Vol. 23, No. 3 | SUMMER 2023

CANADIAN MILITARY JOURNAL

National Defence Défense nationale

Canada

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Members of Operation PRESENCE-Mali conduct their eleventh aeromedical evacuation mission, treating two civilian contractors involved in an IED attack before transferring the casualties to a MINUSMA Role 2 hospital in Gao, near Camp Castor on August 16, 2019.

Image by: Cpl Richard Lessard
Task Force-Mali

Editorial: Transforming Military Cultures

MAYA EICHLER, TAMMY GEORGE, AND NANCY TABER

Maya Eichler, Tammy George, and Nancy Taber are the co-directors of the DND-MINDS funded international collaborative network Transforming Military Cultures.

In recent years, a series of class action lawsuits,[1] external and internal reviews and reports,[2] Statistics Canada surveys,[3] and allegations of sexual misconduct against high-ranking officers,[4] have documented the systemic and interlocking problems with Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) culture. Sexual misconduct is widespread, as are discrimination and hostility towards women, two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, inclusive (2SLGBTQI+), Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour military members. In 2021, Department of National Defence (DND) and the CAF created a new organization, Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC), to "develop a professional conduct and culture framework that holistically tackles all types of discrimination, harmful behaviour, biases and system barriers."[5] At the same time, new funding became available through Mobilizing Insights in Defence and Security (MINDS) to assist the DND/CAF in its culture change efforts. With funding from MINDS, the co-editors of this special issue established the Transforming Military Cultures (TMC) network. TMC is a network of Canadian and international academic researchers, defence scientists, military members, veterans, youth, and people with relevant lived experience. The network takes a feminist intersectional trauma-informed approach to reimagine and transform CAF culture. We argue that culture change requires not just addressing sexual misconduct *or* homophobia *or* racism *or* the legacies of colonialism—but understanding them all as interrelated root causes of the military's culture problem.

It is important to locate the issue of culture change in the CAF alongside larger societal shifts. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, inequities were revealed across sectors including, but not limited to, the labour market, health care, and higher education. Amidst the health care crisis, 1700 CAF members were deployed to support the day-to-day operations of long-term care homes and help with infection control and prevention.[6] A few months into the pandemic, George Floyd's death mobilized massive protests across the globe and catalyzed a rewriting and reclaiming of history. These events along with the ongoing climate crisis, human rights abuses, geopolitical instability, and the rise of right-wing movements are threatening democracy and profoundly impacting our lives as individuals and communities. For many, returning "to normal" has simply not been an option.

There is today a tremendous opportunity and appetite for social change. The CAF is not alone, as institutions and organizations across the board grapple with culture change initiatives. These include creating Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) offices; adding diversity statements to organizational websites; encouraging EDI training for staff and employees; in addition to myriad other efforts aimed at a range of underrepresented groups. EDI is now big business in Canada and the United States, with numerous consultants and companies engaged in this work.[7] And yet, as much as culture change is underway, we ask: Will institutions be fundamentally changed in their constitution and functioning, or will their efforts only amount to performative gestures? How do power and hegemony continue to reassert themselves in the midst of culture change? How will we know when transformative change has been achieved?

With this special issue we provide readers with insights and recommendations for meaningful military culture change. This special issue grew out of two TMC panels at the 2022 Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (Ottawa, Canada). These panels were titled *Transforming military cultures: An educational and leadership lens* and *Transforming military cultures: Identity and organizational change*. Several panelists, as well as others interested in transforming military cultures, have contributed to this issue. The articles in this special issue discuss research on root causes, lived experiences of racialized military personnel, contested military identities, familial norms, critical feminist education, and trauma-informed pedagogy as they relate to transforming military cultures. The issue also includes an article about Argentinian public and military gender policies, as well as a book review essay on Australian and Canadian military cultures. The issue concludes with perspectives pieces, which respectively focus on military culture change through research, professional, and personal lenses in relation to women's experiences on deployment, regimental ritual objects, feminist identity in a military context, CPCC, and youth.

This issue begins with an article from two of us, Eichler and Brown, *Getting to the root of the problem: Understanding and changing the culture of the Canadian military*. This article grounds the special issue in a discussion of how various forms of oppression operate in Canadian society and in the military. Their exploration demonstrates that any discussion of military culture must engage with patriarchy, heteronormativity, colonialism, white supremacy, ableism, and classism. Eichler and Brown's analysis informs the articles that follow, with a call to address and challenge how institutional systems and structures are not only shaped by these root causes but reproduce them. Their analysis and insights open new pathways to think about transformative culture change in the CAF and the agency of the institution and its members to contribute to broader progressive societal change.

The next article, *"I'm not your typical white soldier": Interrogating whiteness and power in the Canadian Armed Forces*, by Tammy George, explores the service of racialized military personnel in the context of white privilege and supremacy. Her research demonstrates the importance of learning from the experiences of racialized military personnel by listening to and centering their voices, to challenge the ways racism is embedded in policies and practices. Leigh Spanner's article, *Supporting military families: Challenging or reinforcing patriarchy?*, focuses on how the CAF conceptualizes and supports military families. She argues that, despite some recognition of the diversity of military families, military culture, policies, and supports are still largely informed by the heteronormative patriarchal assumption that families consist of a military man married to a civilian woman who cares for the family and home.

In *Understanding and addressing opposition to transforming military cultures: Moving from technical and humanist to critical learning*, Nancy Taber examines how traditional military educational approaches of technical and humanist training, while effective in skill development and socialization, are ineffective in supporting transformative organizational culture change. To challenge the institutional and individual privileging of the warrior ideal—which is embedded in military policies, practices, teaching, and learning—she argues that the CAF must embrace a critical feminist pedagogical approach. In *Trauma and military cultures: Transformation through community*, Ash Grover illustrates how acts of "othering" can result in responses

typically associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. Her work demonstrates the need for a trauma-informed approach to culture change and the importance of seeking transformation through community and mutuality across difference. Alan Okros' article entitled, *Anticipating future culture struggles over contested military identities*, explores key areas where military identity will remain contested. He examines how CAF members might respond to a shift in the dominant identity alongside evolving military roles and broader societal changes. In light of these shifts and changes, Okros draws our attention to several issues such as hegemonic patriarchal systems and the potential impacts of AI and Cyber on military identity.

Laura Masson's article, *Gender identity, professional identity, and military culture: Challenges in the implementation of gender policies in the Argentinian Armed Forces*, uses a sociological framework to trace women's leadership roles in relation to historical and contemporary public and military policy. She recommends that to understand women's experiences, researchers and policymakers must consider structural power relations. Meaghan Shoemaker's book review essay, *Power and culture change in the military*, discusses two recent books on military culture change, one focusing on the CAF and one on the Australian Defence Force: *The ones we let down: Toxic leadership culture and gender integration in the Canadian Forces* (by Charlotte Duval-Lantoine) and *Blood lust, trust and blame* (by Samantha Crompvoets). She notes how both authors problematize, in each of their national contexts, the ways in which change initiatives remain disconnected from actions on the ground and from meaningful accountability. The work of critical scholars, she concludes, is required to draw the connections between military power relations and culture change.

