qualitative study aimed at understanding the experiences of CAF members as they transition from military to civilian life. To this end, in-depth, semi-structured interviews and focus groups were conducted with men and women Veterans, service providers of Veterans, and spouses of Veterans. This article presents findings from the data collected from women Veterans in the study.

Data collection

Participants were recruited by distributing the study information letter to the author's contacts in the military

and Veteran community and by advertising on Facebook and Twitter. Snowball sampling was also used as existing participants shared the call for participants with others. Veterans with any amount of service in the Canadian military after 1990, who had since released or retired, were eligible to participate. Rationale for the study's eligibility time frame was based on the change in type and frequency of CAF operations since 1990.[16] Inclusion criteria were broad because this was an exploratory study open to Regular and Reserve Force Veterans across service elements (land, sea, and air), member status (officers and non-commissioned members), and rank. Individual interviews and focus groups were conducted by the author, primarily in person, audio recorded (with consent), and transcribed verbatim. The author asked respondents about experiences serving in the Canadian military and transitioning from military to civilian life, as well as about how gender, sex, and other identity and structural factors may have shaped their military and post-military lives.

Data analysis

Interview transcripts were imported into MAXQDA computer software (VERBI Software, Berlin, Germany) to support data analysis. Using a grounded theory method helped identify emerging themes in the data related to women Veterans' experiences during and after military service.[17] In addition, a critical feminist approach helped discern aspects of these themes related to gender, such as gender norms, gender discrimination, and gendered expectations. Sex-related issues were also noted, even as this social sciences study foregrounded gender over sex.[18] The inductive analysis of women Veterans' accounts using a grounded theory method allowed for the development of an innovative conceptual understanding of MCT that did not presuppose women's particular experiences.

RESULTS

Thirty-three Canadian cisgender women Veterans were interviewed between 2015 and 2020. They served in the CAF between 1972 and 2019, with at least some service after 1990. The sample was heterogeneous in terms of age (range, 27–64 years; mean = 47 years), length of service (range, 2–39.5 years; mean = 19 years), reason for release (voluntary, n = 20; medical, n = 12; other, n = 1), and service branch (air force, n = 10; army, n = 7; navy, n = 5; combination, n = 11), and it included Regular Force (n = 19) and Reserve Force (n = 6) Veterans, as well as those who served in both the Regular and Reserve Forces (n = 8). The sample was fairly homogeneous in terms of race and sexual orientation, with the majority of women being white (n = 31) and identifying as heterosexual at the time of the interview (n = 28). More than half the women were, or had previously been, in a relationship with a military or ex-military member.

The overarching study finding is that women's gendered experiences in the military carry forward into civilian life after release; that is, MCT manifests as a continuity in gendered experiences. Gender norms define the ideal soldier, sailor, aviator, and Veteran as male and masculine, making military and Veteran women invisible and, at times, hyper-visible as targets for discrimination and violence. For some participants, these gendered experiences stood out more than for others, but all either directly experienced or witnessed other women negotiating gender norm expectations both in service and after release. These gendered experiences co-existed with and, in some cases, overshadowed the pride and satisfaction women felt for their military service. A thematic description of these experiences follows. Table 1 provides examples of participant quotes related to each of the themes and corresponding subthemes. References to the quotes are noted in the description of each theme (Q1–Q8).

Theme 1: Gendered experiences during service

Having to conform to the masculine ideal and male norm

Almost all study participants reported having to fit in and conform to the masculine ideal of the soldier, sailor, or aviator. Fitting in meant having to "prove yourself" and "work twice as hard, as a woman, to be considered half as good." Others felt they had to change their personality to fit in. Many found it a difficult — if not impossible — task. As one participant noted, being "physically imposing" and having a loud voice helped some women more easily perform the masculine ideal of military service member.

The expectation to conform to a male norm was experienced in having uniforms and equipment that did not fit correctly. This led to health problems for some women (Q1). Several study participants noted that they, and other women, did not receive equitable care or treatment because their bodies did not conform to the male norm. They remained invisible in a health care system designed to serve men. This included the observation

that women had difficulty receiving medical care for sex-specific health issues (e.g., reproductive health). Women were also reluctant to seek medical care because they did not want to be seen as weak compared with the masculine ideal of the strong military service member.

Facing gender discrimination and gender-based violence

Many study participants were reminded they did not fit the male and masculine ideal of military service member through acts of gender discrimination. They were assigned menial tasks or kept out of the loop because they were women or had recently returned from maternity leave. Reflecting the gendered hierarchy among trades and types of service, some felt their work was not valued because they were in a feminized trade (such as medical or clerical) or because they were a Reserve Force member among deploying Regular Force members. To varying degrees, participants experienced sex- or gender-based harassment and discrimination by their peers or commanders. This was especially the case in male-dominated trades or units. Some women reported facing further discrimination during the release process, for example, by not receiving, or having to fight for, a Depart With Dignity ceremony or a shadow box.

While in many ways invisible within the military system, women were, at times, hyper-visible targets of discrimination and violence. In addition to facing discrimination, approximately half the women reported facing gender-based violence during service in the form of ongoing harassment, physical abuse, or sexual assaults, in some cases leading to health issues and premature release (Q2). Women described various health problems resulting from experiences of sexual (and non-sexual) harassment and assault, including posttraumatic stress disorder, eating disorders, chronic pain, fibromyalgia, migraines, and depression. Some survivors of military sexual trauma (MST) expressed feeling deeply betrayed by the institution and their peers as a result of how their reporting of a sexual assault incident was handled (Q3).

Being a military spouse and mother while serving

When reflecting on their time in the military, women recalled a difficult balancing act between family and work. Some expressed being treated differently after returning from maternity leave. Often, the challenge was compounded by the fact the servicewoman's spouse was also in the military, and the woman had to deal with the demands of his career. This led some women to put their own careers on the back burner or to leave the military because of difficulty balancing family and work. Some participants supported a military husband after deployment, or through transition, while still serving. The competing roles of service member, spouse, and mother were noted by several participants as creating a seemingly unresolvable dilemma, with both military and family demanding their full commitment (Q4).

Theme 2: Gendered post-service experiences

Being a woman Veteran: Not fitting the male and masculine Veteran norm

All women reported not being recognized by civilians or service providers as Veterans. They found civilians and service providers in the general population assumed a Veteran is a man (and, secondarily, someone older). For example, one participant with a Veteran licence plate shared her experience of having her Veteran identity and military service downplayed by a member of the public (Q5). Many women also expressed not identifying as Veterans. They felt they did not deserve the Veteran label either because of the nature of their service (e.g., having served in support occupations or not having deployed) or because military identity was not their primary or most important self-identity (compared with their professional identity or identity as a mother).

Women had difficulty accessing benefits, treatments, and services because their sex- and gender-specific injuries did not fit the male and masculine Veteran norm. This was especially true for MST survivors seeking supports. Study participants commented that male-dominated Veteran spaces are not welcoming or safe for women or MST survivors. They felt dismissed when those serving the Veteran community told them to go to civilian support services or join support groups for female military spouses, because neither of these options could adequately address their unique needs (Q6). In an act of resistance and empowerment, a small minority of MST survivors decided to actively embrace the Veteran identity through advocacy for improved recognition, benefits, and services.

Standing out as a Veteran woman: Not fitting femininity norms

Study participants reported challenges having to learn or re-learn civilian femininity norms after releasing or retiring from the military, such as how to dress or act as a woman in the civilian world.

Table 1. Select participant quotes related to each theme and corresponding sub-theme

Theme and sub-theme	Quote
Theme 1: Gendered experiences during service	
Having to conform to the masculine ideal and male norm	Q1. "Yeah, the rucksack that we had to wear and that sort of thing 'cause it never ever fit right. And that's, my back problem is because of that."
Facing gender discrimination and gender-based violence	Q2. "In the military they would say that in order for you to be a strong man you can't be like a weak woman, so they're building strength up from saying that, you know, strength is the opposite of anything that is feminine. So, there was a lot of stuff that was happening along those lines that was a difficult pill to be able to swallow, but so, just having to deal with that level of violence directed toward me as a female was a hard thing to have to deal with."
	Q3. "And then you end up being released. Either you quit, you do your medical release, you can't face the retaliations anymore. Yeah, basically quit. Um, so there ... you're going to end up releasing. So, when you release you realize that, well first of all, reporting didn't work out the way you thought. And second, that people didn't back you up ... that brotherhood was never including sisterhood. And even though you thought it did, right?"
Being a military spouse and mother while serving	Q4. "I know that for me I felt that, that pull of I want to be here, I loved my career, and I was good at it. And, but at the same time I knew I was never going to progress because I wasn't going to be able to do the things that will allow me to progress in my career. I was never going to go back and do a post-grad, I was never going to go and volunteer to do a deployment because I had little kids at home. And my husband certainly wasn't going to be around to take care of them, because he's in the navy and he's progressing well in his career. And so it was, ugh, I can't advance in my career, I'm not feeling very, very welcome in my career anymore because I have kids, you know, because I can't give them [the military] what they want, which is my full attention."
Theme 2: Gendered post-service experiences	
Being a woman Veteran: Not fitting the male and masculine Veteran norm	Q5. "But what I was going to say about the licence plate was the fact that I went to park it at Sobeys, the grocery store, and an old man came out and he said, 'What did your husband do in the military?' And I looked at him and I said, 'I'm the Veteran,' and he just, it stopped him cold and he just said, 'Well,' and he said, 'Well, you probably didn't serve very long, you had babies.' I looked at him and said, 'No, I had babies and 25 years.' But I will say that sometimes I'm not necessarily as pleased as I should be with that Veterans licence plate. I'm still very conflicted about having it."
	Q6. "And I tried OSISS [Operational Stress Injury Social Support] thinking they could help. Turns out that they somewhat can. They said, 'Oh yeah because we were operational, yes' but because, you know, I wasn't comfortable going to the whole combat thing, and being with people from Afghanistan and all that they sent me. 'So, we don't know where to put you' but they put me with the family support coordinator, which is the lady that was taking care of the spouses of people with, husbands with PTSD, which didn't fit really either."
Standing out as a Veteran woman: Not fitting femininity norms	Q7. "Well first it would be like people not understanding why a woman in the first place would want to go in the military so there's an assumption that there must be something wrong with me, right? So, there's just that part. And then the, again, the Rambo factor, so, oh, you know, she would have been in command and control and she would have, so she reacted that way and that's why she's psycho, she's so aggressive, ex-military. And then you go like, no, everybody sort of reacts that way and then it was like, yeah, being like, you know the, what they would expect with the whole feminine thing, and I don't think I'm not feminine, I just think that I was a little bit more kind of assertive in how sort of I handled myself."
Women Veterans as spouses and mothers: Gendered care	Q8. "So again gender, for the female soldier we are much less likely to have the, you know, traditional presupposed, stay-at-home, civilian spouse. It's actually a rarity for us, where it's assumed for the men. And so again, as a female transitioning through, if your spouse is still in the military, which a large number of them are, you're still stuck then with that military soldier, that military stuff."

Some also reported facing stigma and discrimination in the civilian labour force because of their military history or military habitus (Q7). Military service set women Veterans apart from civilian counterparts and made them visibly stand out in the context of civilian femininity norms.

Women Veterans as spouses and mothers: Gendered care

Many study participants reported primarily giving care to, rather than receiving care from, others during MCT. Many still had children to care for and were leaving the military because of challenges balancing military work with child rearing, to devote more time to family, or to start a family. Some were caring for military or ex-military spouses with health challenges resulting from a difficult deployment or MCT. Others dealt with family breakdowns, separations, and, in some cases, single parenting as part of MCT. These developments meant women were doing a disproportionately larger share of parenting and caregiving labour than their spouses or former spouses, and were not the focus of care from others during MCT. Those who were still military spouses felt the military continued to dictate many aspects of their lives, which could lead to substantial frustrations. Thus, both military and family continued to exert pressures on women after service. Although some embraced their caregiver roles, others found it hard not to have more support themselves (Q8).

DISCUSSION

MCT literature emphasizes military and civilian spheres have distinct norms, expectations, and formal and informal rules.[19] Cooper et al. describe MCT as "movement between two different fields, the military and the civilian, and [they] have highlighted some of the difficulties that can occur when negotiating different rules within each of these social arenas."[19(p. 58)] However, this common understanding of transition may reflect a particular gendered standpoint, because it is primarily rooted in men's experiences. Examining women's military and post-military experiences highlights the continuity in gendered experiences across military and civilian life. Both military and Veteran systems are designed around men and their needs. Women are treated as the other in the military as a result of sex, gender, and mothering, but also often no longer fit civilian gender norm expectations upon release. This element of continuity manifests in contradictory experiences of invisibility and hyper-visibility across military and civilian life. The MCT literature misses this important feature of continuity, even as it acknowledges continuity in terms of "an enduring attachment to the military"[19(p. 53)] or the embodied legacy of military socialization.[20]

Much of the literature focuses on women's experiences as individuals and their ability to cope and adjust,[21-23] whereas a critical feminist lens shifts the focus to the way gender norms shape MCT. Consistent with existing feminist research on the CAF, this study found the military is a deeply masculinized institution in which women have to continuously prove they belong. Masculinity is privileged over characteristics associated with femininity despite claims of gender neutrality.[24-27] Women had to make themselves invisible as women to belong in an institution built without them in mind. Pressure to fit in takes many forms: material (uniforms and equipment), social (being one of the boys), performative (acting like a soldier), professional (working twice as hard), and more. The pressure to fit in is especially heightened in male-dominated parts of the military, as earlier Canadian research has also shown.[28] In trying to fit in, women in this study often downplayed gender identity and sex- and gender-specific needs while having to prove they were as good as men, or even better, at performing military roles. While becoming less visible by conforming to the male norm and the masculine ideal, women were also targeted as hyper-visible others who stood out in a male-dominated and masculinized military culture, as earlier Canadian research has also found.[29] Although some women experienced only the occasional sexist or discriminatory incident, others faced repeated sexual harassment, gender discrimination, and sexual assault, echoing reports of high rates of gender-based violence experienced by women in the CAF.[9,30,31] These experiences led to a sense of betrayal by the institution and fellow service members, premature departure, and long-term negative health and well-being consequences — themes well-established in the U.S. literature on women Veterans.[32-35]

Women continue to encounter biased systems and invisibility as they transition out of the military. Civilian society does not readily recognize women as Veterans, leading U.S. researchers to describe women as invisible Veterans.[36,37] The invisibility of women Veterans is reflected in a lack of adequate sex- and gender-specific services, as Canadian researchers are beginning to point out.[38] The importance of developing services tailored to women's needs is well established in the U.S. literature.[39-41] Women Veterans also encounter challenges

fitting into the dominant norms of femininity, a theme previously identified in the U.S. literature.[22,42] Not fitting into civilian femininity norms is yet another form of hyper-visibility associated with the stigma of Veteran womanhood in civilian culture.[43] Moreover, the fact there is no publicly recognized woman Veteran identity to step into may explain why the loss of military identity was found to be more salient for women than men Veterans in Canada.[44]

Parenting and caregiving are key issues affecting women's well-being across military and civilian life, reflecting a central theme in feminist research beyond the military.[45] When servicewomen have children, they are marked as less-than-ideal military members, confirming earlier Canadian research showing the ideal service member is assumed not just to be male but also to have a particular family unit attached to him supporting his military career.[26,46] Although the burden on women of negotiating work and family demands is acknowledged in the literature on gender and the military,[15,25,32,46,47] it has been neglected in the MCT literature thus far. The competing demands of military and family — described as "greedy institutions" — continue to exert pressure on women during MCT.[15] Women take on multiple roles in support of the military, as both service member and military spouse, and these roles compete for women's undivided loyalty. When their role as service member ends, their role as military spouse may continue, highlighting another reason to pay attention to women Veterans' unpaid reproductive and caregiving labour in the context of MCT. These findings resonate with Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) research showing women Veterans are more likely to be engaged in caregiving than men.[7] Despite greater vulnerability resulting from intersecting identity factors of sex, gender, relationship status, and parenthood, military and Veteran women who are also mothers and military or Veteran spouses are largely invisible in Canadian research and programming.

