In recent years, early attrition in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), especially among non-commissioned members (NCMs) with less than one year of service, has been a growing concern (Lee, McCreary, & Villeneuve, 2011).

Past research has recognized a number of factors related to attrition, including (see Hoglin & Barton, 2015):

- Demographic variables (e.g., sex, education, age)
- Cognitive ability and aptitude
- Health and psychosocial variables (e.g., smoking, somatic symptoms)
- Personality traits (e.g., neuroticism)

Little research to date has looked at the personal values-attrition link, however, so the current work adds to this body of knowledge by focusing on values and values congruence as key drivers of early career attrition.
What Are Values?

- Values are “desirable, trans-situational goals, varying in importance, that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives.” (Schwartz, 1996, p. 122)

- They are related to traits, needs, and attitudes but remain conceptually distinct from these variables (Bardi, Buchanan, Goodwin, Slabu, & Robinson, 2014)

- The most widely known model of values is the Schwartz (1992) value theory, which posits the existence of 10 universal value types
The Schwartz (1992) Value Theory

[Diagram showing the Schwartz Value Theory model with axes for Openness to change and Self-Transcendence, and divisions for Self-Direction, Universalism, Benevolence, Conformity, Tradition, Security, Power, Hedonism, and Stimulation.]
Values Congruence and the Workplace

- De Clercq, Fontaine, and Anseel (2008) proposed the Schwartz (1992) value theory might be a suitable framework for studying person-organization (PO) fit

  - PO fit, or values congruence, denotes the compatibility between people’s values and the values of their organization (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, Johnson, 2005)

  - Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found small-to-moderate correlations between measures of PO fit and organizational commitment, turnover intentions, and turnover (i.e., ultimately, “misfits” are more likely to quit).

- Organizational commitment
  - Three forms: affective, continuance, and normative (Meyer & Allen, 1991)
  - Affective commitment is an employee’s emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1990)
Aims of the Current Work

- Identify, in terms of values, key drivers of early career attrition in CAF NCM recruits
- Explore the indirect pathways (i.e., via affective commitment and intentions to leave) through which values and values congruence might influence attrition
- Provide an up-to-date snapshot of CAF NCM recruits’ values profiles
- Investigate how these profiles might relate to values congruence as well as to affective commitment, intentions to leave, and attrition
Method

- Participants ($N = 1216$)
  - Canadian Army (CA) non-commissioned member (NCM) recruits in Land occupational roles
  - Originated from a larger sample of participants who took part in a longitudinal retention study of Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) officer candidates and NCM recruits entitled *Project Horizon* (Laplante, Goldenberg, & Otis, 2015)
  - Largely male between 17.0 and 53.0 years of age with a high school education

- Procedure
  - Participants completed electronic surveys in mass-testing sessions at the Canadian Forces Leadership Recruit School in St-Jean, Quebec, during the second (Time 1) and last (Time 2) week of their 13-week Basic Military Qualification (BMQ) training
Method (Continued)

- **Materials**
  - **Time 1**
    - Values (10 items; Lindeman & Verkasalo, 2005)
      - Based on the Schwartz (1992) value theory
    - Perceived values congruence (three items also included at Time 2; adapted from Cable & Derue, 2002)
  - **Time 2**
    - Affective commitment (five items; Jaros, 2007; Meyer, Kam, Goldenberg, & Bremner, 2013)
    - Intentions to leave (two items; Eren & Budgell, 2015; Laplante et al., 2015)
  - Attrition
Key Findings

Power

Security

Attrition

Achievement
Stimulation
Universalism
Benevolence
Tradition
Conformity

Hedonism
Self-Direction
Person-Centered Analyses

Profiles of recruits

- High Social (66%)
- Average (29%)
- Low Social (5%)
- Grand mean

Values

Grand mean

High Social (66%)

Profile of recruits

- Mean rating
- PO
- AC
- HE
- ST
- SD
- UN
- BE
- TR
- CO
- SE

Profiles of recruits

- Mean rating
- Values
Person-Centered Analyses (Continued)

Predictors of the Profiles

- High Social (66%)
- Average (29%)
- Low Social (5%)

Marital status

- Married
  - High Social: 0.06
  - Average: 0.16
  - Low Social: 0.05
  - Proportion: 0.78

- Other
  - High Social: 0.05
  - Average: 0.30
  - Low Social: 0.05
  - Proportion: 0.65
Outcomes Associated with the Profiles

- **High Social (66%)**
- **Average (29%)**
- **Low Social (5%)**
- **Grand mean**

Outcome variables:
- PVC (T1)
- PVC (T2)
- AC

Mean score

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<tr>
<th>Outcome variables</th>
<th>PVC (T1)</th>
<th>PVC (T2)</th>
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<td>Average (29%)</td>
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Take Away

- In the early stages of recruit training, a low endorsement of most social values appears to be a red flag for subsequent attrition.
  - However, socialization tactics such as clear expectations, the observation of role models, and positive support from experienced members could help promote the internalization of the values of the CAF and hence prevent attrition by increasing values congruence and perceived PO fit (based on the work of Cable & Parsons, 2001).

- Understanding its applicant’s goals and motivations allows the CAF to better tailor its advertising materials, in turn enabling the organization to improve its performance relative to competitors and attract the most suitable candidates (Tasseron, 2001).
Future Directions

- Additional predictors of values profiles could be considered, provided larger samples are available; a comparison with a sample of young Canadians would be valuable (as would comparisons to recruits from other nations).
- Alternatives theories and tools (e.g., Organizational Culture Profile) to the Schwartz (1992) value theory could further inform values-based research in the CAF context.
- Future work could explore values-based self-selection and socialization processes in the CAF training environment.
  - Bardi et al. (2014) provided support for value-based self-selection but not for value socialization in British police trainees.
  - Jackson, Thoemmes, Jonkman, Ludtke, and Trautwein (2012) found that personality traits predicted entry into the military, and military training was associated with changes in personality.
- Results are upcoming regarding the values profiles of CA members, based on a large stratified random sample of both the Regular and Reserve Forces.
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