Research, professional, and personal perspectives pieces conclude the issue. The first, by Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic, is titled, *Women's deployment experiences: Safety, barriers, and CAF culture change*. She discusses how her dissertation research about the experiences of deployed women military personnel has informed her understanding of transforming military cultures. She argues that a focus on including women in peacekeeping operations solely for reasons of operational effectiveness misses opportunities to create organizational equity and engage in culture change. The second, titled *Hidden in plain sight: Ritual items as inhibitors to culture change*, by Walter Callaghan, explores the role that nuanced elements of culture, such as traditions and rituals, play in the maintenance and transmission of culture. His piece highlights the need for ethnographic research in liminal spaces, to understand and challenge how often hidden traditions can work against culture change.

The third perspectives piece, by Karen Davis, is titled *Feminism in the military: Misconceptions and possibilities* and explores how the author had to negotiate her feminist identity as a military member and civilian defence scientist throughout her career. She examines how, although misconceptions about feminism in the military create barriers, feminism can be mobilized for culture change. The fourth perspectives piece, *Reflections from the Chief Professional Conduct and Culture*, is written by Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan. She details how CPCC conceptualizes and is addressing culture change in the CAF, stating the importance of acknowledging how the CAF has historically discriminated against women, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, members of racialized groups, and the 2SLGBTQI+ community. She notes that the CAF is committed to change and diversity as well as to implementing the recommendations of the Arbour report.

The final piece, *Youth perspectives on military culture change*, is co-written by members of TMC's Youth Advisory Board, who describe what transforming military cultures means to them. Collectively, they call for more education on diversity, equity, and inclusion; listening to the voices of non-commissioned members, junior ranks, and youth; and, continuing to improve health and wellness services for CAF members and their families. We end with their piece, so their voices can take the CAF into the future.

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Notes

1 Government of Canada. *Apology to LGBTQ2 Communities*, https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/en/free-to-be-me/apology-discrimination-individuals-families-communities.html, (2020); Epiq Class Action Services Canada Inc., CAF-DND Sexual Misconduct Class Action Settlement, https://www.caf-dndsexualmisconductclassaction.ca, (2022); Stewart McKelvey, *Class Actions. Canadian Armed Forces*. https://www.stewartmckelvey.com/class_actions/canadian-armed-forces/, (2022).

2 Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*. External Review Authority, 2015; Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence*. Borden Ladner Gervais, 2022; Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a Focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy*, Government of Canada, 2022.

3 Statistics Canada, *Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces*, 2016. Canada: Statistics Canada, (2016).

4 David Pugliese, General who replaced senior officer accused of sex assault is now himself under investigation for sexual misconduct. *Ottawa Citizen*, (2021).

5 Government of Canada, *Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture*, https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/organizational-structure/chief-professional-conduct-culture.html, (2022), para. 2.

6 Jocelyln Halladay, "Fast Facts on COVID-19 and the Canadian Armed Forces," *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 6, no. 2 (2020): 7–8, https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-C019-0015.

7 Conor Friedersdorf, "The Paradox of Diversity Trainings," *The Atlantic*, January 23, 2023, https://www.theatlantic.com/newsletters/archive/2023/01/diversity-training-paradox-intolerance/672756/.

Canadian, Dutch, and German military members participate in a shortened version of the Nijmegen March, completing 10 kms each day for four days at Camp Castor in Gao, Mali on July 17, 2018.

Image by: MCpl Jennifer Kusche

Getting to the Root of the Problem: Understanding and Changing Canadian Military Culture

MAYA EICHLER AND VANESSA BROWN

Dr. Maya Eichler holds the Canada Research Chair in Social Innovation and Community Engagement and is an associate professor of Political and Canadian Studies and Women's Studies at Mount Saint Vincent University (Halifax, NS). She is also the director of the Centre for Social Innovation and Community Engagement in Military Affairs at Mount Saint Vincent University. Her research focuses on gender and the armed forces, military sexual violence, transforming military culture, military-to-civilian transitions, and community stories of war and peace. She is one of the co-directors of the DND-MINDS funded international collaborative network Transforming Military Cultures.

Dr. Vanessa Brown holds a PhD in Sociology from Carleton University. Her thesis investigates the integration of gender and cultural perspectives in Professional Military Education and its relationship to organizational culture change. Dr. Brown is an assistant professor at Canadian Forces College teaching in the Department of Defence Studies. She has assumed a variety of Department of National Defence research and advisory roles in recent years including as an assistant professor with the Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security, as well as gender advisor to Commander of the Canadian Defence Academy.

Canada's military faces a complex, multi-layered problem with its culture. Over the past three decades, numerous media stories,[1] external and internal reports,[2] class action testimonies,[3] and first-person accounts,[4] have brought the problem to light. Numerous change initiatives have been undertaken, but the problem persists, as the 2021 sexual misconduct crisis demonstrated. Some of the most senior leaders who had previously called for the elimination of sexual misconduct, allegedly perpetrated by others, were themselves accused of sexual misconduct.[5] This watershed moment led to a call for new approaches, more accountability, and meaningful change. The Department of National Defence (DND)/Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) now recognizes culture change to be a top priority, promising to go beyond a focus on symptoms and individual behaviour. The Initiating Directive for Professional Conduct and

Culture issued by the Chief of the Defence Staff and Deputy Minister states: "we have simply not achieved the cultural change required and we must embark on a fundamentally new approach to address the root causes of systemic misconduct."[6] However, little has been said about what DND/CAF understands these root causes to be and how it plans to address them.

This recent shift in rhetoric is an opportunity to examine the root causes underlying the military's culture problem. Drawing on critical theories and empirical evidence, we identify six intersecting root causes that shape military culture in ways that enable discrimination and hostility towards certain groups. These root causes are patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism. In this article, we demonstrate how the military and its culture are a product of these root causes. Thus, to achieve transformative change, the military needs to identify and dismantle the longstanding *impact* of these root causes on its culture as well as reconcile its own role in contributing to their *perpetuation and ongoing reproduction*. We argue that the military should play an active role in dismantling enduring systems of power and privilege within and beyond its institutional boundaries. The stakes are high, especially in view of the military's central place in the nation. Achieving meaningful culture change in the military will have positive ripple effects across Canada's social and political landscape.

Theoretical Approach

How each of us makes sense of the world depends on our explicit and implicit theoretical assumptions. Rather than a neutral tool of analysis, it has been argued that "theory is always for someone and for some purpose."[7] As such, it is helpful to distinguish between mainstream approaches which take a "problem-solving" stance, and critical perspectives which seek to challenge the status quo and envision transformative change. When addressing a systemic problem that requires fundamental change, it is most useful to apply critical perspectives.