Military and Veteran women transgress gender norms both within the military and in civilian society, making them both invisible as military members and Veterans and hyper-visible as women who challenge the male and masculine norm, as well as femininity norms. The invisibility and simultaneous hyper-visibility of military and Veteran women is a product of a history of male-centrism and gender blindness. The military was historically set up around the norm of the male service member. Although explicitly discriminatory policies were replaced by policies aimed at gender neutrality in the 1990s, they did not undo systemic sex and gender biases and left women's distinct needs invisible.[24,48] Gender neutrality manifests as gender blindness and, as such, negatively affects women's health and well-being.

The study findings highlight how sex- and gender-biased military and Veteran systems set women up for less-than-ideal MCTs. Women have long been expected to change to fit a system designed for men and to find individual solutions to systemic sex and gender problems. However, acknowledging this is neither fair nor just, a more systemic approach to change is required. First, the Department of National Defence (DND)/CAF and VAC should acknowledge and address systemic sex and gender issues affecting women's MCT. Although some changes are underway, findings of this study reinforce the need for swift and systemic change.

Second, meaningful change requires a redesign of military and Veteran systems through a thorough application of Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis and Gender-Based Analysis Plus to ensure women do not experience discrimination and inequitable outcomes.[49,50] Finally, it is essential to listen to the voices of military and Veteran women, as highlighted in this qualitative study, to develop MCT supports that meet their sex- and gender-specific needs. As the continuity of gender norms experienced by women across military and civilian life underscores, these efforts need to include DND/CAF and VAC, as well as civilian service providers.

Limitations

The study has several limitations. First, the study included a heterogeneous but nonetheless non-representative sample of women Veterans. Second, this article did not provide a comprehensive analysis of factors contributing to Canadian women's MCT experiences. Instead, its focus was on identifying key gendered experiences across military and post-military life that shape women's MCT. Third, this study did not include a diverse enough sample of women Veterans to undertake an intersectional analysis that would reveal potential differences based on, for example, race, age, element, or rank. Fourth, participants who served earlier may have served in a less welcoming context than more recent women Veterans, something this analysis did not capture. Fifth, the study focused on gender and only to a lesser degree on sex-specific issues (e.g., health issues) encountered by military and Veteran women.

Conclusion and future directions

This study highlights how gender and sex shape women's experiences across military and post-military life through the continuities of invisibility and hypervisibility. Making military and Veteran women visible as women, with their specific gendered MCT experiences and sex- and gender-specific needs, is a key objective of this article. It provides a critical feminist perspective on MCT in Canada, contributing to MCT research, research on women in the military, and research on women Veterans. Continued research is needed to capture women's evolving experiences of military and post-military life in Canada and to better meet the needs of the growing population of women Veterans. Future research has the task of drilling deeper into specific women's experiences, especially lesbian, racialized, and single women's MCT experiences, to uncover how sex and gender are confounded by other intersecting factors. Future research will also need to delve into specific aspects of Canadian women Veterans' experiences, such as homelessness, social supports, or reproductive health. This article provides a foundation for a sex- and gender-informed understanding of MCT on which future research can build.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

Maya Eichler is the co-chair of the Women Veterans Research and Engagement Network.

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A gender-based analysis of recruitment and retention in the Canadian Army Reserve

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has experienced difficulties in maintaining desired personnel numbers and has sought to remedy this with a renewed emphasis on recruitment and retention. The CAF is also attempting to reach 25.1% women by 2026. The primary goal of this study was to identify successful strategies reserve units use to enhance recruitment and retention. **Methods:** Interviews with 29 members of the Canadian Army Reserve were conducted to gather qualitative data on perceptions and beliefs surrounding recruitment and retention to explore where these two goals of the CAF overlapped. **Results:** The study revealed patterns tied to the CAF's broader recruitment and retention efforts, as well as unit-level strategies. Results point to some specific changes the CAF could implement i.e., better defining retention strategies for the reserves, the importance of focusing on mid-ranking individuals, the positive impact of camaraderie, and creating a recruitment-focused climate. **Discussion:** Findings are discussed in the broader context of recruitment and retention in the reserves to identify ways through which current efforts can be bolstered. These findings are of particular importance for future military personnel policies, especially as they relate to women in the military and the inclusion of under-represented groups.

Key words: army, CAF, Canadian Armed Forces, gender in the military, military reservists, recruitment, retention, women

RÉSUMÉ

Introduction : Les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) éprouvent de la difficulté à maintenir le nombre souhaité de membres du personnel et ont entrepris de remédier à la situation en mettant de nouveau l'accent sur le recrutement et la rétention. Les FAC tentent également d'atteindre 25,1 % de femmes d'ici 2026. Cette étude a comme objectif primaire de déterminer les stratégies fructueuses qu'utilisent les unités de réserve pour accroître le recrutement et la rétention. **Méthodologie :** Les chercheurs ont interviewé 29 membres de la Réserve de l'Armée canadienne afin d'amasser des données qualitatives sur les perceptions et les croyances entourant le recrutement et la rétention et explorer où se situent les chevauchements entre ces deux objectifs des FAC. **Résultats :** L'étude a révélé des tendances liées aux efforts plus larges de recrutement et de rétention des FAC, de même que des stratégies adoptées au sein des unités. Les résultats font ressortir certains changements précis que les FAC pourraient adopter, comme définir les stratégies de rétention des réserves, l'importance de se concentrer sur des personnes de rang intermédiaire, les répercussions positives de la camaraderie et la création d'un climat axé sur le recrutement. **Discussion :** Les résultats sont abordés dans le contexte des efforts de recrutement et de rétention des réserves et des approches qui pourraient être adoptées pour les renforcer. Ces résultats revêtent une importance particulière dans le cadre des futures politiques auprès du personnel militaire, particulièrement à l'égard des femmes militaires et de l'inclusion des groupes sous-représentés.

Mots-clés : armée, FAC, femmes, Forces armées canadiennes, genre chez les militaires, recrutement, réservistes militaires, rétention

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LAY SUMMARY

In this qualitative study, 29 members of the Canadian Army Reserve were interviewed to investigate Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) recruitment and retention strategies. Studying member attitudes and participation in recruitment and retention led to original insights about the importance of community outreach, peer recruiting, and commitment on behalf of leadership when it comes to fostering a recruitment-focused culture. Participants pointed to camaraderie and the quality of training opportunities as significant considerations to improve retention, providing further validation to existing research on retention in reserve units. Using a gender-based lens, reservists were asked about the culture of the CAF, sexual misconduct, and issues facing under-represented groups. Participants felt the military was doing well meeting recruiting targets and that representation and mentorship were important tools to encourage women and members of under-represented groups to join. The answers regarding sexual misconduct were extremely consistent: most were surprised when hearing Reserve Force statistics on sexual misconduct, and many displayed low awareness of how to report incidents. Nevertheless, participants thought their units were better than others when it came to equity, diversity, inclusion, and preventing sexual misconduct, signalling these topics could be further examined in the reserves.

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has plans to grow its ranks yet continues to fall short of recruitment targets, especially for under-represented groups such as women, visible minorities, and Indigenous people.[1] This article begins from the premise that recruitment and retention challenges are different when comparing subgroups within the military with a dearth of scholarship in Canada explicitly focusing on the reserves. A focus on the reserves is important for several other reasons. First, the CAF is set to increase the size of the reserves, and tailored recruitment efforts are needed to guide units in achieving this goal. Second, reservists are drawn from the communities in which they live, contrasting the need for relocation inherent in the Regular Force. Therefore, the reserves might be a lesser-known alternative to Canadians who are interested in the military, but do not want to move. Third, investing in the reserves can deliver benefits for the CAF when it comes to increasing the visibility and awareness of the general population vis-à-vis the military, since many reserve units are in urban centres.

This article informs the discussion by using qualitative data from interviews to identify successful recruitment strategies in Canada. The contribution of this article is twofold: theoretically, it sheds light on gender-based and intersectional considerations affecting recruitment and retention; and empirically, it offers original data drawn from reservists, which continues to be an understudied military sub-group.

Literature on recruitment in the reserves, most notably articles published in the *Canadian Military Journal*, centre around the need for stronger focus on recruitment and retention in the reserves,[2] readiness problems (i.e., the reserves are not ready for the next conflict Canadians will face),[3] a rebuttal to this assertion,[4] and an article in defence of reserve armouries.[5] But what drives recruitment and retention trends at reserve regiments across Canada? Beyond permissive policies at the national level, what generalizable, unit-level conditions contribute to successful recruitment in the reserves? By conducting 29 interviews with members of the army reserves, this study found that broad unit involvement and enthusiasm were key to recruiting success.

While leadership from the command and recruitment teams is a necessary condition, it is not sufficient. The research findings reveal that a key strategy for recruitment is to cultivate a strong regimental culture, conveyed by unit members to their peers, coupled with broad unit participation in recruitment, so that it is the responsibility of not just the command and recruitment teams, but the whole unit. On the retention front, providing continued training and deployment opportunities for reserve personnel was seen as a key determinant, which some members found lacking.

Literature on recruitment and retention

There is ample evidence that the CAF struggles with institutional barriers preventing it from recruiting new members and processing applications with enough speed and efficiency to meet recruitment goals.[6-9] Acknowledging these supply-side explanations for why recruitment efforts are hampered, this article puts more emphasis on the demand side, which starts with the recruitment pool: Canadian society. While some discussions focus on why the Canadian public seems disconnected from the military, these do not often focus on the reserves, despite its visible presence in urban centres and small towns, creating an opportunity for the military to establish ties with communities across the country.[10] Accordingly, the Reserve Force, rather than the Regular Force, may be uniquely positioned to increase the Canadian public's awareness of the CAF

and to influence young Canadians' attitudes toward military service. Recommendations stemming from this study can thus inform efforts to increase connections between the military and the general population, in addition to improving recruitment strategies to better reflect reservists' lived experiences.

When it comes to retention, several studies have been conducted within the CAF on reasons why members choose to either leave or remain within the military. The 2015/2016 Your-Say Survey in the reserves noted the top five self-reported reasons (in order): lack of opportunities, civilian obligations, job dissatisfaction, family-related issues, and dissatisfaction with compensation and benefits.[11] Certain similarities in the results can be noted with the Regular Force; for instance, job dissatisfaction rated highly on both the Regular and Reserve Force surveys, which is not dissimilar from what was found in other countries.[12] Additionally, the survey results indicate dissatisfaction among both Regular and Reserve Force members regarding compensation, pay, and benefits.[12]

There were also notable differences between the groups. Geographic stability was the second most common reason given by Regular Force members for leaving the CAF, whereas this factor did not make the list for Reserve Force members, who typically remain in their communities.[12]Another significant reason for reserve members leaving the CAF was civilian obligations, an issue that did not appear in the Regular Force results.[12] This distinction is to be expected, as reserve soldiers predominantly work for the CAF part time and have other full-time obligations (i.e., other careers, school, etc.), whereas the military is a Regular Force member's full-time employment.[12]

Interestingly, the most common reason reserve members gave for leaving the CAF was a lack of opportunities.[12] Though this is interesting in its own right, the Auditor General's report (2012-15 fiscal years) notes almost half of reserve soldiers who left the CAF did so before completing the first level of their occupational training.[6] Indeed, the Auditor General's report on the Reserve Force stated the CAF has "recognized that providing challenging, exciting training will help improve retention."[6(s. 5.55)] Picking up on this aspect, this interview-based study provides more fine-grained evidence to examine if efforts designed to provide reserve soldiers with opportunities for training and professional advancement have merit.

Recruitment and retention of under-represented groups

Although the CAF is actively working to increase the representation of service members from under-represented groups, there exists a cultural context keeping the military from effectively succeeding in its goals.[13-15] For example, when examining the viability of the Canadian military as a career option for women, Waruszynski et al. argued that the prevailing warrior culture creates an unwelcoming environment for women and must be addressed if the military wants to meet its diversity objectives.[14] Harassment and misconduct are related problems that contribute to recruitment and retention challenges, and these incidents are disproportionately experienced by women and other minority service members when compared with the dominant demographic of the military (i.e., cisgender white men).[13] Regarding the sexualized culture of the CAF, although some changes were implemented with Operation Honour, the rate of sexual assault women experienced only decreased in 2018 for those who did not identify as visible minorities.[15] Hateful conduct has also been identified as a problem within the CAF that might uniquely affect racialized service members.[13]

This discussion thus far has highlighted how recruitment and retention patterns vary when applying an intersectional lens based on employment status (reserves vs. Regular Force), gender, and race. While exit surveys, harassment reporting data, and reviews conducted by the Auditor General represent a strong evidence base, qualitative data derived from interviews are needed to validate these broad findings and provide more nuance and context to the patterns of recruitment and retention in the CAF.

METHODS

This study aimed to gather qualitative data on perceptions and beliefs regarding recruitment and retention trends in the CAF but focused on a participant pool from the primary reserves. After the authors secured ethics clearances, participants were recruited to identify factors that contribute to successful recruitment strategies within the reserves (the interview questionnaire for this study is available online[16]).

The first stage of the study involved assessing key themes covered in the interviews, during which service members would provide valuable insight on recruitment and retention. To analyze the data, a list of key themes was developed, drawn from existing training materials, as well as the broader literature on military recruitment

and retention. Three themes of interest were developed for the interviews: perceptions pre-enrollment, perceptions post-enrollment, and recruitment and retention challenges. Four participant groups were identified for the interviews:

1. The command team would provide a unique lens by outlining the contours of the regiment's recruitment strategies.
2. The recruiting team would provide insight on recruitment trends and activities.
3. Recruits from training companies would provide the perspective of new recruits.
4. Trade-qualified junior non-commissioned members would provide the perspectives of more experienced members of the regiment.

Out of 29 interviewees, 2 were from Group 1, 4 from Group 2, 6 from Group 3, and 18 from Group 4. A total of 24 men and 5 women were interviewed; 25 interviewees identified their ethnicity as Caucasian. The sample is roughly consistent with the proportion of women and visible minorities in the CAF primary reserve, according to CAF employment equity statistics.[7] A total of 16.80% of primary reservists are women, and the sample comprised 17.24% women. A total of 11.30% of primary reservists identify as visible minorities, and in the sample, 10.35% of participants identified their ethnicity as other than Caucasian. However, the sample did not have any Indigenous participants, even though Indigenous reservists make up 2.60% of the CAF primary reserve.

RESULTS

To identify the conditions under which units employ successful recruitment and retention strategies, it must be acknowledged that part of the increase in high-performing units can be attributed to a permissive policy environment for recruitment in reserve units, the full-time summer employment program, and overall improvements in the CAF recruitment system (e.g., more streamlined recruiting processes with some documents housed locally with recruiting regiments). Additional factors were identified through the interviews, which highlight more unit-specific dynamics.

Social media presence and community outreach were identified by participants as contributing factors to recruitment success when recruiting teams saw them as a priority, evidenced by staff time and material resources invested. On a more individual level, participants reported personal commitment on behalf of commanding officers (COs) as important. COs could demonstrate this by talking about recruitment during parade nights and regimental activities, as well as encouraging personnel to hand out recruiting materials, and to discuss employment in the reserves with family and friends. Indeed, COs who focus on expanding the recruiting team and bringing all reservists into the process undoubtedly play a part in recruitment success. Many recruitment events take place at high schools, colleges, and universities to directly target student populations, which recruiting teams often prioritize, though this varies from community to community.

While recruitment was clearly a priority for individual units, as well as the Department of National Defence (DND)/CAF, it was more difficult to find explicitly stated retention strategies. Participants noted that without training opportunities or exciting deployment opportunities, people will eventually lose interest in the reserves unless financial incentives are the driving motivator. What came out of the interview data is that the most positive experiences were associated with training or deployment. Grievances centred on reservists not feeling as if they were provided enough opportunities to train and deploy, as well as complaints about equipment. Some junior leaders were also concerned about heightened training responsibilities that they did not feel equipped to handle. For most who raised the prospect of leaving their units, the rationale was tied to finishing university or college. Some of those who planned to leave had goals of careers in the Regular Force or in policing. The reserves were largely seen as a fallback option, with more desirable careers in the participant's field of study or in other security fields as the priority. This is understandable, as most of the participants in the sample were in their early twenties.