Critical theories highlight how various systems of power and privilege operate in society and within institutions. These systems produce inequalities and enable oppressive behaviours between individuals and groups. To glean what is at the root of power disparity and inequality in the CAF, we draw on intersectional feminist scholarship,[8] decolonial and critical race theory,[9] queer theory,[10] critical disability studies,[11] and critical political economy.[12] We use these critical theories to develop an anti-oppression framework that can provide pathways towards military culture change.[13] While distinct in their focus on particular systems of power and privilege, these critical theories examine how power relations are historically and socially constructed, and operate at individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal levels.[14] Dynamics and patterns of power and privilege are reinforced over time to advantage those in the dominant group, while oppressing those who become positioned at the margins of society.[15]

The same root causes that give rise to inequitable global and national social orders also contribute to the military's problematic culture. Through the process of turning ordinary citizens into military members, the CAF embeds patriarchal, colonial, white supremacist, heteronormative, ableist, and classist paradigms that exist in wider society into its own unique systems, structures, norms, and culture.[16] Largely unwritten yet commonly held notions of who constitutes an ideal military member tend to centre cisgender, heterosexual, Anglophone, white, able-bodied men of settler colonial heritage.[17] In this way, the military is a product of, as well as an agent in the reproduction of, the very root causes that lie at the foundation of its culture problem.

Root causes of the military's culture problem

The following discussion of root causes is not exhaustive, but aims to highlight key systems of power that have direct implications for the organization of social relations within the military. Patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism give rise to the social construction of idealized and valued characteristics based on intersecting factors such as sex, gender, sexuality, relationship status, parental status, race, ethnicity, skin colour, Indigeneity, income, socioeconomic class, education, language, ability, age, region, and life experience. These factors manifest in the organization of social relations within the military, and furthermore intersect with the military's own unique ways of organizing people based on military-specific factors such as element, occupation, trade, rank, unit, deployment history, and universality of service. We define each root cause in turn and explain how it impacts the experiences of diverse military personnel.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of hierarchical social organization that establishes and perpetuates men's social, economic, and political power, privilege, and leadership.[18] Under patriarchy, characteristics associated with masculinity are privileged and hierarchically positioned in opposition to characteristics associated with femininity.[19] Sexism is the key ideology of patriarchy, ascribing to women characteristics such as weakness, deference, pacifism, and nurturing, and to men characteristics such as toughness, violence, strength, and rationality. Militaries are key patriarchal institutions. Their internal organization reflects the masculine biases and male power found in broader society.[20] At the same time, men's dominance in positions of power and privilege within militaries supports patriarchal forms of domination in broader society.[21]

The CAF, like other militaries, was built and designed with service men in mind—specifically, cisgender, heterosexual, Anglophone, white, able-bodied men. The institution has a long history of assuming male norms, privileging masculinity, and discriminating against women. For most of the military's history, women were not permitted to serve in the same way as men. They were selectively included, and often constructed as the "other" within military culture. Thus, the entire military environment has been designed for (white, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied) male service members married to female civilian spouses, creating systemic barriers for military women and others who fall outside this norm.[22] Bathrooms, accommodations, equipment, uniforms, materiel, and medical care norms have been based on the average man's height, weight, strength, shape, and physiology. The same is true for military personnel policies which were originally, and largely still are today, designed to support men's needs, career paths, and leadership styles.[23] In the military, patriarchy presents in the maintenance of male-dominant spaces; men's overrepresentation in most occupations, trades, and positions of esteem; and the predominance of men in roles associated with operations (particularly combat operations) and the combat warrior.[24] Women were excluded from the combat arms until 1989, when a Canadian Human Rights Tribunal decision ordered the military to lift the ban in the face of resistance from its senior leadership.[25] Even as women have been permitted to serve in the combat arms for over three decades now, the masculine warrior ideal remains a cornerstone of CAF culture and is often touted as necessary for operational effectiveness.[26] The military's reproduction of patriarchal relations within its own policies and practices continues to shape military culture today.

Colonialism

Colonialism entails the direct control and exploitation by a colonial power of the people of another country or nation. It is predicated on violence that aims to displace and dispossess people, exploit their labour, and appropriate their land, resources, and knowledge.[27] The relationship between colonizer and colonized is fundamentally unequal. Colonialism is premised on "a deeply held belief in the need to and the right to dominate others for their own good, others who are expected to be grateful."[28] Canada is built on settler colonialism, a distinct form of colonialism that enforces large scale assimilation and erasure of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis culture and peoples.[29] As Hayden King explains, colonialism extracts the labour of the colonized, but settler colonialism goes further in that it "attempts to liquidate all remnants of the previous (Indigenous) societies to legitimize its permanent presence."[30]

The CAF is both a product and an instrument of the white settler colonial state. As the key instrument for the state's monopoly over legitimate violence, the military is inextricably intertwined with the state's colonial legacy. Furthermore, the military is built on, and centres, white settler histories and culture. Most military historical references (written, visual, and symbolic) tend to amplify white settler bodies, exploits, successes, and legacies over those of diverse military members from Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour communities. The implicit (and sometimes explicit) centering of white settler men, mostly of British descent, demonstrates and normalizes the colonial roots of military culture.[31] Colonialism manifests in the CAF through systemic and structural barriers leading to the low representation of Indigenous and other racialized communities—across elements, occupations, and trades as well as rank.[32] Colonialism also manifests in the CAF through racist behaviours, white supremacist attitudes, and in verbal, physical, and sexual violence targeting Indigenous, Black, and People of Colour military members.[33]

White Supremacy

White supremacy and racism are closely tied to colonialism as a historical force and global social structure. White supremacy is a system of advantage and inequality based on race. Race is not a biological category, but a sociopolitical construct used to justify hierarchical divisions between population groups.[34] Racialization is "the *process* of turning physical differences into social markers, and typically, enforcing them in a regime of oppression that gives race its significance."[35] White supremacy operates structurally to privilege those perceived to be

"white" over diverse "others," shaping individual, interpersonal, institutional, and societal contexts.[36]

As a white settler colonial institution, the military has historically reproduced white privilege and the marginalization of racialized "others." Racial and ethnic minorities, such as Chinese, Japanese, Black, and Indigenous Canadians had to fight for the right to equal participation in the Canadian military, especially in the context of the two World Wars.[37] They also had to fight for equal recognition after their service ended, reflecting both military and broader societal racism. Currently, racialized Canadians are encouraged to join but must find ways to negotiate the military as an institutional "space of whiteness and dominance."[38] While diversity is officially welcomed in the CAF, military members and veterans struggle to have racism acknowledged as a source of trauma contributing to occupational and operational injuries and illness.[39] Ruben Coward, a former member of the Royal Canadian Air Force notes: "Complex PTSD is not only caused by war. Racism is a war that (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) are fighting."[40] While the military has committed to addressing anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, institutional and cultural practices still reproduce white supremacy and the oppression and marginalization of racialized military members.[41] The dominant approach focused on increasing racial diversity is not sufficient to address the systemic embeddedness of white supremacy within military culture (see Tammy George's article in this special issue).