Another interesting finding from the interviews relates to the unintended consequences of either recruitment success or personnel challenges at the mid-level. Lieutenants, corporals, and master corporals were concerned they were not receiving training and their unit was recruiting over capacity. These participants felt they were not afforded opportunities to train and that they were asked to train members without the required qualifications.

Sexual misconduct and other issues facing underrepresented groups such as discrimination and hate speech were seen by some participants as side concerns that did not affect the whole of the unit. Participants

were hesitant when speaking to these issues and felt the military was doing well with recruiting targets overall. Those who offered strategies for recruitment claimed representation and mentorship were key to encourage women to join. However, both men and women discussed how women, visible minorities, and Indigenous people were sometimes paraded out to showcase the unit's diversity and achievements, with some resentment expressed toward this practice.

The way sexual misconduct was discussed by those in the unit was extremely consistent. Upon hearing statistics of sexual misconduct in the reserves, interviewees often first expressed surprise.[17] Overall, participants also thought their units were better than others when it came to sexual misconduct preservation. Many focused on peer-to-peer assaults in their responses, as opposed to evidence that points to abuse of power as a significant factor in sexual misconduct and discrimination. Participants also seemed to paint an idealized portrait of the Regular Force, suggesting that trust and familial connections between Regular Force members may explain lower rates of sexual misconduct. Participants often discussed sexual misconduct from the military's point of view, noting how individuals are easier to control in the Regular Force setting, and how reserve units have more time together off duty than on duty, creating more windows of opportunity for sexual misconduct to occur without repercussions. Some participants revealed they did not know how sexual misconduct was reported and disciplined within their unit and expressed confusion about the rules. These participants also discussed the lack of direct and immediate repercussions and the long time frame of processing allegations.

DISCUSSION

Creating an environment where everyone is expected to contribute to recruitment is an important and novel finding not previously identified in the Canadian literature as an effective recruitment strategy. While surveys conducted by DND/CAF show family and friends are a big source of influence when making decisions about joining the military, the mechanism by which this happens is not specified.[18] This is where interview data can provide a clearer picture. Multiple participants reported friends joined based on informal conversations about the reserves, which signals that peer group dynamics can positively impact recruitment. The possible consequences of peer-based recruiting should be further explored. On one hand, it could reinforce prevailing networks dominant in the CAF (i.e., cisgender white men), but on the other, if diversity efforts are explicitly offered as a rationale for recruitment, recounting positive, peer-based experiences to women, visible minorities, and Indigenous people may encourage them to join. Another point emerging from the interviews is that recruits who expressed an interest in joining the unit only temporarily were not turned away. While these applicants boost recruitment numbers, they can negatively impact retention numbers. This recruitment pool is flighty, but it is renewable, given the proximity of universities to some reserve units in urban centres. The interviews also showed that good camaraderie at the regiment may also contribute to retention, as regimental climate can vary widely, across time and space.[17,19] Overall, it seems that more junior members were more satisfied with their experience — an interesting avenue for future research.

In terms of more generalizable recruitment and retention factors identified by the study, it is worth restating that recruitment strategies that push hard for certain demographics can have a detrimental effect on longer-term retention. For example, if a regiment relies heavily on transient university students as a main recruitment pool, it must be a clear-headed strategy with mitigating measures, as almost all plan to leave the regiment upon graduation. Many participants did not want to leave the regiment but knew they would have to move for their jobs (and so transfer to another unit) or wanted a career in the Regular Force.

Interesting gaps in reservist recruitment strategies were also found. For example, local part-time workers, who are less of a flight risk, might be interested in the reserves if they had more knowledge of opportunities. Investing in more — and better — training opportunities for reservists and improving career advancement prospects are factors identified as recruitment and retention challenges in the international literature. The interviews provide additional confirming evidence from the Canadian context.[20] The interviews highlight the interconnected nature of training and culture, meaning an approach that meets the needs of the regiment and translates into a more enthusiastic recruitment culture can deliver bottom-up results and might be more effective than a top-down recruitment strategy.

More research should be conducted on recruitment and retention of under-represented groups, such as racialized minorities, within the primary reserves. Members of the regiment were often stumped on the diversity

questions posed during the interviews, despite these issues receiving significant media and policy attention nationwide. Participants noted the military has a bad reputation when it comes to including women, visible minorities, and Indigenous people but offered that this view was inaccurate, as their experiences did not reflect this reputation. This suggests topics such as equity, diversity, and inclusion, as well as sexual misconduct prevention, should be further emphasized in the reserves through tailored training and clear leadership guidance.

Conclusion

When assessing the factors that contribute to recruitment and retention in the CAF, this study has shown that while policies at the national level and streamlined recruitment processes are important, attention should also be paid to unit-level dynamics. Indeed, while all units stand to benefit from a permissive policy environment, there is considerable variation in terms of how units perform when it comes to taking advantage of these policies and being successful at boosting overall numbers. To help explain this variation, the interview data[16] revealed that a positive and welcoming culture makes recruits want to stay and encourages them to recruit friends and acquaintances. Furthermore, retention strategies aiming to improve training opportunities were confirmed to be effective, but these should be implemented evenly at all levels so that all members of the regiment are offered similar training and advancement prospects.

In terms of areas of improvement, there was a lack of focus and awareness on under-represented groups and their needs, both in the content of unit-level policies and in the answers provided during the interviews. Diversity and inclusion should be a key part of a broader and more holistic recruitment and retention strategy that enhances unit-level culture and is embedded in leadership and soldier guidance, so it is consistent with the broader diversity efforts of the CAF. Finally, army reserve units with similar community demographics should share best practices when it comes to recruitment and retention, rather than having these discussions at the brigade or division levels, where units might be harder to compare.

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Pictures tell a story: Diversity and inclusion on the National CFMWS website

Lynne Gouliquer[a], Carmen Poulin[b], Alissa Moore[b] and Hilary Longobardi[b]

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Despite efforts to end discrimination in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), policy reform will not be effective unless the culture changes. After the official policy preventing gay and lesbian soldiers from serving (Canadian Forces Administrative Orders [CFAO] 19-20) was struck down, these service members and their spouses still faced discrimination and were disadvantaged by a heteronormative military culture. This study examines a lack of representational equity that may impede progress toward a military community that is truly inclusive of women, LGBTQIA2S+ members, and those who identify as Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC). **Methods:** A visual analysis of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services national website (https://www.cafconnection.ca/) was conducted by capturing screenshots of images displayed. Images were coded for diversity-related themes (gender, LGBTQIA2S+, or BIPOC representation) using NVivo 12 qualitative analysis software. **Results:** Findings indicate that women, LGBTQIA2S+, and BIPOC service members were disadvantageously represented. **Discussion:** Current online depictions of people maintain the historic heteronormative and cisnormative assumptions and image of the CAF. The authors conclude unconscious biases and hegemonic assumptions can, if left unexamined, obstruct diversification, inclusion, and recruitment/retention in the CAF.

Key words: BIPOC, Canadian Armed Forces, CAF, cisgender, diversity, gender, heteronormativity, LGBTQIA2S+, qualitative visual methodologies, women

RÉSUMÉ

Introduction : Malgré des efforts pour mettre fin à la discrimination au sein des Forces armées canadiennes (FAC), une réforme des politiques ne sera pas efficace sans modification de la culture. Après la résiliation de la politique officielle interdisant aux soldats gais et lesbiennes de servir (Ordonnances administratives des Forces canadiennes [OAFC] 19-20), ces militaires et leurs conjoints doivent encore composer avec de la discrimination et sont désavantagés par une culture militaire hétéronormative. La présente étude examine un manque d'équité représentationnelle qui pourrait faire obstacle au progrès quant à l'atteinte d'une communauté militaire qui est pleinement inclusive des femmes, des membres LGBTQIA2S+ et ceux qui s'identifient comme personnes autochtones, noires et de couleur (PANDC). **Méthodologie :** Une analyse visuelle du site Web national des Services bien-être & moral des Forces canadiennes (https://www.connexionfac.ca/) a été effectuée en faisant des captures d'écran des images affichées. Les images ont été codées selon des termes liés à la diversité (représentation des genres, personnes LGBTQIA2S+ ou PANDC) du logiciel d'analyse qualitative NVivo 12. **Résultats :** Les conclusions montrent que les femmes, les personnes LGBTQIA2S+ et les PANDC n'étaient pas représentés de manière avantageuse. **Discussion :** La représentation actuelle, en ligne, de personnes conserve l'image et les présomptions historiques hétéronormatives et cisnormatives des FAC. Les auteurs concluent que des préjugés inconscients et des présomptions hégémoniques peuvent, s'ils ne sont pas examinés, faire obstacle à la diversification, à l'inclusion et au recrutement/à la fidélisation au sein des FAC.

Mots-clés : cisgenre, diversité, FAC, femmes, Forces armées canadiennes, genre, hétéronormativité, LGBTQIA2S+, méthodologies visuelles qualitatives, PANDC

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LAY SUMMARY

Women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA2S+ people have faced, and continue to face, discrimination in the Canadian Armed Forces. This study examined the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services national website (https://www.cafconnection.ca/) to see how diversity was represented. The authors captured screenshots from the site between November 2020 and April 2021. While images of women, Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour, and LGBTQIA2S+ people were present, the images that showed diversity were usually purchased, generic photos of people, and not representative of military life. In general, the photos maintained a patriarchal status quo largely depicting cisgender male soldiers and heteronormativity.

INTRODUCTION

Canadian society has changed significantly over the last 60 years. Parallel changes in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) were much slower and were usually the result of political legislative powers such as those imposed by a Royal Commission, Human Rights Tribunal, or federal court ruling. The 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women resulted in significant gains for women in the military, such as equivalent pensions, access to CAF college education, and the right to serve when pregnant.[1(p. 134-138)] In 1989, a Human Rights Tribunal directed the CAF to eliminate employment occupational barriers and fully integrate women into the military.[2(p. 27)] In 1992, a federal court ruling directed the military to cease discrimination against non-normative sexual orientations and gender expressions.[3 (p. 165)] These legislative tools aided in eliminating most discriminatory military laws and policies toward women and LGBTQIA2S+ people.

The 1989 Human Rights Tribunal recognized deep-rooted and widespread prejudice against women in service, and in military culture itself, given that it granted the CAF 10 years to fully integrate women into its ranks.[2(p. 28)] Yet, more than 30 years later, military culture continues to entail the objectification, subordination, and exclusion of those who differ from the quintessential soldier.[4-13] In other words, anyone who is not heterosexual, hypermasculine, white, and a man is vulnerable to experiencing discrimination and harassment in the CAF.[14(p. 104)] Women, LGBTQIA2S+, and Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) soldiers continue to endure discrimination.[10(p. 70),12(p. 18-20,),13(p. 81-82),15(p. 50-53)] For example, the Deschamps report revealed CAF culture is inhospitiable to women and sexual minorities, and rife with sexual harassment and assault.[12(p. 86)]

Operation HONOUR was implemented to end sexual misconduct in the Canadian military.[16] Recent allegations of sexual misconduct at the highest level of CAF hierarchy (e.g., the former Chief of the Defence staff who launched Operation HONOUR) highlight the depth of the problem.[17-21] Callaghan argues this initiative did not address the underlying problematic aspects of military culture.[13(p. 82)] Operation HONOUR ended and was denounced as indicative of the CAF's inability to change.[19,20] Another Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, headed by former Supreme Court justice the Hon. Louise Arbour, was ordered in 2021.[22] Similar to the Deschamps report, its purpose is to continue the work of eliminating sexual misconduct in the CAF.

Integration of women into the CAF

Examining changes simply in terms of the number of women in the ranks of the CAF reveals an interesting trend. In the 50 years following the 1970 Royal Commission, the CAF Regular Force saw a 650% increase in the representation of women, going from 2% to 15%. More specifically, between the 1970 Royal Commission and the 1989 Human Rights Tribunal, there was a 350% increase in the number of women in the forces, rising from 2% to 9% of all members. From 1989 to 2001, there was a 33% increase (9% to 11%), and from 2001 to 2019, the increase was 36% (11% to 15%).[23] The CAF now aims to increase the number of women in the forces by 67%, from 15% to 25% in 10 years.[24] Historically, the CAF achieved a 67% change, but over a 30-year period that included a mandated policy forcing change.[23] Is this new objective achievable, considering the complexity of change required in terms of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the context of CAF culture? This snapshot of gender progression demonstrates the challenges change represents for the CAF. However, assessment of women's integration into the CAF must go beyond the numbers; Eichler proposes that further research on the experiences of women Veterans and CAF members should draw on feminist theories and incorporate an analysis of the implications and constructions of gender roles.[25(p. 7),26(p. 686-687)]

Another example of inequality is the pay gap. In a quantitative analysis of CAF members' military pay, Gouliquer found a gendered pay gap in both the officer corps and the non-commissioned member (NCM) ranks, with the largest difference affecting women officers.[27(p. 97-117)] All accountable military factors did not eliminate the gender difference in pay. Given institutional resistance to change, gendered pay differences are likely to persist. Thus, despite positive policy changes, discrimination persists.

Integration of LGBTQIA2S+ soldiers into the CAF

Previous findings indicate an enduring lack of acceptance of difference underpins the institutional structures of the CAF.[10(p. 70),12(p. 18-20),28,29(p. 90)] This lack of acceptance negatively affects cisgender women, LGBTQIA2S+ personnel, and ethnically and racially diverse soldiers. Often, the pronouncement that culture is slow to change is given to evoke understanding and forgiveness for institutional leaders and lack of substantive change.[30(p. 402-404),31(p. 38)] Evidently, there is an understanding that informal realities (culture and attitude) do not often match official rules and policies, yet policy reforms are essential, and induce progress. However, policy reforms are not sufficient and do not change culture, as illustrated by the unresolved problems plaguing the CAF.[13(p. 73, 80-82),18,21,32] Indeed, research indicates a hypermasculine, heteronormative, cisgender, white, male soldier ideal is pervasive within the CAF, along with a belief that soldiers need to display traits embodied by this schema.[3-10,12-15,23,33,34] For example, due to the informal policing of sexual orientation and gender expression, gay and lesbian service members feared repercussions if they were to officially come out for over 10 years after CFAO 19-20 was rescinded.[8(p. 71-72),10(p. 65-66, 68),11(p. 56-57, 60)] There is a disparagement of behaviours or traits associated with femininity, non-heterosexuality, non-cisgender identity, or other non-normative identities.

Integration of BIPOC soldiers into the CAF

Acknowledging the CAF's historical (mis)treatment of racially diverse soldiers is pertinent to contextualize the current reality.[34(p. 114, 116, 134)] The CAF is what George refers to as a "white space," where BIPOC soldiers are seen as "other," and whiteness and hegemonic masculinity predominate.[15(p. 43, 50-51),34(p. 115)] Historically, Canada discriminated against its racialized citizens, such as Chinese and Japanese Canadians, who were willing to serve during the Second World War.[35(p. 341)] The premier of British Columbia during that time feared recruiting Chinese and Japanese Canadians into the military would result in "Oriental domination" in British Columbia.[35(p. 343)] Regardless of citizenship or years spent in the country, Asian Canadians were socially constructed as a menace to the nation.[35(p. 343, 350)]

Black and Indigenous Canadians have also experienced discrimination in military recruitment policies.[36(p. 17),37(p. 9-10, 13-14)] For example, during the Second World War, until 1943, the Royal Canadian Navy's policy required recruits to be "of pure European descent and of the white race."[37(p. 9)] The Royal Canadian Air Force maintained a similar policy until 1939.[37(p. 11)]

Today, racism and homophobia are no longer blatantly written into the CAF's policies the way they were in the past. George argues CAF initiatives to boost diversity have been a superficial solution to deeper problems.[15(p. 43, 53)] Arguably, increasing the demographic diversity of the CAF should be accompanied by an acknowledgement of, and a willingness to change, the prevailing culture of white, heteronormative masculinity.[15(p. 51-53)]

Aim of this study

Sanctioned discriminatory policies against BIPOC, LGBTQIA2S+, and cisgender women soldiers no longer exist in the CAF. However, as discussed above, hypermasculine, white, colonial, heteronormative, gendered assumptions remain deeply embedded within military structures and culture, in both subtle and blatant ways. It is essential these be identified, acknowledged, and addressed if the CAF is committed to not alienating, erasing, or overlooking women, BIPOC, and LGBTQIA2S+ members. Considering the commitments made in the CAF's diversity strategy to increase the organization's overall diversity and inclusion by 2026,[38(p. 8-9)] significant change is required. To examine the inclusivity of the Canadian military, an analysis of the Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) national website was conducted. The CFMWS provides current and retired CAF members and their families with services and resources such as fitness programs, financial services, and educational information.[39,40]

The CFMWS website is intended for use by the entire military community, which comprises over 1 million people.[41] Recent initiatives from the CAF and Department of National Defence show diversity and inclusion are important to the military community and for recruitment and retention in the CAF.[42-44] The lack of diverse and unbiased pictorial representation

of minorities on institutional websites and virtual media spaces is shown to exacerbate marginalization and perceptions.[45(p. 477-478),46(p. 17-18),47(p. 489)] According to Rose,[46(p. xxii, 14-18, 22-23, 46)] a visual methodological analysis of images highlights how images can carry and transmit meaning and messages about cultural norms. Rose also contends images can potentially do harm by reinforcing, or erasing, social categories such as race, gender, and ethnicity.[46(p. 17-18)] Thus, an analysis of visual images on the CFMWS website is an informative means to elucidate the CAF's progress.