Heteronormativity

Heteronormativity refers to the normalization, idealization, and, often, enforcement of heterosexual relationships and social orders. Together with patriarchy, heteronormativity supports the dominance of men over women by regulating notions of masculinity and femininity. Heterosexual masculinity occupies a valued, dominant, and powerful position in relation to a subordinated, passive, and controlled femininity.[42] "What Judith Butler calls "heterosexual matrix" describes how peoples' behaviours, beliefs, and life choices are policed and constrained to a narrow set of heteronormative expectations and roles that appear normal or natural.[43] Government and workplace policies often assume a heteronormative family unit made up of a heterosexual couple with children, centered around the man as breadwinner. As Leigh Spanner's article in this special issue shows, heteronormativity also permeates military policies and practices which assume as a norm the military man partnered with a civilian woman.[44]

Heteronormativity gives rise to related forms of oppression such as homophobia, which "includes prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and acts of violence brought on by [...] fear and hatred" towards 2SLGBTQI+ people.[45] Heteronormativity is also the basis for biphobia, the fear and hatred towards bisexual people, and transphobia, the fear and hatred towards transgender people. Heteronormativity is built into the historic design of the CAF, as are patriarchy and sexism. From the late 1950s to the early 1990s, the Government of Canada engaged in a concerted campaign to "purge" lesbian and gay service members from the military and other federal workplaces.[46] In 1992, Michelle Douglas' lawsuit ended the ban against lesbian, gay, and transgender military personnel, but non-heterosexual and gender diverse members continue to experience discrimination.[47] Successive reports and class actions (LGBT Purge and Heyder-Beattie class actions) have exposed the military's discriminatory structures and practices as well as a "hostile" culture for women and 2SLGBTQI+ members.[48]

Ableism

Ableism refers to "a system that places value on peoples' bodies and minds based on societally constructed ideas of normality, intelligence, excellence, desirability, and productivity."[49] As critical disability scholar Talila A. Lewis shows, ability cannot be understood separately from other socially constructed systems such as patriarchy, colonialism, or classism. Ableism is a system of oppression that constitutes who is considered valuable and worthy in society and within institutions, based on characteristics such as a "person's language, appearance, religion and/or their ability to satisfactorily [re]produce, excel and 'behave'."[50] Consequently, Lewis argues that you do not have to identify as disabled to experience ableism, though persons living with visible and invisible disabilities often do.

In the military context, ableism can be explicit or implicit. Explicit examples relate to bona fide occupational requirements,[51] Universality of Service requirements,[52] and required fitness tests.[53] These policies restrict access to the military based on a socially defined category of ability and fitness. Ableist discourses in the military are rooted in the construction of a particular military body—that of the male, white, cisgender, heteronormative, able-bodied masculine warrior.[54] Implicit ableism can include sex, gender, race, age, and class-based assumptions about a military member's fitness and suitability for a given trade, occupation, task, or role.[55] In the military, ableist ideas about physical and mental fitness also manifest in the stigma around illness and injury. The service member who exhibits health challenges after a deployment or

Maj. Chelsea Anne Braybrook, Commander of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry and a member of the enhanced Forward Presence Battlegroup in Latvia, briefs troops on plans and strategies during the NATO certification exercise at Camp Adazi, Latvia, August 24, 2017.

Image by: MCpl Gerald Cormier

suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder can be subject to ableist discourses around mental health, fitness, and recovery.[56] While valued military members are expected to adhere to ableist standards of fitness, ableism constructs a hierarchy around whose injury and illness is most valued, elevating combat- and deployment-related trauma over other workplace trauma including military sexual trauma.[57]

Classism

Classism is part of capitalism, an economic system built on the exploitation of people's labour by those who own the means of production. While tied to the economy, classism permeates social, cultural, and political spheres.[58] Classism refers to the institutional and individual prejudice and discrimination against those with lower socioeconomic status within an economic system such as capitalism.[59] Exploitation of people's labour and discrimination on the basis of class are compounded by intersecting forms of marginalization and oppression based on race, sex, gender, ability, and sexuality.[60] For example, while both men and women face class-based exploitation in Canada, women also experience a gender pay gap, which is wider for women who are racialized, Indigenous, or live with disabilities.[61]

Class divisions manifest in a variety of ways in the military context. Historically, the officer class came from wealthier family backgrounds and positions of social privilege, while non-commissioned members tended to be compromised of people from lower socioeconomic classes.[62] These classed traditions continue to impact the culture of British and Commonwealth militaries.[63] In the CAF, class divisions include social, economic, and cultural distinctions between officers and non-commissioned members, regular and reserve force members, military college graduates and military members educated at civilian universities and colleges or those entering military service directly from secondary school.[64] Classism is also evident in the recruitment and use of military members' labour. Lack of economic opportunity and lower socioeconomic status are factors in the decision to join the military.[65] At the same time, service members enter dangerous conditions to advance the defence and security ambitions of the state without enjoying the same labour rights as public servants or other Canadian workers.[66] Intersecting with the sex, gender, as well as relationship and parental status of a military member, class distinctions impact the ability of individuals and families to manage the demands of military life.[67] As more racialized Canadians, including permanent residents, join the military, race-based classism will likely be amplified within the institution.

Implications

Militaries are bureaucratic, traditionalist, and conservative institutions. They place high value on history, rituals, and customs as these have worked in support of military operations in the past.[68] Due to these institutional characteristics, the military tends to be slow to change its culture at pace with society and is reluctant to determine which facets of military culture no longer serve it. Thus, the military can resist organizational change, perceiving new approaches, values, or demographics as threatening to cohesion and operational effectiveness.[69] An anti-oppression framework examining root causes and their intersections provides an underpinning theory to understand the military's culture problem and points to three requirements for transformative change.

First, the CAF's history has led to the implicit privileging of particular men and masculinities and the "othering" of men, women, and gender diverse people who do not fit the male, Anglophone, white, heterosexual, cisgender, masculine, warrior ideal. The first step towards culture change is to recognize the continuing impact of the root causes discussed above on the design of the Canadian military, and the way they still pervade many aspects of the institution and its culture today. When we confront the root of the problem, we can understand why short-term superficial initiatives based on numerical targets or policing the behaviours of individual members are not sufficient to bring about transformative institutional change. It will take a concerted effort on the part of the institution to systemically and comprehensively undo the legacy of historical inequalities and "othering" that manifest in and through

institutionalized patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism. Thus, culture change in the military is far more complex than has generally been assumed. Identifying the root causes of inequality is key to understanding the problem and what kind of change must occur across all aspects of military life.

Second, advancing culture change requires naming the CAF's historic and ongoing role in reproducing the inequalities linked to root causes such as patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism. So far, there has been reluctance to explicitly acknowledge how the military is implicated in these systems of power and privilege. The report from the Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination provides a step in the right direction by recognizing the systemic nature of racism within which the military operates. The report states:

> *Racism in Canada is not a glitch in the system; it is the system. Colonialism and intersecting systems such as patriarchy, heteronormativity and ableism constitute the root causes of inequality within Canada. Throughout Canada's history, the existence of systemic and cultural racism has been enshrined in regulations, norms, and standard practices.*[70]

Yet, the report does not go so far as to recognize that the military itself reproduces white supremacy and other systemic forms of discrimination and oppression, institutionally and within broader society. The explicit naming of the military's role in systems of power is needed to move towards meaningful change and accountability.