METHODS

The authors conducted a visual methodological qualitative analysis of images from the CFMWS national website (https://www.cafconnection.ca/). Screenshots of webpages were systematically captured and analyzed using version 12.7.0 of the qualitative analysis software NVivo 12 (QSR International Pty Ltd., Melbourne, Australia).[48] The screenshots were collected between November 2020 and April 2021. Like other quantitative or qualitative studies, the analyzed images represent a snapshot of the website during this time period and may not reflect the site as it currently exists. For more information regarding the images analyzed for this study, please contact the authors. The following themes were a priori identified from the literature: LGBTQIA2S+ representation, ambiguous identity, BIPOC representation, family relationships, gender, symbols and logos, text language, traditional norms, and who is wearing the uniform. These themes helped guide data collection and orient researchers toward the images. Given the scope of this study, not all themes yielded results. Thus, the discussion and analysis focus on LGBTQIA2S+ representation, depictions of families, and BIPOC representation.

Additionally, the authors analyzed the difference between photos based on origin (i.e., stock photos or military-generated images). Rose argues the "site of production" of images influences the meanings they convey.[46(p. 27-32)] Photo credits for stock images purchased from a company read "iStock" or "Thinkstock," whereas military-produced images usually credited "Military Family Services" (MFS) or "Combat Camera." Although what is depicted in an image is important, knowledge about origin, or how an image was made, influences and informs the viewer.[46(p. 27)] Arguably, the stock images were created for purposes that were different from military-produced photos (i.e., monetary vs. self-promotion).

RESULTS

LGBTQIA2S+ representation

Findings revealed little LGBTQIA2S+ representation on the CFMWS website. Most notable was the absence of artifacts such as LGBTQIA2S+ symbols or pride flags. Furthermore, depictions of non-heterosexual couples were located far from the main landing pages. Images of LGBTQIA2S+ couples were only visible once one navigated three layers/pages down inside the site (home> programs and services> health> healthy relationships). On the Healthy Relationships page, the dominant image is a non-white heterosexual couple. Further down the page, there were four photos with links to other pages. Two of the photos were of a lesbian and a gay couple and subtitled Tips Sheets and Supports Available to You, respectively. Both couples were interracial. Photo credits indicate both images were stock images. Neither depicted a person in a Canadian military uniform. On the Tips Sheets page, which focuses on family violence and abuse prevention, there is another photo with a link subtitled the Intimate Relationships Continuum and Chart page. This image highlights another gay couple who are white. The Intimate Relationships page provides information to help members understand healthy versus unhealthy relationships. The photo is also a stock photo and neither of the men can be visually identified as a military member.

Depictions of families

Also found on the Healthy Relationships page is a link to a page entitled Stories of Military Members and Their Families. The families featured in short videos on this page at the time of the study were all heterosexual-presenting military families and contrasted starkly with the stock photos of non-military LGBTQIA2S+ couples. All the people in the videos were white, and each video had a single family name as its caption. In these videos, the men were identifiable as military members and the women usually as civilians, although in one video both the man and woman were service members.

BIPOC representation

While white, heteronormative military family depictions were most often featured, interracial couples were also depicted. One image showed a white man wearing a Canadian military uniform with children and a woman in civilian clothing who was a Person of Colour. There were many BIPOC individuals and couples depicted but most were stock images. Thus, BIPOC representation

was quite common on the site. However, no images of BIPOC members wearing a military uniform and accompanied by their families were present. Of the many images showing familial relationships where at least one parent was in uniform, the families were predominantly white and showed a man wearing a Canadian military uniform. However, at the time of the analysis, one of the rolling images on the main webpage indicated that April was the Month of the Military Child. The associated image showed three Black children sitting together and wearing CAF t-shirts.

From the main page of the CFMWS website, following the About Us link to a sub-page, there was a short, animated video about CFMWS as a social enterprise. The still image used to introduce the video shows two animated figures of women, both People of Colour. One is wearing a CAF identifiable sweatshirt. In the actual video, one animated Black woman is the only service woman depicted, and the main character dominating the video is an animated white man in a CAF army shirt.

On the Our Policies sub-page of the About Us page, there is obvious BIPOC representation. All five images for the Our Policies subsection were stock photos featuring BIPOC individuals. For example, the main image for the Conflict of Interest section shows a stock photo of a Black woman. Given the context, it is implied she is being negatively affected by a conflict of interest. Similarly, the image for the Non-Public Funds (NPF) Workplace Harassment and Violence Prevention Policy is a stock photo of two women, one Black and one white, who appear to be in a discussion with a third mostly unseen person. At the time of the study, there was no BIPOC representation in the other sub-pages of the About Us page titled Our Values, Our Leadership, and Our Strategies. These other pages contained primarily photos of CAF soldiers, all of whom were white. There was no BIPOC representation among the 10-person leadership team on the Our Leadership page, and a white hand holding a compass is located at the top of the page.

DISCUSSION

While LGBTQIA2S+ representation on the CFMWS website does exist, it is limited and located three to four clicks (or layers) away from the main page. The images of LGBTQIA2S+ couples were also associated with topics of advice, such as intimate relationships, domestic violence, and abuse. There were no images of LGBTQIA2S+ couples found in sections dealing with finances, parenting, or relocations. There were also no images of LGBTQIA2S+ couples parenting. Most notably, the pictures were usually purchased stock images. None depicted people with a Canadian military affiliation (e.g., wearing a military uniform).

Regarding military families, Spanner argues the demands of the military spousal role have not changed over decades and the CAF continues to benefit from conventional, gendered labour within military families.[49(p. 67)] This analysis of the CFMWS website revealed some examples of women in uniform with children, and one example of a heterosexual couple both in uniform with a child. However, there were no examples found showing a family with a woman in uniform and a man in civilian clothing. Moreover, representations of family on the website predominantly adhered to the schema of a "Standard North American Family" — two white parents of different genders and children, all using the same family name.[50(p. 157-171)] By routinely depicting a man in uniform, images symbolically promoted a traditional, patriarchal, heterosexual, cisgender CAF hierarchy and culture. Although women are pictured in uniform, they are often in nurturing roles (i.e., with children, or caring for the sick and injured).

Regarding BIPOC representation, the image for the Month of the Military Child on the landing page seemed to be a photo of actual military children. This is a positive step toward diversity and inclusion. In the animated video, while the inclusion of BIPOC women (and men) are indicators of inclusivity, the inclusion remains cursory.[34(p. 123-124, 133-134)] Undercurrents of white dominant power relations also underpin the video. Furthermore, images of BIPOC people on the CFMWS website were associated with problems that needed to be solved and monitored, such as a young Black girl held by her father while a white medical technician treated her injury, rather than being associated with CAF leadership roles or positive subthemes. Thus, BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ persons are depicted as needy (i.e., associated with concepts of conflict, violence, and disclosure of wrongdoing), and not fully integrated members of the CAF.

In summary, the representations of CAF members and their family constellations remain white, heterosexual, cisgender, and dominated by masculinity. The fact that stock images depicting diversity and inclusion were added is a step in the right direction. However, with different sites of production,[46(p. 27-32)] they send the message that diversity is outsourced and not integral or important to the military. Arguably, diversity and inclusion render military institutions stronger and impart unique

strengths.[51] For instance, the recruitment of Indigenous Peoples into the Canadian Army during the Second World War led to the formation of a unit of Cree code talkers who created a code the German Axis was unable to crack, thereby helping secure Allied intelligence.[52]

Whether the absent or subordinated depictions of BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ members and their families is inadvertent or intended is not the point. In a culture that tries to erase differences to bolster cohesion, equitable depiction and inclusion of women, BIPOC and LGBTQIA2S+ CAF members and families remains extremely challenging. Like previous findings in the context of academic recruitment,[53(p. 262-264, 275-276)] the use of both stock and military photos created an illusion of inclusion and, in this case, sustains a military culture which values whiteness, men, heteronormativity, cisgender, and hypermasculinity. Diverse individuals should see themselves reflected in a realistic way and celebrated in visual media.[47(p. 482, 489-490),53(p. 278-279)] While a certain type of inclusion is evident in the images analysed, strategic efforts on the part of the CAF will require further mindful analyses for unconscious biases and hegemonic expectations.

Limitations and suggestions for future research

All research, whether quantitative or qualitative, involves the subjective positioning of researchers, and analyzing images is no different.[46(p. 16, 46),53(p. 268-269)] While this study examining the CFMWS website was small, the findings indicate where change, with respect to diversity and inclusion in the CAF, is needed. Future research should expand to in-depth quantitative and qualitative examinations of all CAF and CFMWS websites.

Conclusion

This article presents an informative visual qualitative analysis of images on the CFMWS national website. Given the current impetus to diversify the CAF and Department of National Defence, and the historic discrimination faced by marginalized groups in the military, an analysis of visual representations is timely. This analysis revealed limitations to how and when LGBTQIA2S+, women, and BIPOC CAF members and their families were represented. The military families pictured predominantly consisted of white men in uniform with women in civilian clothing accompanied by two children. A critical analysis of how heteronormative and cisnormative relations of power are privileged in the CAF is necessary. This analysis will require a long-term commitment to carefully examine institutional structures, practices, and culture using Gender-Based Analysis Plus,[54] critical feminist theory, critical race theory, and Indigenous approaches.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have nothing to disclose.

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PEER REVIEW

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Canadian Rangers

The Canadian Rangers are part of the Canadian Armed Forces and work in remote, isolated, and coastal regions of Canada. Drawn from their local communities, Rangers speak 26 different languages and dialects, and bring diversity of experience and insight to their training, alongside other Canadian Army members.

Photos clockwise from top left: Canadian Ranger Melina Tessier-Fontaine of Dawson City, Yukon, Canada, is pictured after a two-week Arctic patrol during Operation NUNALIVUT. *Photo by Cpl. Pierre Létourneau;* Sgt. Emily Coombs of the 4th Canadian Ranger Patrol Group teaches 3rd Canadian Division soldiers about the importance of finding the right wood to start a fire during Basic Wilderness Survival Training in Dease Lake, British Columbia, Canada. *Photo by O.S. Alexandra Proulx/Directorate of Army Public Affairs (Ottawa);* Members of the Royal Canadian Air Force 436 Transport Squadron and the Canadian Rangers evacuate residents of Pikangikum First Nation during Operation LENTUS. *Photo by Cpl. Ken Beliwicz;* Canadian Army reservists participate in Exercise NORTHERN SOJOURN near Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. The exercise brought together soldiers from Canada, the United States, and Poland. *Canadian Army photo;* Members of 1st Canadian Ranger Patrol Group conduct search and rescue drills on Great

Slave Lake near Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada, during Operation NUNAKPUT. *Photo by Petty Officer, 2nd Class Belinda Groves;* The Inukjuak Junior Canadian Ranger Patrol, located in Nunavik, Québec, Canada, conduct a training activity under the supervision of the Canadian Rangers. The Junior Canadian Rangers program promotes traditional cultures and lifestyles, including Ranger skills, by offering a variety of structured activities to youth ages 12-18 years living in remote and isolated communities. *Canadian Army Photo;* Master Corporal Gordon Reed performs a daily check-in between Teslin, a satellite patrol, and Carcross, Yukon, Canada, using an iridium phone, as part of the Northern response to the COVID-19 pandemic. *Canadian Armed Forces photo;* Pte. Dennis Funk, a Canadian Ranger, patrols the coastline of Hudson Bay in Churchill, Manitoba, Canada, during Operation NANOOK. *Photo by Cpl. Tina Gillies/DND-MDN Canada*

Socio-cultural dynamics in gender and military contexts: Seeking and understanding change

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ABSTRACT

In response to a 2015 external review and subsequent allegations of sexual misconduct, high priority has been placed on socio-cultural change in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Canada's Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, reinforces this priority, calling for a culture of respect and inclusion that supports gender equality and a workforce that leverages the diversity of Canadian society. Notwithstanding multiple efforts targeting diversity, inclusion, sexual misconduct elimination, and integration of gender perspectives into policy, planning, and military operations, understanding and monitoring culture and culture change is a persistent challenge. Drawing from historical documents and social science research on culture and gender in the Canadian military, this article presents an analysis of socio-cultural shifts since 1970. The analysis illustrates the importance of understanding the complexity of cultural influences and describes how cultural discourses have shaped responses to gender difference. Related narratives are frequently adopted at face value in the absence of comprehensive analysis of cultural influences. Research has made valuable contributions to better understanding and monitoring of Canadian military culture; however, historical evidence suggests the meaning of gender integration has not been fully understood or achieved. This analysis underscores the importance of critical and comprehensive analyses to support aspirations for social inclusion.

Key words: CAF, Canadian Armed Forces, culture change, gender, military culture, policy, planning, women in the military

RÉSUMÉ

En réponse à un examen externe et à des allégations subséquentes d'inconduite sexuelle, les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) ont fait de la modification de leur environnement socioculturel une priorité. La politique de défense du Canada, Protection, Sécurité, Engagement, vient renforcer cette priorité, en réclamant une culture de respect et d'inclusion qui soutient l'égalité des genres et une main-d'œuvre qui vient tirer parti de la diversité de la société canadienne. Malgré des efforts multipliés pour cibler la diversité, l'inclusion, l'éradication de l'inconduite sexuelle et l'intégration de nouvelles perspectives dans les politiques, la planification et les opérations militaires, il reste difficile de comprendre la culture et les changements culturels et d'en faire le suivi. En se fondant sur des documents historiques et des travaux de recherche en sciences sociales sur la culture et le genre dans les forces armées canadiennes, cet article présente une analyse des changements socioculturels survenus depuis les années 1970. L'analyse illustre l'importance de comprendre la complexité des influences culturelles et décrit la façon dont les discours culturels ont façonné les réponses aux différences de genre. Des narratifs connexes sont souvent pris au pied de la lettre en l'absence d'une analyse complète des influences culturelles. Des travaux de recherche ont offert d'utiles contributions à une meilleure compréhension et à un meilleur suivi de la culture militaire canadienne; cependant, la preuve historique suggère que la signification de l'intégration des genres n'a pas été pleinement comprise ou atteinte. L'analyse souligne l'importance d'analyses critiques et exhaustives pour appuyer des aspirations liées à l'inclusion sociale.

Mots-clés : changement de culture, culture militaire, FAC, femmes dans les forces armées, Forces armées canadiennes, genre, planification, politique

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LAY SUMMARY

Today, changing the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is a high priority so that all members feel respected and included and do not experience discrimination, harassment, or any form of sexual misconduct. This article looks back at the CAF experience with gender integration to see what it tells us about what should be done today. Over 20 years ago, many believed the job was done, that the CAF had fully integrated women and welcomed all members, regardless of who they were. Women have served in the Canadian military for several decades; they make important contributions, and there are no formal limitations on how they contribute and what they can achieve. Although policies and practices have changed, too often, some women and men continue to experience discrimination, harassment, and sexual assault. Based on past experience, this article suggests that thinking about different ways of understanding culture in the CAF is important in paving the way for a more inclusive experience for all members.

INTRODUCTION

In response to the 2015 external review on sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, high priority was placed on social-cultural change in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).[1] This is reinforced within Canada's Defence Policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged, in its call for a culture of respect and inclusion that supports gender equality and a workforce that leverages the diversity of Canadian society.[2] Notwithstanding the multiple efforts targeting diversity, inclusion, the elimination of sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, the integration of gender-based analysis into policy and planning and gender perspectives into military operations, understanding and monitoring culture and culture change to inform the multiple objectives of the socio-cultural change strategy is a persistent challenge. While the commitment of senior and institutional leadership is held up as a critical component of change, it is less well understood what needs to change and how to determine if, and when, culture change efforts are realizing success.

Drawing from historical documents, including CAF organizational policies and directives and social science research on gender and culture in the Canadian military, this article begins with an overview of the socio-cultural shifts that have taken place within the CAF, including consideration of cultural narratives related to sex, gender, and diversity that have shifted and persisted over time, and the impacts of those narratives on culture change strategy and cultural response to change imperatives. In doing so, the discussion revisits the CAF experience with gender-related social change to illustrate the importance of understanding the complexity of cultural influences in determining approaches to understanding and monitoring culture change.

This analysis recognizes that the most recent emphasis on culture change is driven by highly visible and important imperatives to respond to sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct is a particularly insidious and harmful experience influenced by cultural context and response, and the experience of sexual misconduct has repercussions for gender integration and inclusion in military organizations.[3] Consequently, the analysis includes, but is not limited to, sexual misconduct in the CAF.

GENDER AND SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE IN THE CANADIAN MILITARY

This section presents a gender-based conceptualization of the changes claimed within the CAF in recent decades, in moving from a male, heterosexual warrior paradigm to the various gender and diversity-based imperatives being negotiated today. It highlights four phases of CAF discourse and claims to social change that are relatively visible and supported by CAF narratives: 1) the integration of women, 2) gender integration, 3) gender-neutral culture, and 4) recent focus on integrating gender perspectives.

Each of these phases took varying priority and differed in visibility within CAF policy and practice over time as the CAF responded to external pressures for change. The phases are visible in ways that suggest linear and progressive change, and are supported by the language, assumptions, and policies at work within the CAF over time, as the military negotiated the increasing participation of women in selected occupations and roles, followed by the participation of women in virtually all military roles, including combat, and, most recently, responded to calls for unique gender-based contributions to enhance operational effectiveness.

Analysis further suggests these responses are limited in terms of understanding the implications for gender-related culture change. Most frequently, formal policy changes have signaled visible change, followed by short-term initiatives and monitoring approaches that captured indicators and outcomes as proxies for culture change. These indicators, such as the representation of women, while important components of monitoring,

have been insufficient to capture the complexity of root causes embedded within culture, including the norms that present gender-related barriers despite "equal employment rhetoric."[4(p. 29)]

The theoretical frameworks addressing military culture frequently relied on interpretations of the military as a "total institution," a world with "its own unique set of norms of behaviour and dress, its own judicial system, and its own rights and responsibilities."[5(p. 158)] Critical feminist analysts such as Zilla Eisenstein[6] and Cynthia Enloe[7] have further claimed that military culture is sustained by masculine norms that draw heavily on traditional conceptions of male warriors and is reinforced through enduring cultural processes. In her gender analysis of Canadian military peacekeepers, Sandra Whitworth highlights the role of military myths in defining what is natural, normal, and legitimate within a framework of military masculinity — courage and endurance, physical and psychological strength, rationality, toughness, obedience, discipline, and patriotism.[5] Historically, military leadership was strongly committed to assumptions regarding operational effectiveness that were dependent on all-male heterosexual teams, and in combat domains in particular.[8] The explanatory power of the combat masculine warrior paradigm,[8-9] or the warrior paradigm,[10] is rooted in key assumptions about the essential differences between women and men in society.

Indeed, prior to the February 1989 direction of a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal (CHRT) to fully integrate women into all environments and roles, resistance to the full participation of women in the Canadian military was driven by sex-based beliefs and assumptions about the essential and dichotomous character and abilities of women and men. The participation of women, the military claimed, would undermine the values of the masculine heterosexual warrior identity, a vocational orientation to military service and operational effectiveness. Even as military leadership recognized the important contributions of women in support roles, they sought scientific evidence to seek exemption to the inclusion of women in combat roles to protect the culture and cohesion of all-male heterosexual combat teams.[11]

In directing the CAF to fully integrate women into all environments and roles in the following 10 years, the CHRT asserted that operational effectiveness is a gender-neutral concept and further directed external and internal monitoring of CAF efforts to integrate women.[12] Within months of the ruling, military policies were updated to remove exclusions to the participation of women. These policy changes meant women in all occupations were immediately eligible, and immediately liable, for operational deployments and roles from which they were previously restricted. While this opened opportunities for women, in the short term, at least, they were frequently placed in positions for which they were not trained or prepared.[11] In tandem, CAF policy changed in 1992 to permit Canadians, regardless of their sexual orientation, to serve in the military without restriction.[13] Changes to the Employment Equity Act in 1996 signaled expanded application to include the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the CAF.

As the CAF negotiated the expectations of the CHRT, the language also shifted, from the integration of women to gender integration. This shift was intended to reflect the inclusion of women and men in a process focused on mixed-gender cohesion and the equality of women and men.[14] By the late 1990s, as women and LGBTQIA2S+ members struggled for belonging and acceptance, the CAF settled on gender integration "as the process of facilitating the full participation of women."[15(p. 3)] In 1996, the Canadian guide for gender-based analysis defined gender as "the culturally specific set of characteristics that identifies the social behavior of women and men and the *relationship* between them," emphasizing the social construction of gender includes the relationships among women and men.[16(p. 3)] Notwithstanding the potential for a sex- and gender-inclusive framework, the CAF definition embedded gender as language referring to the equality of women in the CAF rather than a gender-inclusive concept.

Coming out of the 1990s, military analysts observed that military institutions had undergone significant change as they shifted from homogenous masculine military institutions to cultures reflecting full gender integration.[17] The representation of women in greater proportions, and in expanding roles, supported assumptions regarding shifts away from masculine cultures to those reflecting gender-neutral ethos and greater permeability with civilian society. The Canadian military, according to military sociologist Franklin Pinch, became "more democratized, liberalized, civilianized, and individualized."[18(p. 156)] Change was visible in terms of sex- and gender-neutral approaches to policy development, and in 1998, anonymous self-report survey measures indicated experiences of sexual harassment among military women had declined since 1992.[19] Yet

many women, as well as members of marginalized sub-groups of women and men, continued to face significant challenges as they struggled for success and belonging in the military.[20-22] Also in 1998, CAF perceptions were challenged by high-profile media claims of sexual misconduct in the Canadian military.[23,24]

In 1999, at the end of the 10-year timeline, the Canadian Human Rights Commission determined gender integration was incomplete but expressed confidence that military leadership was committed to progression toward that goal.[25] As a result, the requirement for external monitoring was removed, and strategy to employ women was largely subsumed within broader equity objectives[11] and assumptions regarding the extent to which gender equity had been achieved.[26,27] While gender-neutral policy seeks equity, it breaks down when assumptions are made about shared perspectives, experiences, and impacts among women and men, and — in particular — when the dominant gendered experience subsumes alternative perspectives and experiences.[26] What the CAF claimed to be gender integration was essentially a strategy of assimilation, associated with tolerance for the physical presence of different bodies without challenging the ways in which social construction of gender, masculinity, and femininity[28] shaped CAF culture and its impacts on women, as well as under-represented groups.

Throughout Canada's commitment to Afghanistan in 2004-11, assumptions about the gender-neutral character of the Canadian military were reinforced, at least in part due to the challenges shared by women and men, coupled with the high visibility of these combat-related challenges.[29,30] However, in 2014, sexual misconduct was once again highly visible in the media,[31,32] shattering any remaining conceptions of gender-neutral impacts in the CAF. The public re-emergence of sexual misconduct underscored differential impacts of the lived experiences of women and marginalized sub-groups of women and men in the military. This marked the first of multiple external influences prompting the CAF, for the first time since 1999, to place significant focus on building capacity related to gender and diversity. In response, the CAF commissioned the *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*.[1] Released in 2015, the report claimed a disjunction between the high professional standards established by CAF policies and the day-to-day reality experienced by many members. Consequently, the external review authority, Marie Deschamps, recommended the CAF "establish a strategy to effect cultural change to eliminate the sexualized environment and to better integrate women, including by conducting a gender-based analysis of CAF policies."[1(p. ix)] As the CAF initiated its response — Operation HONOUR — in a bid to eliminate sexual misconduct,[33] numerous related priorities for reconceptualizing the role of gender in military culture were also brewing.

Parallel to the implementation of Operation HONOUR, a CAF diversity strategy was in development,[34] along with initiatives to implement Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) across the CAF and the Department of National Defence.[35] Concurrently, the discourse around diversity in organizations, including within the CAF, expanded from diversity to diversity and inclusion.[36] The year 2015 also marked the fifteenth anniversary of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the first in a series of UNSCRs making specific reference to the priorities of women, peace, and security (WPS). The anniversary was leveraged to reboot efforts to address global gender-related security priorities, including the recruitment and retention of women in armed forces.[37]

In 2016, the CAF launched its formal response, with direction to implement UNSCR 1325 (and subsequent WPS SCRs), along with GBA+, to facilitate the integration of gender perspectives into planning and operations.[38] Concurrently, efforts continued to increase the representation of women to 25% by 2026.[2(p. 11)] These initiatives, in highlighting claims to the particular value women contribute to military operations, represent a disruptive departure from the gender-neutral conceptions that have undermined meaningful gender-based culture change, including shaping of the warrior framework since at least 2000.

Along with challenges to the lived experiences of women and men, these developments further reinforced calls to challenge assumptions about how the warrior is framed in the CAF and, at the very least, recalibrate what it means to be a warrior, with a view toward meeting emerging defence and security challenges.[39]

This analysis suggests cultural discourses have shaped organizational response to gender in the Canadian military, moving from essentialist-based narratives considering heterosexual women as a dichotomous complement to heterosexual men to a struggle between gender-neutral posture and increasing recognition of sex, gender, and related intersecting experiences and identities. Changing narratives over time have been adopted

at face value, largely in response to the removal of formal policy barriers. These observations, coupled with analyses of current gender-related change challenges in the CAF, underscore the importance of better understanding how to capture dynamics within military culture in ways that contribute to understanding the complexity of culture and imperatives for culture change.

MONITORING SOCIO-CULTURAL CHANGE

Past research reveals multiple models for how to effect culture change and has well established the importance of measuring and monitoring change initiatives.[40] However, limited evidence-based research in non-profit contexts includes assessment of successful culture change initiatives and, in particular, the sustainment and continued development of culture change objectives over time. Claims to successful culture change are frequently predicated on highly visible, short-term initiatives and outcomes, along with relatively little focus on the less visible practices and relationships that limit meaningful and sustainable change. Given the complexities and impacts of culture, understanding the dynamics influencing culture and subcultures, and determining what needs to be monitored over time, is critical. In a CAF context, this includes first understanding the ways in which experiences of harm such as sexual misconduct as well as the broader experiences of all CAF members are shaped and impacted by cultural dimensions and values that can conceal and reinforce tensions embedded in the intersections of gender with authority, power, race/ethnicity, sexuality, and religion — all essential considerations when conducting organizational analysis.[41,42]

Culture can be monitored through the application of quantitative approaches to assess dimensions and outcomes of culture and qualitative approaches to determine which (and how) elements of the existing culture aid or hinder the change process.[43] Strategies that favour positivistic models of organizational behaviour frequently rely on standardized survey instruments, while inductive, qualitative approaches tend to be used by researchers seeking explanations for the complexities of organizational culture.[44] Drawing from analyses of gender and military culture, Nancy Taber further suggests that researchers need to continuously push methodological boundaries to address those areas traditional methodologies cannot address. Her analysis highlights, for example, institutional ethnography as an approach particularly useful in understanding how institutional ideology creates and reinforces social relationships of power.[45]

Broadly speaking, three basic perspectives can be applied to the examination of culture, and although constructed in different ways, the role of language and discourse, and culture as a process of co-production and meaning, are considered in most approaches.[46] Interpretive approaches consider the relationship between culture, communication, normative rules, and resources. Inter-group perspectives, rooted in social identity theory,[47] are concerned with the creation of group memberships and identities and how in-group/out-group distinctions are maintained. Critical perspectives understand culture as a source of power and seek to explain how culture treats those at the margins.[46] Feminist theory and critical race theory present particular potential for revealing the social construction of power and privilege undermining inclusion in organizations. All these perspectives are important to consider in a longer-term culture monitoring strategy, as each will capture unique insights through engagement with different perspectives and research methodologies. While triangulation can be an important benefit of multi-method approaches, understanding culture demands understanding from different experiences, perspectives, and methods,[47] which can be both complementary and contradictory.

Regardless of approach, monitoring culture change is a complex process that needs to engage multiple dimensions of an organization to capture elements influencing behavioural outcomes. According to W. Richard Scott, a sociologist specializing in institutional theory and organization science, this includes three pillars: regulative (formal policies and direction), normative (values and norms), and cultural-cognitive elements (shared conceptions and meaning making to mediate external and internal worlds).[48] These elements work together to stabilize, produce, and reproduce social life and will resist or adapt to change when accepted patterns and outcomes (e.g., behaviour) of meaning making are challenged.[44,48]

As suggested by the earlier discussion on gender-based culture change, critical gender-based perspectives offer an important key to understanding culture. It is critical to unpack gender-based concepts to challenge the espoused and frequently compelling narratives that reinforce and sustain military culture. Recent analyses of the Masculinity Contest Culture scale in military and paramilitary contexts, for example, reinforce the correlation of values-based assumptions that are instrumental in reinforcing and sustaining dominant masculine values. Showing no weakness, displaying strength

and stamina, putting work first, and competing in a dog-eat-dog manner correlate in military and paramilitary contexts with outcomes including bullying, harassment, discrimination,[49,50] gender bias,[51] poor personal well-being,[49] and toxic leadership.[49,50,52] However, masculinity is not a homogenous concept. In fact, gender researcher Jeff Hearn asserts that "any rigid, monocultural definition" should be dismissed.[53(p. 64)] Monitoring culture in the CAF demands further unpacking the influences of gender, including masculinity,[54] and how they operate across CAF culture and subcultures to shape objectives of diversity, inclusion, and operational effectiveness.

In response to the external review on sexual harassment and sexual misconduct, internal research was initiated with a view to integrating gender-based perspectives throughout the research. In addition to survey-based measures of individual experience and member perceptions and perspectives, qualitative lines of research seek greater understanding of the values, norms, and shared conceptions among military members, including how new members' socialization influences both explicit and implicit assumptions regarding sex- and gender-based values and conduct and how dynamics across the chain of command impact leader and bystander responses to inappropriate conduct.

Importantly, this includes interviews with affected members, as well as focus groups, non-participant observation, and analysis of subcultural artifacts. In monitoring culture change, all approaches are important. Surveys administered to CAF personnel, including, for example, those related to sexual misconduct administered in 2016 and 2018,[55-57] are valuable in ensuring visibility of patterns of gender-based harms impacting CAF members, including disproportionate impacts on women, LGBTQIA2S+, Indigenous, and racialized members. It is also critical to engage multiple qualitative research strategies to create and maintain comprehensive understanding of culture and subcultures, as well as to engage the perspectives and readiness of all members, as the organization seeks to be fully responsive and prepared for continuous alignment with emerging socio-cultural developments and challenges.