Third, recognizing the CAF's role as an active agent in reproducing systemic and structural root causes of inequality also means that the CAF and its individual members are capable of finding alternative pathways for positive organizational change. Military members can learn through exposure to critical theories and the application of an anti-oppression framework to identify and challenge the institutional practices that reproduce systems of power and privilege. Moreover, the military can facilitate and champion the dismantling of the root causes of inequality and oppression in broader society. As Vanessa Brown's research demonstrates, military members can be "forces for good".[71] They can identify and deconstruct masculinist and oppressive institutional norms and social hierarchies, and work to "re-gender" the soldierly identity. Military members can construct professionalism around principles of inclusion, recognition, redistribution of power, equality, empathy, and compassion. These qualities are not antithetical to military effectiveness—they amplify mission success by ensuring each member has equitable conditions to succeed. Military members can draw on gender and cultural perspectives, including critical feminist and decolonial concepts, to examine and work to address inequalities within the military and in broader society.[72] With an underlying theory of the root causes of the military's culture problem, the institution and its members can become central actors in advancing transformative change.

Recommendations

Ongoing examination of the root causes that have shaped the military as an institution is key to identifying the problem to be solved. Applying an anti-oppression framework that builds on a set of critical theories including intersectional feminist, decolonial, critical race, queer, critical disability, and critical political economy theories to advance culture change efforts is not an easy task, but a necessary one if DND/CAF wants to move the yardstick on culture change. The military's culture requires not evolution or enhancement,[73] as is currently being suggested, but transformative change. This change entails continuous and collective learning through an application of critical theory. It requires asking crucial questions such as: How is the CAF reproducing systems of power and privilege at this particular moment in time? What can the CAF do to challenge these systems within its own institution and within broader society? To begin this journey, we recommend the following actions. DND/CAF should:

- consider the utility of an anti-oppression framework for culture change.
- clearly identify and name the root causes of problematic components of its institutional culture.
- approach culture change in a holistic way, connecting the dots between various intersecting forms of oppression and marginalization related to patriarchy, colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism.
- integrate critical theories and an anti-oppression framework into professional military education and training (also see Nancy Taber's article in this special issue), and into all institutional systems, structures, processes, and procedures (just as should be done with Gender-Based Analysis Plus).[74]
- be politically empowered to stop languishing in a reactive mode—responding only to external pressures to change—and see itself as an agent of transformative change, leading to broader institutional and societal shifts.

Addressing the root causes of the military's problematic culture is challenging and does not lend itself to 'quick fix' solutions. While difficult, a root cause-oriented approach holds more promise than past approaches focused on symptoms, individual behaviour, and numerical targets. Such an approach considers the deep impact of the systems and structures within which military members are embedded, socialized, and work daily. Addressing root causes also holds more promise than the continued assumption that legal changes, such as changes to the military justice system, will adequately address problems around sexual misconduct and other harmful behaviours. Also, while important, it is not sufficient for the military to become more diverse in its make-up. To achieve meaningful inclusion, the military must address the inequities and injustices stemming from patriarchy, settler colonialism, white supremacy, heteronormativity, ableism, and classism within its own institution and beyond. It is time for DND/CAF to get to the root of the problem with its institutional culture. In so doing, the military has the potential to become an active agent of institutional and broader societal transformative change.

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Corporal Lisa Kim of the 25 Field Ambulance prepares a C-7 rifle for firing during Exercise Southern Drive 2012.

Image by: Cpl Igor R. Korpan

"I'm Not Your Typical White Soldier": Interrogating Whiteness and Power in the Canadian Armed Forces

TAMMY GEORGE

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In recent years, senior military officials have been increasingly concerned with the rise of white supremacist and neo-Nazi infiltration in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).[1] While the threat of white supremacy should not be dismissed, focussing on extreme cases obscures everyday forms of whiteness. This article is concerned with how racialized soldiers are constructed as "Other" through everyday encounters with whiteness and what this means for contemporary culture change efforts in the CAF. I intentionally use the term racialized to describe the process of how race is socially constructed in ways that produce privilege and marginalization. Very rarely do scholars address the nuanced everyday ways in which white supremacy works to consolidate whiteness in Western militaries. While there are practices and policies that call for strict uniformity in the CAF, racialized soldiers embody the "Other" and come to know themselves through settler colonial legacies of whiteness. In this

article, I ask, what are the impacts of everyday whiteness to current culture change efforts in the CAF? What are the mechanisms by which institutional whiteness is produced? How is the CAF socially constructed as a place of white dominance? In what follows, I draw on my interviews with racialized members in the CAF to demonstrate how the Canadian military is constructed and preserved as a space of whiteness while simultaneously exploring how racialized bodies negotiate this space in a multitude of ways. I make visible the production of whiteness and how it "quilts together various racial practices" grounded in colonial history that has important implications for institutional culture change efforts going forward.[2]

First, I briefly introduce the literature on race and the military context. Next, I explore the theoretical underpinnings of institutional whiteness and how this applies to the CAF. I then introduce my research methods and explore the narratives of racialized soldiers, demonstrating how the CAF is made white while simultaneously revealing how racialized soldiers are continually negotiating their practices through expectations to approximate whiteness, while simultaneously demarcating difference. I showcase racialized service members' narratives to posit that they navigate military life and space differently from those in the white majority. In doing so, I call attention to the important nuances of service that are often ignored or even considered. This tension is central to understanding how to think about contemporary culture change efforts in the CAF both structurally and interpersonally.

Race and the Canadian Armed Forces

While there has been ample research and scholarly work on race and the military from a variety of perspectives (i.e. employment equity, diversity issues, racial patterns in enlistment, officer promotion rates, administration of military justice, risk of death in combat, and health care for wounded soldiers), particularly in the American context, very little scholarship has centered on the *lived* experience of racialized soldiers and how they negotiate national belonging within the Canadian multicultural context.[3] Literature on war and soldiering have largely dealt with markers of identity such as race, gender, and sexuality as characteristics and/or attributes and/or separate entities, rather than focused on the practices of racialization and gendering as they are produced institutionally and are lived out on a daily basis. How wars and armed conflict produce, naturalize, and maintain race, gender, and ethnic hierarchies is also instrumental to understanding the racial underpinnings of citizenship and notions of diversity in the contemporary moment. More recently, my work on racialized soldiers in the CAF expands on previously conducted work on race in military contexts and focuses on the lived realities of military members.[4] This article centres the lives of racialized soldiers, and in doing so examines how power and whiteness are structured in the CAF.

Theoretical Considerations

My understanding of how whiteness operates at the institutional level is informed by Sara Ahmed's (2007) conceptualization of how institutional whiteness functions. She states, "Whiteness could be described as an ongoing and unfinished history, which orientates bodies in specific directions, affecting how they 'take up' space, and what they do."[5] However, I want to stress that the institutionalization of whiteness requires ongoing work by individuals who uphold white settler norms. Therefore, it is important to unpack how whiteness is upheld in the CAF. Ahmed examines the ways in which "white" subjects are permitted to constitute themselves as national subjects through the spaces that they occupy. She situates her discussion of whiteness in bodies that are both spatially and temporally located. Bodies, she argues, are "shaped by [their] contact with objects."[6] That is, bodies are

The Canadian Ranger Patrol – Inukjuak from 2nd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group participates in an annual training event designed to refine valuable skills in Inukjuak, an Inuit community, located on the north bank of the Hudson Bay in Nunavik, Northern Quebec, on February 8, 2023.