Conclusion

The extent to which socio-cultural change in the Canadian military has shifted from dominant expressions and influences of hegemonic heterosexual masculinity to inclusive cultural spaces for expressions and contributions of multiple masculine, feminine, and intersecting identities is, from some perspectives, abundantly clear. Yet from the perspectives of stakeholders — including those who experience the impacts of marginalized status in the military — it is much less clear. When viewed through the lens of longer-term historical change, the extent to which change has taken place is both visible and deceptive. For example, in spite of past claims to successful gender integration, evidence suggests full gender integration has never been achieved. While it is important to recognize sex- and gender-based shifts, including the extent to which claims to cultural outcomes such as gender integration have been achieved, it is also important to maintain full visibility of gaps that persist.

Drawing from the CAF research response to the external review, this discussion suggests that related research has made valuable contributions to better understanding and monitoring CAF culture. The discussion further reinforces the importance of a strategy that includes short-term monitoring of member response to new initiatives, maintenance of highly visible measures of member experiences, such as sexual misconduct, and longer-term strategy for understanding influences on the creation and sustainment of CAF culture and subcultures.

Finally, analysis suggests the application of different analytical perspectives is invaluable and claims gender-based perspectives are particularly critical as monitoring strategy seeks enhanced understanding of relational dynamics to identify key risks and barriers to healthy and inclusive military culture and subcultures.

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Desire to serve: Insights from Canadian defence studies on the factors that influence women to pursue a military career

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) set a goal of having women represent 25% of its workforce by 2026 to enable greater diversity and inclusion. Within this context, this article explores the findings of internal CAF research studies to determine why women may (or may not) consider a military career. Researchers used secondary data analysis involving three internal studies to examine the factors that influence women to pursue a military career. First, the Earnscliffe Strategy Group (ESG; 2017) study focused on the perceptions of women in the Canadian public. Second, the Women in the Regular Force (WRF; 2018) study explored the perceptions of women in the CAF. Finally, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group (CFRG; 2017) study examined the recruitment and retention of women in the CAF. The ESG study disclosed the following factors that impacted women's decisions to join the military: negative public perceptions of the military, lack of familiarity with the Canadian military, and motivators and perceived benefits that define career choice. The WRF study revealed the following factors that motivated women to join the military: subsidized education, job security, challenging opportunities, physical fitness, familiarity with military culture, and concerns from family/friends. The CFRG study uncovered the following factors that influenced women in a military career: family and work-life balance, posting cycle, and physical fitness standards. The findings highlight the need to examine these factors alongside public outreach, impacts of policies, and organizational culture change to improve the representation of women in the military.

Key words: attraction, diversity, gender, gender equity, inclusion, masculinized culture, military career, motivation, operational effectiveness, recruitment, retention, women military culture

RÉSUMÉ

Les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) ont établi l'objectif d'avoir une main-d'œuvre à 25 % féminine d'ici 2026 pour encourager la diversité et l'inclusion. Dans ce contexte, le présent article explore les résultats d'études internes des FAC pour déterminer les raisons pour lesquelles les femmes pourraient considérer (ou non) une carrière militaire. Les chercheurs ont utilisé une analyse de données secondaires recoupant trois études internes pour examiner les facteurs qui encouragent les femmes ou non à faire carrière dans les forces armées. Tout d'abord, l'étude d'Earnscliffe Stratégies (ESG; 2017) s'est axée sur les perceptions des femmes au sein du public canadien. Ensuite, l'étude sur les femmes dans la Force régulière (WRF; 2018) a exploré les perceptions des femmes au sein des FAC. Et finalement, l'étude du Groupe du recrutement des Forces canadiennes (GRFC; 2017) a examiné le recrutement et la fidélisation des femmes dans les FAC. L'étude d'ESG a révélé les facteurs suivants qui ont un effet sur la décision des femmes de se joindre aux forces armées : perception publique négative des forces armées, manque de connaissance sur les forces armées canadiennes et éléments de motivation et avantages perçus pour la définition du choix de carrière. L'étude du WRF a exposé les facteurs suivants qui motivent les femmes à se joindre aux forces armées : une éducation subventionnée, la sécurité d'emploi, des occasions de se dépasser, les aptitudes physiques, les connaissances de la culture militaire et les préoccupations de membres de la famille/des amis. L'étude du GRFC a dévoilé les facteurs suivants qui ont un effet sur la carrière militaire des femmes : la famille et l'équilibre entre la vie professionnelle et la vie personnelle, le cycle de déploiement et les normes en matière d'aptitudes physiques. Les conclusions soulignent le besoin d'examiner ces facteurs avec les mesures

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de sensibilisation du public, l'impact des politiques et les changements à apporter à la culture organisationnelle pour améliorer la représentation des femmes au sein des forces armées.

Mots-clés : attrait, carrière militaire, culture des femmes militaires, culture masculinisée, diversité, efficacité opérationnelle, égalité des genres, fidélisation, genre, inclusion, motivation, recrutement

LAY SUMMARY

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) continues to highlight the need to promote greater diversity and inclusion in its ranks. An increased representation of women in the Canadian military would enable greater capacity and capabilities to serve people, both domestically and abroad, and would contribute to a more diverse and inclusive military. To better understand how the CAF could increase the representation of women in the Canadian military, this article provides the key findings of three internal research studies on women's perceptions of joining the military and women's experiences as CAF members. These research studies examined the factors that influence women to join the military, the possible challenges impacting women's decisions to join the military, and the improvements required for enabling a more effective military culture, including recruitment strategies that may help to increase the representation of women. The findings highlight specific factors and recommendations military leaders may consider to help promote greater capacity and capabilities through a more diverse and inclusive military.

INTRODUCTION

The Canadian defence policy, Strong, Secure, Engaged (SSE)[1(p. 19-28)] highlights the need to promote greater diversity and inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Coupled with the Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy,[2] the CAF emphasized the valuable contribution diversity makes to mission success. Part of this increased emphasis on diversity and inclusion includes the attraction of more women to occupations within the CAF. In essence, gender equality is core to contemporary Canadian values, along with values of inclusion, compassion, accountable governance, and respect for diversity and human rights.[1(p. 20-24)] Although women represent 16.3% of the CAF's total strength,[3] the CAF's employment equity goal is to increase the representation of women to 25.1% by 2026, a significant increase (from 15.2%)[4] from the time the SSE defence policy was released.

Countries around the world are strategizing how to best attract and retain women in their militaries. For example, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) published its own strategy on how to increase the diversity in its ranks.[5] The ADF has similar goals to Canada: the need to achieve 25% representation of women in the navy and air force by 2023, and 15% in the army by 2023.[6(p. 1)] The UK Armed Forces set a recruitment goal of 15% women by the year 2020, but it was not met.[7(p. 3)] As many armed forces within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)[8] and the United Nations[9] are attempting to increase women's representation, it will be important to examine the factors that influence women to join the military.

This article explores key findings of three internal research studies conducted by the Department of National Defence (DND) on why women may (or may not) consider a career in the military.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN THE CAF

Women have been involved in Canadian military operations since the late nineteenth century, typically in nursing and support roles.[10] Until the latter part of the twentieth century, women were restricted in the occupations they could pursue. In 1989, the CAF removed all gender-based barriers after two successful trials related to the employment of women in combat support and operations (Service Women in Non-Traditional Environments and Roles [SWINTER][11] and Combat Related Employment of Women [CREW][12]). The CAF was forced to make this change due to a complaint of discrimination under the Canadian Human Rights Act based on sex, which led to a landmark Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision in 1989 whereby the CAF was directed to remove all employment restrictions and integrate women in all military occupations.[13] At this time, women accounted for 9.7% of the Regular Force and could serve in any occupation they chose, except submarine services.[14] By the time the ban on submarine services was lifted in 2001, women's representation had risen slightly to 11.5%.[4]

Women's participation has primarily been in occupations attributed to health care and logistical and administrative support.[4] In 1989, 49% of Regular Force women were in logistical and administrative support trades, and 15% were in health services.[14] While women still tend to serve in similar occupations to those they served in 1989, more women are now serving at higher ranks. Among Regular Force officers, only 8% of women

were at senior ranks (Major and above) in 1989, resulting in a representation rate of 2%.[14] Since then, these figures have increased to 30% and 18%, respectively. Meanwhile, the representation rate of women among general and flag officers increased from 1% to 10%.[4] Among non-commissioned members, 15% of women were serving at senior ranks (Sergeant and above) in 1989 (a representation rate of 5%),[14] compared to the current rate of 29% (a representation rate of 15%).[4]

In addition, several studies explored women's experiences in the CAF and the factors that motivated a military career.[10,15] A study from 2017 showed that, to achieve the 25.1% goal by 2026, women would need to make up about one-third of new recruits — double the average representation rate among new enrolments over the preceding five years.[16]

Although the number of women serving in the CAF has increased, progress has been slow. This slow progress can be attributed, in part, to the hierarchical nature of military organizations that require members to join at the lowest rank and work up to senior levels. For example, the representation rate of women at senior ranks cannot be increased rapidly through external recruiting; rather, it increases slowly over time, and is driven by factors such as past intake and attrition.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE AND MILITARIZED MASCULINITIES

The development of an organizational culture requires members to have shared experiences in the workplace by observing artifacts, values, and assumptions of the organization.[17] The military is a unique organization, as it possesses its own cultural identity.[18,19] Through the ranks, insignia, uniforms, traditions, and etiquette of military service, personnel are made to feel part of this unique culture.[18,20] This unique culture can also present challenges to those who do not see themselves represented by this cultural identity.

Men are primarily represented in occupations central to military operations (e.g., combat or special operations), and are more likely to achieve higher ranks.[21(p. 472-475)] By the nature of the occupation (i.e., warfighting) and historical male dominance, society may have come to attribute masculine characteristics to the military.[22] For centuries, the military has been a way for men to demonstrate their masculinity.[21] As women entered the military profession, they had to confront this hegemonic masculinity and reconcile the disparity between what society expects of women and of military members.[22]

Using a gender analysis lens, hegemonic masculinity refers to stereotypical male characteristics that are valued as the "masculine cultural ideal," and denote why men continue to maintain a dominant social role over women.[23] These male characteristics can be evidenced in physical strength, authoritative behaviours, and use of violence involving conflict.[24] Traits and attitudes that are hypermasculine and hegemonic are primarily associated with the military,[25] and studies have shown women taking on male characteristics as a way to fit into the military setting.[26,27] Understanding the role of hegemonic masculinity is key to promoting organizational culture change in which women would experience greater inclusion in the military.

From the initial attraction to the military and the desire to join, women have been questioned if they are real women,[22(p. 2)] with the implication being they cannot be real women if they are pursuing a military career. For example, fathers are lauded for their service, while mothers are questioned for theirs.[28] On the other hand, those who are attracted to a military occupation may characterize themselves as being tomboys or not overly feminine.[29(p. 224-226)]

Once in the military, women may experience a myriad of challenges. Fitting in with male colleagues can be difficult, and women have spoken about becoming one of the guys to fit into their units.[29,30] Also, women have to contend with attitudes that challenge their capabilities as military members. For example, women have to prove themselves capable in their occupational roles,[31] facing reprisals for becoming pregnant,[32,33] interacting with co-workers without being viewed as promiscuous,[10,30] attempting to balance work and family responsibilities,[32,34] and experiencing harassment/discrimination based on gender.[35,36] This masculinized culture represents a key barrier to diversity and is central to many of the findings presented here.

Moreover, the landmark report by former Justice Marie Deschamps and the External Review Authority about sexual misconduct and sexual harassment in the CAF are fundamental to the changes required in the CAF's organizational culture.[37] For example, Deschamps reported, "There is an undeniable link between the existence of negative and discriminatory attitudes towards women in the CAF, the low representation of women in senior positions in the organization, and the prevalence of sexual harassment and assault" [37(p. 24)]. Recent allegations of sexual misconduct against two former Chiefs of the Defence Staff and other senior leaders

have also put the integrity and leadership of the CAF into question.[38,39]

SECONDARY DATA ANALYSIS OF INTERNAL RESEARCH STUDIES

The findings presented in this article are based on a secondary data analysis of three separate internal research studies designed to understand the factors that would help increase the representation of women in the Canadian military. Researchers examined the findings from the three internal reports to help answer the research question, "What factors motivate or dissuade women (within the CAF and the Canadian public) to seek a military career?" These internal reports allowed the researchers to compare and contrast multiple sources of data through a triangulated process to help develop the themes and provide a more robust approach to answering this research question.

Study 1: Earnscliffe Strategy Group

In 2016, the Earnscliffe Strategy Group (ESG)[40] conducted a study with women in the Canadian public to determine their perceptions about having a military career in the CAF. Participants of the study included self-identified women, aged 18 to 34 years, who had never served in the CAF, as well as a group of influencers. The influencers were women and men (aged 35 to 60 years) considered to be in positions of having influence over women's career choices. Participants completed surveys and were involved in focus groups or interviews that examined the attraction of having a military career.

Study 2: Women in the CAF Regular Force

From the fall of 2016 to the spring of 2017, an internal research study was conducted with self-identified women in the CAF Regular Force (WRF) looking at the attraction, recruitment, employment, and retention of women in the military.[41] The study aimed to: 1) look at the reasons why women joined the CAF, 2) examine potential explanations as to why women are not joining the CAF, and 3) determine how women currently serving in the CAF can influence recruitment strategies or outreach programming to help increase the representation of women in the Canadian military. The study involved the conduct of 45 focus groups across 12 locations with 335 women in the Regular Force.

Study 3: Canadian Forces Recruiting Group

In November 2016, the Canadian Forces Recruiting Group (CFRG) study[42] was formed to identify and recommend approaches that would help to increase the number of women enrolling in the CAF and further respond to the CAF's direction to achieve a 25.1% representation of women in the military by 2026. The working group brought together focus groups from within the CAF and from other government agencies. The examination of these studies, augmented further by analyses of administrative human resources data as presented in the Introduction, allowed for a view of broad-ranging factors affecting women's decisions to join the military.

RESULTS

By analyzing the three internal research studies, researchers unveiled the main factors that either motivate women to join the military or potentially impede a career in the military.

Perceptions of women in the Canadian public (ESG, 2017)[40]

Of the 2,017 participants who took part in the survey component of this study, only three selected the military as their field of interest. Health care and education were selected by participants as the top fields of interest. Out of 20 occupational fields, the military was second only to mining as the least interesting field to enter. Three factors explained why women would not pursue the military as a career choice, including: negative public perceptions of the military, lack of familiarity with the Canadian military, and motivators and perceived benefits that define career choice.

Negative public perceptions of the military

Barriers to joining the military included: being separated from family and friends, perceptions of women's poor treatment in the CAF, and perceptions that those who leave the military (retired or discharged) are not supported in daily living and may suffer from posttraumatic stress disorder. Additional factors include concerns about risk and physical danger in combat operations, passing the physical fitness tests and basic training, and exercising family and work-life balance.

Lack of familiarity with the Canadian military

Many women stated they did not know about occupations within the CAF. For example, only 13% of participants stated they would pursue a career in the military. However, when the participants were asked if they would consider applying if their preferred career of interest (e.g., health care) was available in the CAF, the number of participants who were more likely to do so

increased to 42%. Equipped with the proper information, more women viewed the military as a viable option.

Motivators and perceived benefits that define career choice

The study highlighted specific motivators that define one's career choice, including: securing a rewarding job, income stability, opportunities for career advancement, higher education, health benefits, pension, and travel. Many participants identified the military as a noble occupation, one that women should be encouraged to pursue.

Perceptions of WRF currently serving in the CAF[41]

Participants in the WRF study provided practical reasons to join the CAF in line with what women in the ESG (2017) study[40] identified as important motivators to join the military. These included the opportunity to obtain higher education and to find a job that offered challenging opportunities, as well as one that provided financial security. A sense of familiarity with the CAF and military life was also an asset to women who joined the CAF and a particularly salient reason for joining. Similar to the ESG[40] participants who did not see the CAF as an employer of choice, WRF participants highlighted concerns about personal safety. These concerns were also expressed by friends and family of many WRF prior to joining the military. Ultimately, there were specific motivating factors for women who joined the Regular Force.

Subsidized education

Paid education was a great motivator to join the military and, in many cases, this motivating factor led to participants wanting to remain and build a career in the CAF. In looking at potential recruits, women were more likely than men to list the opportunity for subsidized higher education as a motivating factor in applying to the military.[43]

Job security

A career in the military also gave participants greater job security, including medical and dental benefits, and a pension. For participants with families, particularly single mothers, the ability to take care of one's family was important for women.