Image by: MCpl Matthew Tower, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

understood within public spheres through their orientations to dominant structures of power and subordinate others. Addressing people of colour occupying whitened spaces Ahmed states,

> *[w]hiteness is not reducible to white skin, or even to 'something' we can have or be, even if we pass through whiteness. When we talk about a 'sea of whiteness' or 'white space' we are talking about the repetition of the passing by of some bodies and not others, for sure. But non-white bodies do inhabit white spaces; we know this. Such bodies are made invisible when we see spaces as being white, at the same time apart. You learn to fade into the background, but sometimes you can't or you don't. The moments when the body appears 'out of place' are moments of political and personal trouble.*[7]

These moments are critical junctures in the production of race, gender, identity, and resultant marginalities, oppressions, and resiliencies. However, borrowing from Ahmed, I am also concerned with "how whiteness holds its place" in the CAF and with what consequences for racialized soldiers? According to Ahmed, understanding how the habitual can be thought of as a bodily spatial form of inheritance is instructive here and applies to how we can view the habitual formation of soldier's life and how that impacts the spaces in which they operate, train, and exist. Military spaces in the forms of barracks, bases, mess halls, and training grounds require bodies to operate in a particular manner which ends up producing the spaces in which soldiers operate. While a large part of the soldiers' life is one of conformity and performing a particular type of "white homogeneity," soldiers of colour who conform, gain authority in their ability to align themselves with white settler identities.

Often considered the invisible norm in the West, understanding how whiteness operates in the everyday lives of racialized subjects is central. I contend that to name whiteness is to refer to a set of locations that are historically, socially, politically, and culturally produced that are intimately connected to dynamic relations of domination.[8] According to Ruth Frankenberg, the way in which whiteness operates is multidimensional: "Whiteness is a location of structural advantage, of race privilege. Second, it is a 'standpoint,' a place from which white people look at [them]selves, at others, and at society.[9] Third, whiteness refers to a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed."[10] Therefore, for Frankenberg, whiteness works as a series of processes and practices rather than a singular bounded identity.

In seeking to examine whiteness as a process, I trace some of the dynamics involved in its production, that is the unmarked norms, behavior patterns, traditions, symbolism, and colonial underpinnings that often bolster the social position of white military members thereby establishing who can belong in the contemporary moment. As Richard Dyer suggests, race is "never not a factor, never not in play."[11] To conceptualize the ever present operations of race and its unbounded process of domination rather than as isolated discrete episodes, particularly in military life, is to acknowledge whiteness is present in the productions of the military apparatus. The deeper implications of understanding the operations of whiteness as a form of power alongside the everyday processes of military life are central to grappling with culture change. Dyer argues that "the point of seeing the racing of Whites is to dislodge them/us from the position of power, with all the inequities, oppressions, privileges and sufferings in its train, dislodging them by undercutting the authority by which they/we speak and act in and on the world."[12] Naming whiteness and linking it to its colonial legacies with respect to projects of assimilation and erasure reveals some of the foundational elements of the construction of the Canadian nation of which the military apparatus is an integral part. Naming whiteness displaces and dislodges it from the unmarked and objective status that itself is an effect of dominance.[13] The silence surrounding whiteness and its attendant racism create unjust power differentials that are invariably manifested within the CAF and among its serving members. As I have discussed elsewhere, these power differentials are grounded in the dominant narrative of meritocracy where service members are often judged solely on their performance as soldiers.[14]

Methods

This article discusses part of a larger qualitative research project that involved semi-structured interviews with a total of 30 retired or serving CAF members (17 men and 13 women) from the Toronto, Ottawa, or Halifax regions who identify as racialized. Participants varied in age, rank, and commission status. Purposeful and snowball sampling techniques were used, and all the participants were approached through contacts with retired, Reserve, and Regular Force military members in the army, navy, and air force.[15] The conversations with the participants occurred between 2015–2016 and lasted between one and three hours. I sought to understand how soldiers' racial and gendered positioning shapes their experience of the military, as well as their relationship to military life, citizenship, and organized violence more broadly. I posed questions to explore the values placed on military service as a profession; what it

Canadian Forces Ranger Deborah Mary Andre-Stewart from Tsiigehtchic, NT hangs whitefish for smoking during Operation NANOOK 2012.

Image by: Sgt Frank Hudec

means to be a soldier in the post 9/11 era; their experiences with training and education on equity, diversity, and inclusion and cross cultural pre deployment training; and, their encounters with various forms of oppression. I asked about their experiences of being a racialized subject in a predominantly white space and how they themselves constitute difference. I also engaged with their nuanced encounters with racism with fellow military members, superiors, and civilians in Canada and during their deployment overseas, to trace the complex expressions of whiteness operating in the Canadian military. All conversations were tape recorded, transcribed, and then organized with the assistance of the QRS Nud*ist qualitative data analysis software. To ensure anonymity, self-chosen pseudonyms were used in the transcriptions and ensuing publications. This article draws on all interviews with illustrative examples from 5 racialized service members with various racial backgrounds (East Asian, South Asian, Caribbean, and African). In what follows, through the experiences of racialized service members, I explore how whiteness is constructed, maintained, and often normalized with important implications for culture change in the CAF.

Constructing Institutional Whiteness in the CAF

Of all serving members in the CAF, 89.2% are white Canadian. According to a 2019 report entitled *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces*, 8.1% of currently serving members identify as a "visible minority" and 2.7% of identify as Aboriginal.[16] Based on these quantitative statistics a clear majority of the CAF identify as white Canadian. My conversations with racialized soldiers involved describing the CAF as somewhat welcoming. Others struggled to find their place. Many soldiers articulated that they were warned of racism and that it was "so white"[17] or a "not a very diverse place"[18] but that service "might get better over time."[19] The following underscores how Chester, a Chinese-Canadian in the Reserve Force, understood the CAF to be a "white space."

> ***Chester:*** *I was thinking about joining for a long time. I enjoyed being part of something bigger, but a lot of my friends and family warned me that the military is really "white" (laughs). It's not very multicultural or diverse, and that you wouldn't see many people that look like you and me around. Also, being a soldier means that you have to be a certain way, there's a strict way of being with little room for anything else.*

Chester conceives of institutional whiteness in terms of the bodies present and the company he is surrounded by in the CAF. According to Chester, a "white space" is constructed by the absence of diverse bodies. He addresses that to be a soldier one must perform soldier in a homogenous way with very little room for different ways of being. Elsewhere, I have argued that racialized military members deviating from this homogeneity are quickly reminded that they are not part of the hegemonic norm and are encouraged to conform to ensure operational effectiveness.[20] The implication is that operational effectiveness and order are incompatible with racial difference. For Sara Ahmed, in her work on diversity and inclusion, when institutions are described as being white, she demonstrates how institutional spaces are shaped by the presence of some bodies and immune to others. Another common expression of the military as a "white space" was often explained by the lack of racialized members in the senior ranks. Alfred, who identifies as Black-Canadian, remarks on the difficulties with moving up in the ranks and the challenge he had imagining his career expanding because he did not see himself reflected in the senior membership.