Challenging opportunities

Participants felt they were given opportunities to learn, demonstrate leadership, and meet people from different countries and cultures. Women highlighted the importance of being introduced to new trades (e.g., pilot, medical professional, electrician, or engineer).

Physical fitness

Service members must maintain a standard of physical fitness to ensure preparedness (e.g., Universality of Service policy).[44] For those currently serving, the ability to engage in physical fitness, sports, or exercise represented an incentive to join the military.

Familiarity with the military culture

Many participants were attracted to the military because they were familiar with the CAF prior to enrolment. Participants who were in the Cadets or Primary Reserve were well acquainted with the military lifestyle, and many members went on to pursue a career in the Regular Force. Participants also revealed family and friends in the military played significant roles as influencers and supporters in joining the military. Familiarity with the military as a motivator to join has also been identified by the Ministry of Defence with the British Armed Forces.[45] Regarding the U.S. military, there exists a warrior caste phenomenon where those most likely to join the military are those who have family members in the military.[46]

Concerns from family and friends

Family members and friends of many Regular Force participants expressed concerns that women would be harmed if they joined the military (e.g., physical harm through combat or being a target for sexual assault).[41(p. 14)] Publicity around the issue of sexual misconduct in the military[47,48] and the military's response, Operation HONOUR, were met with criticism, particularly from those who experienced harassment.[36,41(p. 18-19)]

Perceptions of CFRG participants on the recruitment of women[42]

The CFRG study uncovered several factors that may impact women in a military career, including family and work-life balance, the posting cycle, and achieving physical fitness standards.

Family and work-life balance

Responses from the ESG (2017) study,[40] echoed by the WRF[41] and CFRG[42] studies, emphasized that the largest barrier to recruiting women into the military is the perception that employment in the military makes it difficult to raise a family. The CFRG study considered how alleviating major family-related concerns for women may improve retention and recruitment for those

who may consider a career in the CAF. The CFRG study revealed flexible hours, job sharing, and expanded day care services would allow for an easier transition for women to return to work.

The posting cycle

An important aspect of military life is the posting cycle and the need for CAF Regular Force members to move to different geographical locations for career development and advancement. Postings provide an opportunity for personnel to pursue career objectives and advance in trades.[42(p. 28-29)] The CFRG study outlined important potential changes to policies that could remedy some issues surrounding postings.[42(p. A-4/10)] For example, the CAF has an opportunity to examine the length of the posting cycle to allow members to remain in one location for a longer period of time. Other suggestions included updating the definition of family to recognize the many ways in which a military family exists and providing assistance with housing through better availability of modern residential housing units.

Achieving physical fitness standards

The CFRG study addressed concerns associated with physical fitness standards and the trepidation women have toward achieving these standards.[42(p. 35)] All members of the CAF, regardless of age or gender, must maintain an appropriate fitness level to complete a standardized Fitness for Operational Requirements of Canadian Armed Forces Employment (FORCE) Evaluation, which consists of a series of military-specific physical manoeuvres.[49] Some individuals may see this as an obstacle to military enrolment, fearing they are not capable of achieving these standards. This statement is substantiated by other studies. For example, the CAF Prospect Survey[43(p. 139)] found women were more likely than men to have doubts about their abilities to meet the requirements. Another study of recently enrolled CAF members found women were nearly three times more likely to indicate concerns with the physical fitness aspects of basic military training (e.g., failing to meet the requirements), and women were more likely to indicate they would have liked to have known more about the physical requirements of their training.[50,51] As suggested in the CFRG study, educating women, perhaps by demonstration of the FORCE Evaluation in person, or by video on social media, may resolve this barrier to enrolment.[42(p. 15-17)]

DISCUSSION

By examining three separate internal research studies, the authors were able to provide a comprehensive overview of the key factors that influence women to join the military — more so than would be possible by considering any of the studies in isolation. Increasing the representation of women in the Canadian military is dependent on specific factors that draw women to, or away from, a military occupation.

The findings highlight several factors military leaders may consider to further understand how defence organizations can increase the representation of women, such as public outreach, impacts of policies, and organizational culture change. These factors are implicit in any potential change process, as organizational change cannot occur without an adjustment in the mindsets and behaviours of the people in the organization.[17]

Public outreach

Recommendations made in the above studies centred on the need for more women to work in recruitment centres and be involved in public outreach (including podcasts, YouTube, or Instagram).[41,42]

Educating the public about a career in the military

Of women in the Canadian public who participated in the ESG (2017) study, many did not know about occupations or opportunities available in the CAF.[40(p. 26)] For many women already in the Regular Force, education, job stability, challenges, and opportunities are the main factors that led them to pursue a career in the military.[41(p. 13-14)]

In addition, part of this education is to reformulate the concept of hegemonic masculinity at the global level to allow for a robust model of gender hierarchy that embraces the inclusion of women in the military and moves toward gender democracy.[23]

Public awareness of operations and trades

Many women expressed reticence to joining the military owing to fears associated with military combat.[40(p. 27)] The findings indicate the public needs to gain a better understanding of the types of operations the CAF regularly undertakes, and the various occupations therein. Military outreach needs to consider how the Canadian public could become better aware of various CAF operations, including search and rescue, Canadian sovereignty, emergency response and prevention, training assistance to partner forces, peace support operations,

fisheries patrol and surveillance, assistance to law enforcement, counterinsurgency, and international security and stability.[52] Furthermore, humanitarian aid missions offer the opportunity to help those in need and contribute to the greater good, something research found many women seek in occupational endeavours.[40,41]

Innovative recruiting

In 2017, the CAF launched the Women in Force Program (WIFP), a week-long, commitment-free trial of military life aimed at providing women with a realistic job preview through interactions with currently serving women CAF members. A recent report on the effectiveness of the WIFP found 60% to 80% of the 34 women who participated in the program were either definitely, or probably, going to apply to the CAF in the next six months.[53(p. 12-13)] Results also showed women who attended the WIFP reported feeling more familiar and confident in the CAF as a potential employer.[53(p. 20)] The WIFP is intended to run again across Canada to attract more women to non-traditional military occupations (e.g., combat arms).

Impacts of policies

Flexibility in family care and the treatment of military members who choose to have children are examples of personnel policies that may impact the representation of women in the CAF. Social institutions, such as work, family, and military are greedy institutions in that they place a high demand on individual members' time.[54(p. 563-581)] Strategies that consider these perceived expectations, and their associated policies, are typically required for organizational change.[17] For example, examining the possibility of lengthening posting cycles would allow members and their families to remain in a given location for an extended period of time.[42(p. 28-29)] This adjustment will require cultural change and the shifting of normative expectations of women, men, and gender diverse members of the CAF. Policies that support work-life balance will benefit all CAF members.

Organizational cultural change

There are three important aspects to consider when cultivating sustainable culture change. First, the purpose behind attracting more women to the military needs to be clearly relayed, rather than creating a perception that the CAF needs a higher representation of women to satisfy a quota. Second, the CAF needs to cultivate a sustainable culture with a renewed emphasis on the physical and psychological safety of all members, and greater inclusion, and mutual respect and trust across all military personnel. Finally, gender inclusion will continue to play a fundamental role in sustainable culture change with the aim of addressing greater fairness and human rights, and employment equity, and the need for the CAF to be representative of all Canadians.[23,24,25]

Conclusion

The Canadian defence policy, SSE, promotes positive culture change through greater diversity and inclusion. Emergent themes drawn from the narratives of participants in three internal research studies highlight how women take into consideration specific factors when considering a military career. Through examining the three studies that used different research approaches, this article identified a range of factors affecting women's desire to serve in the military (e.g., subsidized education, job security, and family and work-life balance). The findings explored these factors within the context of public outreach, impacts of policies, and organizational culture change to understand how military organizations can increase the representation of women.

A military cultural shift requires people to understand the social patterns that embrace hegemonic masculinities and the need to adopt a gender democratic approach. Addressing hegemonic masculinity, and the influences it has on military culture, is essential to fostering sustainable organizational culture change in which women experience fulsome inclusion in the military. This shift in sustainable organizational cultural change will create different societal patterns that are based on respect for gender equity and diversity in the Canadian military.

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Working together to address sexual misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces

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LAY SUMMARY

In 2015, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) implemented Operation HONOUR to eliminate sexual misconduct (SM) in the military. Sexual assault, inappropriate sexual behaviours, sexual harassment, and gender discrimination are all types of SM. Experiencing SM can result in depression, substance abuse, physical health problems, and even post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Despite Operation HONOUR, SM still happens in the CAF. At this time, many groups are working together to address SM and to support those who have experienced SM. Canadian-based researchers, policy makers, military members, Veterans, and clinicians are collaborating to identify new approaches to training, culture change, research, and treatment relating to SM in the CAF. The end goal of working together is to minimize SM in the CAF and ensure the health and safety of all CAF members and Veterans.

Key words: Canadian Armed Forces, military sexual trauma, sexual misconduct, trauma, veterans

Mots-clés : Forces armées canadiennes, inconduite sexuelle, traumatismes, traumatismes sexuels militaires, vétérans

INTRODUCTION

The traumatic nature of high-risk military work, such as combat, is well-recognized. However, there is a substantial gap in knowledge regarding other potentially traumatic events related to service in the CAF, especially as they relate to sexual misconduct (SM). The CAF defines SM as "conduct of a sexual nature that can cause or causes harm to others."[1] SM, as defined in the Survey on Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces (SSMCAF), includes "sexual assault, inappropriate sexualized behaviours, and discriminatory behaviours, on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity."[2] SM has been associated with adverse health outcomes, such as increased rates of depression, substance use, sexual health problems, physical health problems, and PTSD in the U.S. military population.[3-5]

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To prevent and address SM within its ranks, the CAF initiated the now discontinued Operation HONOUR in 2015.[6] Operation HONOUR included four lines of effort: 1) understanding the issue of SM, 2) responding more decisively to incidents, 3) supporting affected persons more effectively, and 4) preventing incidents from occurring.[7] The implementation of Operation HONOUR led to numerous changes in the CAF, including SM-focused training and education, policy changes relating to diversity, harassment, and SM, SM-related research,[8] and establishing the Sexual Misconduct Response Centre (SMRC). The SMRC provides expert advice, guidance, and recommendations to the CAF on SM-related matters, as well as providing support services and facilitating access to internal and external services for CAF members harmed or affected by SM.[1] More recently the CAF released a new culture change strategy entitled the Path to Dignity and Respect.[9] Veterans Affairs Canada (VAC) has also updated its approach and policies for determining Veterans' SM-related claims.[10]

Despite these many actions, SM persists in the CAF. In 2018, 70% of actively serving Regular Force CAF members witnessed or experienced at least one form of SM (including inappropriate verbal or non-verbal communication, sexually explicit materials, physical contact or suggested sexual relations, discrimination on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, or gender identity) during the previous 12 months of military service, with 15.4% of respondents stating they had been personally targeted (women 28.1%, men 13%).[2] SM was reported by male and female members, although female members reported being sexually assaulted at a rate five times higher than male members.[2] In 2018, 4.3% of female-identifying and 1.1% of male-identifying Regular Force personnel reported they had been sexually assaulted during active service, and 7.0% of female-identifying and 1.2% of male-identifying reservist personnel reported being sexually assaulted.[11] For both Regular and Reserve Force members, unwanted sexual touching was the most common form of sexual assault experienced. Higher reports of SM were disclosed by female-identifying, younger, Indigenous, disabled, LGB TQIA2S+, and junior non-commissioned members for both Regular and Reserve Forces members.[2,12]

MOVING FORWARD

To better support CAF members and Veterans affected by SM, future work on SM-related issues should move forward collaboratively between the CAF, VAC, the Department of National Defence (DND), and other agencies and institutions. To that end, Canadian-based researchers, policy makers, military members, Veterans, people affected by SM, and clinicians are coming together to create an operational plan to establish core areas of focus that will inform the next steps in research and treatment of SM in Canada. Collaborative knowledge exchange discussions are taking place through SM-focused symposiums, workshops, and a weekly Community of Practice established to better understand and increase awareness of the issues and gaps associated with SM in the areas of research, policy, and treatment. The remainder of this article will highlight and discuss gaps and recommendations identified during a one-day workshop on SM held in December 2019 and more recent discussions that took place in the Community of Practice. These recommendations address training, culture change, research, and treatment relating to SM in the CAF.

Training

SM perpetration in the military was, until recently, supported at a systems level through acceptance of hypermasculinity and a hypersexualized workplace culture.[13] For the CAF to foster an environment of dignity and respect, expectations are best established beginning at recruitment and entrance into the training systems. The following training changes could be implemented:

1. *Moral dilemma training*. CAF members are often faced with morally ambiguous situations in which they are unsure of how to properly react.[14] Including SM-related moral dilemmas in diverse training scenarios could provide members with a chance to both identify SM-related situations and also work through these scenarios in a consequence-free environment. These SM-related moral dilemmas could augment or be included in Respect in the CAF training workshops being conducted by the SMRC.[15]
2. *Skills training*. New recruits and currently serving members can be taught crucial boundary setting skills, assertiveness skills, emotional intelligence, and coping skills, as well as be provided with awareness training on SM. Existing evidence suggests that crucial skills, such as boundary-setting and assertiveness, may help to reduce the risk of SM victimization,[16] and other skills, such as emotional intelligence, may reduce the experience of negative emotional responses and intrusive thoughts after experiencing or witnessing incidents of SM, which may enable members to adapt more readily to the experience.[17]

Culture change

Currently, the CAF is striving to empower women, visible minorities, and LGBTQIA2S+ serving members. Canada's Defence Policy states the CAF must "reflect the diversity of the country we defend" and that it is committed to "gender equality and providing a work environment where women are welcomed, supported, and respected."[18] In fact, the CAF is striving to have 25.1% representation of women, 3.5% representation of Indigenous Peoples, and 11.8% representation of visible minorities within its ranks by 2026.[19] Under Operation HONOUR, the CAF also implemented systems that support and validate members who come forward with allegations of SM.[6]

An important part of the culture change will be a shift from rules-based ethics to values-based ethics. Although the CAF's ethical culture is formally stated to be values-based,[20] its history of SM in the CAF suggests that, in practice, the culture — as it relates to SM — has remained more rules-based. With rules-based ethics, military actions are valued if they are in accordance with conventions, laws, and rules of engagement, whereas with values-based ethics, military actions are valued if they promote good and prevent evil.[21]

Values-based ethics, also known as virtue-based ethics, is argued to be the best method to prevent misconduct by military personnel.[22] If the CAF ethics were, in fact, values-based, the rates of SM would be low because members would not engage in behaviours that do not uphold "respect and dignity of all persons."[20] However, the Deschamps Report described a "hostile, sexualized environment" in which there were few consequences for engaging in SM.[23] Since the implementation of Operation HONOUR, reported rates of SM have declined.[2,12] This decline suggests SM behaviour has been changing because of threat of punishment under the new policies and directives. The authors believe the CAF's goal of culture change will be supported by shifting to values-based ethics that stresses the unique contributing value of all members of the CAF.

Changing the culture around SM will also require addressing informal CAF culture. As noted earlier, the CAF recently released a new culture change strategy, Path to Dignity and Respect,[9] which provides an in-depth analysis of CAF culture and identifies cultural aspects the CAF must eliminate, change, or strengthen to address SM. However, the focus of the strategy appears to be on the formal CAF culture, not the informal culture. Informal organizational culture is the shared values and norms that govern members' interactions with each other and with those outside of the organization.[24] Informal culture includes implicit behaviour norms, values, organizational myths and rituals, organizational beliefs, and language.[25] In the CAF, informal culture includes the ways members interact with each other when they feel relaxed enough to share their feelings and beliefs about larger issues and intolerances, which may occur more often in social settings, apart from the regular workplace. Any effective culture change should address both the formal and informal CAF culture.

Research

Future research on SM in Canada should include investigators from a range of backgrounds external to, and from within, the CAF, DND, and VAC. Until recently, little SM-related research was Canadian-specific, and much of it had been conducted independently within one organization, rather than collaboratively between organizations. Coming together to work collaboratively, investigators are now working to move SM research forward and address gaps through knowledge exchange and research programs. Future areas of SM research identified through collaborative knowledge exchange discussions include:

1. *The link between SM and moral injury*. Moral injury (MI) is the "psychological distress experienced in response to perpetrating, observing and/or failing to prevent acts that transgress deeply held moral standards."[14] Shay[26] defines MI as a betrayal of what is right by someone who holds legitimate authority or by oneself in a high-stakes situation. MI events can have psychological, biological, spiritual, behavioural, and social impacts.[27] MI often leads to feelings of guilt, shame and betrayal.[27] SM in the military can be a MI when the incident involves a significant perceived betrayal by those in a circle of trust (e.g., within-rank/peer violence) and/or by those in a position of authority (e.g., leadership).[28,29] However, there is a spectrum of SM (e.g., from sexually offensive comments to rape)[1] and not everyone is traumatized by or develops MI from SM situations. Understanding the link between SM and MI will inform future treatment directions.
2. *Research with non-CAF members*. Although Statistics Canada is conducting research on Regular Force and Primary Reserve Force CAF members,[2,12] gaining a fulsome understanding of the impacts of SM also requires research that involves other Canadians who have been impacted by SM, such as Veterans, as well as family of CAF members and Veterans

affected by SM. Information on many of these Canadians, and the long-term impacts on their health and wellness, is currently unavailable and is needed to evaluate where resources should be targeted and what kinds of organizational interventions can be implemented. Such research can also address knowledge gaps in subpopulations impacted by SM that are not as visible as women (e.g., qualitative interviews with men and LGBTQIA2S+ members to understand their experiences in more depth) to identify targets for further research and prevention efforts.

3. *Allegations of SM perpetration*. Being accused, and possibly convicted, of committing SM can be traumatic for alleged perpetrators. Research suggests they, and their families, can suffer enormously from the stigma associated with the accusation, investigation,[30] and conviction.[31,32] At this time, little is known about the implications of allegations of sexual misconduct on CAF members and their families.
4. *Affected men and LGBTQIA2S+ members*. Men and LGBTQIA2S+ members may have their own unique experiences of SM, as well as unique experiences of PTSD and MI that may develop. Researching ways in which men and LGBTQIA2S+ members experience SM and developing appropriate treatment approaches for them is essential.

Treatment

Suggestions for treating those affected by SM include:

1. *Community-based therapy*. Developing community-based therapy specific to SM, such as peer support, will help to mitigate isolation, build skills, and help affected members process traumatic experiences. Current U.S. research on the use of peer-support for Veterans with PTSD suggests attending peer support provides social support and understanding, and helping others within a peer-support setting provides a sense of purpose and meaning. It also suggests discussing experiences with peers helps to normalize experiences and reduce stigma, and that peer support provides a link to support for those who are unwilling to reach out for professional treatment.[33] Although the SMRC is currently looking into peer-support programming both online and in person, it has not been implemented at this time.[34]
2. *Discharge*. While experiencing SM is often isolating at any point during or after service, this isolation can be exacerbated for some by feelings of purposelessness upon leaving the CAF.[35] For those struggling in this respect, therapists, clinicians, and other support persons should explore strategies to help Veterans find a new sense of purpose.
3. *Tiered model of care*. A tiered model of care, from community supports to specialist treatment, is critical to ensure integrated care pathways. Integrated care pathways are patient-focused, multidisciplinary care plans that improve the coordination and consistency of patient care.[36] Implementing integrated care pathways through DND- and VAC-accessed treatments is critical to facilitating the appropriate level of care for each individual and should be prioritized.
4. *Innovative therapies*. In addition to typical therapies, there is a need for clinicians to explore new and innovative treatments for individuals experiencing complex disorders that do not respond to current therapies. Most trauma treatments are cognitively based and, while they are effective for many, there is a significant group, particularly within the military population, who do not find adequate relief through these traditional therapies.[37] Investigating integrative personalized treatment approaches using novel adjunctive treatments for trauma-related disorders will be critical for this population.

Conclusion

Given the significant adverse effects SM can have on CAF members and Veterans, it is important to continue working together collaboratively on SM-related issues. In Canada, researchers, policy makers, military members, Veterans, people affected by SM, and clinicians are coming together to discuss and work collaboratively to address the issues and gaps associated with SM in the areas of research, policy, and treatment. Through these collaborative efforts, all are working to ensure the health and safety of CAF members and Veterans.

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Barriers to French language use in the Canadian Armed Forces

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ABSTRACT

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is working toward changing its culture to ensure it is an inclusive organization for all segments of the Canadian population, where members feel comfortable bringing their whole selves to work. These culture-change efforts can also be an opportunity to make progress toward normalizing linguistic duality in the CAF. As an official language in Canada, French language rights are enshrined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, giving them equal status, rights, and privileges to English in all of Canada's governmental institutions. Despite this status, and the further articulation of these rights in the Official Languages Act, barriers to French language use in the CAF exist, some of which are unique to military contexts. This article draws from the research literature — specifically research on ethnolinguistic vitality, Communication Accommodation Theory, and Self-Determination Theory — to discuss underlying mechanisms influencing these barriers and second language training approaches to mitigate them and to provide insight for leadership.

Key words: barriers, CAF, Canadian Armed Forces, diversity, English, French, inclusion, official languages, second language use

RÉSUMÉ

Les Forces armées canadiennes (FAC) cherchent à modifier leur culture afin de s'assurer d'être une organisation inclusive pour tous les segments de la population canadienne, où les membres se sentent à l'aise d'être pleinement eux-mêmes ou elles-mêmes au travail. Ces efforts en vue de changer la culture peuvent également se révéler l'occasion d'évoluer vers la normalisation de la dualité linguistique au sein des FAC. Le français est une langue officielle au Canada, et à ce titre, les droits qui s'y rattachent sont inscrits dans la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés et lui donnent le même statut, les mêmes droits et les mêmes privilèges que l'anglais dans tous les établissements gouvernementaux du Canada. Malgré ce statut et l'exposition claire de ces droits dans la Loi sur les langues officielles du Canada, il reste encore des obstacles à l'utilisation du français au sein des FAC, dont certains sont caractéristiques des contextes militaires. Cet article puise dans des documents de recherche, notamment sur la vitalité ethnolinguistique, la théorie des aménagements en matière de communication et la théorie de l'autodétermination, pour examiner les mécanismes qui influent sur ces obstacles et sur les démarches de formation en langue seconde afin de les atténuer et d'éclairer les dirigeants.

Mots-clés : anglais, diversité, FAC, Forces armées canadiennes, français, inclusion, langues officielle, obstacles, utilisation d'une langue seconde

LAY SUMMARY

Despite the official language status of French in Canada, there are barriers that may limit its use in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). This article discusses academic literature on second language learning, group relations, and motivation to describe the dynamics underlying these barriers and provide recommendations to mitigate them. In particular, the concept of ethnolinguistic vitality is discussed to differentiate between minority and majority groups in terms of how second languages are acquired and used. In addition, Communication Accommodation Theory explains how elements of CAF culture — namely, prioritizing operations, team cohesion, and adhering to a chain of command structure — may contribute to Francophone members sensing they are less able than their Anglophone counterparts to use their language of choice in the workplace. Lastly, drawing on Self-Determination Theory, the incentivizing of official language learning is discussed regarding its potential impact on second language proficiency, willingness to use a second language, and continuation of learning. Insights for leadership and second language training approaches are also provided.

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INTRODUCTION

English and French have equal status, rights, and privileges as Canada's official languages (OLs).[1] One of the requirements of the Official Languages Act,[2] which articulates how these rights are applied by Canada's federal government, is that work environments of federal institutions accommodate and be conducive to the use of both OLs by officers and employees. This accommodation relates to working conditions such as availability of supervision in one's language of choice, correspondence and work instruments being available in both OLs, the ability to use one's language of choice during meetings, and the provision of services affecting employees on a personal level (e.g., pay and benefits, performance appraisals), or that are essential for performance of duties, in one's language of choice.[3]

These requirements are mandatory in bilingual regions of the country, and leaders in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) are responsible for demonstrating compliance with the Act by respecting the OL rights of their subordinates. Regardless of the bilingual status of the region, members of the CAF are encouraged to learn and use their second OL to demonstrate linguistic duality. It is argued that, despite its OL status, there are barriers to using French in the CAF, which can create inequitable working conditions for those who speak French as a first language. This article examines barriers to using French in the CAF and provides evidence-based insights to address aspects of these barriers.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY AND USE AS A REFLECTION OF ETHNOLINGUISTIC VITALITY

Despite holding OL status and rights in Canada, throughout most of the country, French has relatively low ethnolinguistic vitality (ELV) compared to English. ELV refers to characteristics that promote the survival of a language community and influences how individuals acquire and use a second language.[4(p. 410-412)] Objective measures of ELV are based on a linguistic group's social status, demographic representation, and institutional support. For example, in terms of demographic representation, only 21% of people living in Canada report French as a first language, compared to 56% for English.[5] Additionally, the growing population of Allophones — those whose mother tongue is neither English nor French — who account for approximately 21% of Canada's population, learn English as a first OL (80%).[6] Further contextualizing demographic representation, most Francophones (85%) are concentrated in the province of Québec.[7] Despite these demographic disparities, the Constitution of Canada and other legal frameworks protect the OL status of French in Canada and in the federal government, which demonstrates institutional support and social status for French language communities.[4(p. 412-416)]

The preponderance of English in Canada's socio-institutional milieu results in greater second OL fluency for Francophones, even without extensive classroom instruction.[8(p. 516-517)] This immersive contact with English-speaking communities allows for, or imposes, high levels of exposure to the culture of the second OL community and language learning that occurs within context — experiences associated with higher-quality second language learning.[9(p. 154)] With this level of exposure in mind, it is not surprising that Francophones are far more likely to be bilingual than Anglophones on both a national level (46% of Francophones vs. 9% of Anglophones)[10] and an organizational level (58% of CAF members whose first OL is French vs. 9% of those whose first OL is English).[11]

In addition to being an optimal language learning environment, immersive opportunities for second language acquisition are linked to greater willingness to use the second language, and to do so across a broader range of situations.[12(p. 327-332)] With this linkage in mind, the recent resumption of university-level education at Royal Military College Saint-Jean is positive for developing second OL capabilities among Anglophone leaders because bilingualism is fostered in an immersive context, such as through military training, sports, and activities conducted in both OLs.[13(p. 109)] It would be optimal to identify additional immersive opportunities for second OL acquisition across a broader range of CAF members who speak English as a first language. This identification would help address the well-recognized gap between achieving a linguistic profile and using French as a second language in the workplace.[14]

The benefit of immersive contact for French second OL use is only part of the dynamic at play when it comes to ELV. ELV also impacts French as a first OL. That is, for low ELV groups, second language acquisition can come at the detriment of the first language, a phenomenon known as subtractive bilingualism.[15(p. 538-540)] In an organizational context, this phenomenon could occur in various ways, such as losing (or never developing) the ability to speak fluidly about work-related topics in one's first OL. Having French social networks,

particularly where work-related discussions can occur, may help counteract the effects of subtractive bilingualism.[16(p. 222-225)]

Taken together, the discussion of social and linguistic consequences of ELV sheds light on some reasons that Francophone CAF members, compared to their Anglophone counterparts, are more likely to be able and willing to use their second OL. Furthermore, based on research in this domain, Francophone members may experience linguistic barriers to using their first OL, particularly for those whose professional development and/or day-to-day work occurs primarily in English.

STRUCTURAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES TO FRENCH LANGUAGE USE IN BILINGUAL CAF WORKPLACES

Elements of CAF culture — namely, the prioritization of operations, team cohesion, and adhering to a hierarchical structure — may pose challenges to French language use. The primacy of operations may encourage bilingualism in domestic, foreign, and joint operations with French-speaking populations. However, prioritization of operational success can also undermine bilingualism when there is pressure to use the language of the majority to be efficient and clear when communicating.

Cohesion is an important element of a strong and effective team. However, it can also create pressure to conform to a norm or a majority. In a military context, demonstrating belonging to a team and deference to the chain of command may motivate Francophones to converge to the language of the majority (i.e., English) to fit in. This conforming can be understood through the lens of Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT). According to CAT,[17] communication is not simply an exchange of referential information, it also reflects and demonstrates interpersonal and intergroup attitudes. These attitudes are conveyed by accommodative strategies interlocutors use — that is, the extent to which they converge, diverge, or maintain communication behaviours. Convergence refers to adapting verbal and non-verbal communication to become like other interlocutor(s). The communicator that converges is perceived as more competent, attractive, warm, and cooperative and, therefore, is often motivated by a desire to gain approval. In contrast, individuals can accentuate differences between themselves and others through divergence or maintenance of the communication style. These strategies have benefits, such as demonstrating and maintaining an important personal or group identity. However, their use comes at a risk of being perceived negatively.

Following the tenants of CAT, the OL spoken in the workplace can influence how those involved in the communication are perceived. For example, although individuals in bilingual regions have the right to use the OL of their choice, in reality, diverging to a first OL could be seen as uncooperative and could have social consequences. Being perceived as uncooperative poses unique risks in a military context because of the acute consequences of not respecting the chain of command or not fitting in with peers. Furthermore, the interpretation and response to diverging communications does not occur in a vacuum. Intersectional factors, such as rank, gender, race, and first OL, can differentially impact the extent to which divergent communications are perceived negatively. For example, use of French with Anglophones, or in English-speaking situations, is probably more likely to be perceived as a divergence than using English with Francophones because there are lower levels of bilingualism among CAF members whose first language is English, as well as existing social norms to use the language of the majority. Accordingly, Francophone members of the Regular Force are less likely than their Anglophone counterparts to feel they can use the OL of their choice during meetings (49% vs. 92%) and when communicating with immediate supervisors (68% vs. 95%).[18] Therefore, it is incumbent on CAF leaders to encourage and use both OLs in bilingual workplaces to shape group norms conducive to and accommodating of the use of both OLs.

Another structural challenge to OL bilingualism stems from the way second OL competence is incentivized and the impact this has on motivation. In the CAF, achieving a specific linguistic profile is linked to receiving points or meeting established criteria that increase the likelihood of promotion. This approach not only places focus on achieving a linguistic profile, rather than using the second OL, but is also an externally regulated way of influencing behaviour related to second OL acquisition and use. According to Self Determination Theory (SDT), external control will decrease the extent to which motivation to engage in a behaviour is internalized and held as an important part of one's identity. Instead, it shifts the focus to more extrinsic motives (e.g., desire to gain a reward).[19(p. 627-628)] This focus is consequential to second OL learning and use because, compared to less self-determined learners, those with internalized motives expend greater effort and are more

likely to continue learning after training is complete, use more active learning strategies, find the learning process more enjoyable, and achieve positive learning outcomes (e.g., greater proficiency and willingness to use the second OL).[20(p. 25-26)]

Although purely intrinsic motives for learning a language are unlikely in an organizational context where OL bilingualism is linked to career progression, SDT posits that more internalized forms of motivation can still be fostered by supporting learners' basic psychological needs for autonomy, relatedness, and competence. Applying this theory to second OL learning, some recommended approaches include providing opportunities for learners to make choices that permit learning in a way that resonates with them (autonomy support), setting clear and attainable learning goals (competence support), and providing opportunities for learners to connect with, and immerse themselves in, the second OL community (relatedness support).

Conclusion

The CAF is striving to convert its culture to one that better celebrates diversity and ensures equity, as there is growing recognition many members struggle to bring their whole selves to work — including being able to use both OLs in bilingual workplaces. As a fundamental aspect of Canadian identity, linguistic duality should not be separated from these culture-change efforts. The research discussed herein suggests a greater focus on immersive opportunities to learn and use French for members whose first OL is English, leader-led normalization of French in the workplace, and a shift toward more internally driven second OL acquisition, helping to bridge the gap between second OL proficiency and use. However, further research is recommended to explore barriers to French language use among CAF members and the effectiveness of training, leadership, and policy approaches to mitigating these barriers.

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