> ***Alfred:*** *That's how I got jaded, because I don't see myself in the leadership. When you don't see yourself in the leadership or have to fight tooth and nail for every single promotion, it sends a message that this is as far as you will go.*

Alfred began his journey in the military as a reservist "beaming with optimism" and desiring "to make a difference." As I continued to speak with him, his experience appeared to be marked by struggle. Six years into his service, he expressed how "something just switched off in me and I stopped caring." He described an apathy and a disappointment that has built

over the years centered on how white supremacy manifests itself in the ranks and in everyday military life. My interview with Alfred revealed that his career was impacted by the lack of diverse leadership. His comments illustrate that he became aware of the daily practices and active systems of oppression in hiring practices. He felt the lack of diversity in the ranks affected his career mobility resulting in the limited contribution he could make to the organization. His comment on "fighting tooth and nail" illustrates that he became aware over the years of the processes of hiring and promotion grounded in larger systems of oppression that prevented him and others from moving upwards in their careers. Later in the interview, Alfred reveals that he rarely saw racialized leaders promoted, but that "the system does work for white women" in the organization. That is, diversity initiatives work for white women, but not racialized service members.

Reproducing Whiteness: Preservation of military history, tradition, and culture

Another way in which whiteness has been consolidated in the CAF is through the preservation of tradition and particular histories. Jane, a mixed-race woman in the Regular Force, described the appeal of belonging to an institution steeped in Canadian military tradition. For Jane it is being part of family with a long historical legacy. While she is uncritical of what that family entails and how it is further entrenched and privileges a specific whiteness, she does state that deviating from this tradition, or trying to break away from it might be an issue for members of the CAF, particularly if they are non-white:

> ***Jane:*** *The military in general is quite traditional. You're based in a history; the history of your regiment is of utmost importance. When you join that regiment, that battalion or platoon, you are part of all of those who have been there before you and have fought in the battle. You're part of a long history. Anything that's traditional, you don't tamper with. If you're a person who rebels in a sea of change, then maybe military tradition is something that you would find a bit frustrating.*

Jane's evocation and conflation of the military family linked to tradition is significant here. Several military members I interviewed felt that being part of something larger was important to them. The discourse of the "military family" and how that is constructed through a variety of historical military traditions and everyday practices is significant in the lives of some of military members and provides an emotional and occupational security. The notion of "brotherhood" and establishing this bond through traditions is viewed as a litmus test for how one would perform in combat. Blaze powerfully discusses the connection between family and combat, but is also critical of the limitations placed on him.

> ***Blaze:*** *Being part of the military is a really strange thing. Because I wasn't your typical white soldier everything seemed so foreign compared to civilian life. But they slowly bring you in… You do feel part of something bigger than yourself, but every now and then something will happen that lets you know, this place is not for you. It's as if they're saying "Don't get too comfortable because this place isn't really meant for you, but you can try…"*

Blaze, a Black-Canadian in the Regular Force, demonstrates that there are some real benefits of the military family, highlighting that the bonds established are necessary to feel secure in the field. However, he also felt that "putting on one's soldier" was very difficult at times and expressed frustration with wanting to be free of that mold. Both Blaze and Jane express that for anyone trying to display or express any kind of difference or uniqueness (suggesting other sports, or resisting social gatherings, formal dinners or outings) within a military life which is grounded in tradition would have difficulties. Following my argument that the military is by and large constructed and produced as a space of whiteness, I often wondered whether racialized members could exist and benefit in the same manner as white service members. Reflecting on both Blaze's and Jane's concerns, I contend that racialized soldiers struggle with military tradition and being part of the white military family precisely because they are seen as different, foreign, and other. Both Blaze and Jane's narratives illustrate how power and oppression work on a daily basis and how they experience military life differently from the dominant majority. If you are part of the majority and these social events, norms, and traditions such as mess dinners, institutional observances, ceremonial customs, and dress codes are part of your history there is little need to question the status quo. Racialized soldiers are acutely aware that they do not often fit the unmarked and unnamed norms of which the white majority does not see or is unable to see. It is a point of privilege to not have to question the norm and simply belong. Socially constructed traditions entrench the status quo and allow racism, sexism, ableism, and other forms of oppression to operate without having to acknowledge or challenge them. Shannon's narrative below speaks quite frankly about military culture and its

connections to whiteness and the status quo, not to mention the onus on racialized service members to belong:

> ***Shannon:*** *Go to Kingston and you'll see what's important and in the CF it is curling, its hockey, and its darts. That's been my experience and those are sports of interest to your typical white person in the military. So they set up social events around those things, right? So while you can sit here by yourself and have no friends or you can get in there and throw a rock down the ice and have a beer and just try to like it because that's what the dominant crowd is doing. That's what I mean by just fitting in. Just kind of accepting what already exists and just trying to be part of it.*

Shannon, a Filipina woman in the Regular Force, conflates this notion of military tradition with everyday culture in the CAF, but also links activities like hockey and darts with Canadianness and whiteness and expresses that for racialized service members the choice is theirs with respect to inclusion and belonging. Hockey, curling, and darts are seen as neutral activities, where everyone is encouraged to join and the onus is on the racialized member to join rather than thinking about how these activities are grounded in a history of whiteness and exclusion.[21]

Geographies of Whiteness: The Making of National Warriors in Rural Spaces

Both Reserve and Regular Force members are often sent to spaces located outside of urban centres to train and carry out specific postings. Soldiers from urban centers sought both comfort and invisibility in urban spaces, and expressed concern and trepidation with respect to training or being posted in smaller rural towns. Most of the racialized soldiers I interviewed were from urban centers that were required to train in rural spaces, foreign to many of them. Small towns such as Petawawa and Gagetown located a few hours from urban centers were often understood by service members as "white places," and "not really diverse," from which their bodies could not hide or "blend in" despite being shielded by the uniform. In my exchange with George, a mixed-race Soldier in the Regular Force, he explains his concerns and fears of these rural training grounds:

> ***George:*** *When I was younger in the military, I didn't notice race or ethnicity having an impact because I was too busy keeping my head down and trying to work when I first joined. I was the lowest man on the totem pole[22] and I'm getting yelled at non-stop, I didn't have time to think about why he's yelling at me and I never put the two together, that I'm being treated this way because I'm a minority. I didn't really notice that until later on in my career. It happens a lot more with the units that are further away from bigger cities, small towns. I think a big part of it is racism in the small towns. If you don't ever experience it, you don't notice it. I have a lot of friends in the military that are white and they just don't get it.*

George first articulated a discourse of meritocracy, the idea if you work hard, you will be rewarded. Only later George began to consider that race and racism may have had an impact on his career and the treatment he received in the military. George further expressed that he feels much safer and comfortable in big urban centers because of the presence of various racialized groups. He expressed concern when having to travel to smaller towns suggesting the different treatment he receives, however subtle. George's alienation is also evident when he tries to speak about these incidents with his comrades and they fail to acknowledge the difference in treatment he receives thereby isolating him further. His comrades' denial and lack of understanding that race and racism are part of his everyday lived experience in a small town where he works and trains leaves him dismissed. Whiteness in this instance is operating through the inability of George's friends to acknowledge how they are benefiting from white racial privilege. They cannot consider or see how George and his comrades could be positioned differently in rural space. George's fears of encountering racism or experiencing racial violence in rural small towns is not unfounded. Petawawa evoked much anxiety for racialized soldiers in this study. One of my participants described seeing a confederate flag on a business on her first day in Petawawa and related her disappointment and uneasiness.

Making the connection between the rural space, militarism, and masculinity Deborah Cowen states, "the rural ideal has hardly been explored in relation to the particular and powerful form of nationalism that constitutes contemporary militarism."[23] She goes on to demonstrate that rural spaces, in modern history, "come to constitute the labour geography of the vast majority of military personnel. A powerful cultural discourse of the rural ideal identifies the rural as the authentic space of patriotic militarism."[24] In a feature article in the Globe in Mail on previously appointed Canadian Chief of Defence Staff Rick Hillier, his mother is quoted saying that she "believes his Newfoundland upbringing made young Rick a natural for the army. People from the outpost of Newfoundland lived their lives in the woods and on the seas in rugged activities and fit into the armed forces quite easily."[25] This white rural idealism lies in

stark contrast to how racialized soldier subjects experience rural places like Petawawa, Gagetown, and others.

Racialized soldiers' fear and concern, both anticipated and lived, is viscerally felt through rural spaces of military labour and life. Most of the soldiers I encountered are keenly aware of the spaces in which they belong and which ones are sources of anxiety, stress, fear, and exclusion. David, a Chinese soldier and newcomer to Canada in the Reserve Force describes when his nationality and hence his suitability to be in the CAF was questioned in a small town out east:

> ***David:*** *This one Regular Force guy that I met in a small town out east said to me when I first arrived, "How does it feel like to wear that flag when you're not even a Canadian"? I am not really Canadian by blood, you know, but as long as I have my citizenship and I'm wearing this flag that pretty much qualifies me as a Canadian. I was so shocked.*

David's narrative reveals one of the many racial microagressions that he and others experienced in a rural military town. In this moment, David's body and commitment to the nation is questioned despite wearing the uniform and serving in the Canadian military. David is reminded that, for bodies like his, it is a privilege to wear the flag for which he should be grateful. Marking David's body in this particular rural space also marks the existence of whiteness thereby indicating who can and cannot be part of the nation. When David says, "I may not be Canadian *by blood* [emphasis mine]," it signals that he is grappling with Canadian identity in a way that reveals a particular claim of authenticity around who is and is not Canadian. What does the evocation of "Canadian by blood" mean for racialized bodies? Examining the relationship between blood, nation, and whiteness, OmiSoore Dryden explains that "the hermeneutics of blood operate in the management of populations through the categorization (and thus creation) of multiple body types that delimit those of the nation, those outside of the nation, and those considered to be out of place, to occupy outer—(not here)—space, to be outer national".[26] David's linking of citizenship to blood is not unfounded in that nations have laid claim to space through blood. Nations rely on the understanding of blood to deploy the language of lineage, where purity is used to dominate and inform the construction of the nation and national identity.[27] In the Canadian context, the colonial significance of blood is connected to the production of Canadian nationalism. Dryden, drawing on Picard's work, examines how in the 1940s the Canadian Red Cross Society held its first public, non-military blood donor clinic. She states,

> *With the slogan "Make a Date with a Wounded Soldier" Canadians were urged to donate blood, with all donations being reserved for use solely within the military. The formation of voluntary blood donation during and in response to the Second World War effectively configured the practice of donation as one of citizenship and nation making, and by recruiting citizens to identity with Canadian soldiers and then donate blood, it further consolidated the nation.* [28]

What this intimate relationship of blood, military, and nation makes clear is that donating one's blood for those literally 'spilling their blood' for the nation became emblematically a white practice. In the military context, the first individuals to receive blood transfusions were white American and British soldiers who did not receive blood from non-white bodies. This history reveals that there are racial practices of exclusion with respect to blood donation practices, and these practices have their genesis in the Canadian military and how it produces itself as a crucial site of blood and belonging. In this context, David's evocation of blood citizenship reveals a legacy of the connection between whiteness, citizenship, and belonging.

Conclusion

By centering the lived experiences of racialized soldiers in the CAF, this article reveals the ways in which whiteness itself is reproduced, consolidated, and negotiated through social practices in both visible and less visible ways. This article revealed how institutional whiteness operates in various ways that are often unmarked and unnamed—that is they are not often seen and/or addressed by the white majority. As such, what are the impacts of everyday whiteness to current culture change efforts in the CAF? Meaningful, sustained culture change requires engaging with not only racism, whiteness, and power that manifest in overt individual acts, but with those that are systemic and constitutive of the CAF as an institution. It is imperative to move beyond superficial and performative responses to deeply changing structures and systems. For example, specific experiences illustrated by participants in this study may inform decision makers to reflect on promotional and reporting procedures, normalized recreational and socialization activities, and rural postings. These are key areas in which policies and procedures could be reviewed and examined further.

When we look historically at projects of inclusion in the CAF, primarily mobilized through equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives, many efforts are focused on bringing those on the margins into the institution or superficial attempts at modifying

the status quo. The data presented here reveals that racialized soldiers make concessions to belong, but at what cost? Within the mental health profession, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder often connected to military service, particularly deployments, is now widely known to be caused by racial trauma in service.[29] The recent Lionel Desmond Inquiry cited that systemic failures and racism were partly to blame for the chain of events that led the Afghanistan war veteran to kill his family and himself in 2017. Ruben Coward, a Black-Canadian and a former serviceman in the Royal Canadian Air Force and now a community activist, has stated, "Complex PTSD is not only caused by war. Racism is a war that (Black, Indigenous and people of colour) are fighting."[30] In order for meaningful, sustained culture change to occur, there must be a recognition by the white majority of the way in which whiteness organizes lives in different, yet powerful, ways with important and distinctive implications.

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Notes

1 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel of Systemic Racism and Discrimination – Final Report*, 2022.

2 Bruce Erickson, "A Phantasy in White in a World that is Dead: Grey Owl and the Whiteness of Surrogacy," in *Rethinking the Great White North: Race, Nature and the Historical Geographies of Whiteness in Canada*, eds. Andrew Baldwin, Laura Cameron, and Audrey Kobayashi (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2012), 19-38.

3 See: Roy Ito. *We Went to War: The Story of Japanese Canadians who Served During the First and Second World Wars*. 1984. Patricia E. Roy, "The Soldiers Canada Didn't Want: Her Chinese and Japanese "Citizens". *Canadian Historical Review*, 59, (1978): 341-358. James W. St. G Walker, "Race and Recruitment in World War I: Enlistment of Visible Minorities in the Canadian Expeditionary Force," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXX (1989): 1-26. Victoria Basham, *War, Identity and the Liberal State: Everyday Experiences of the Geopolitical in the Armed Forces*. (New York, USA: Routledge, 2013). Vron Ware, *Military Migrants: Fighting for YOUR Country* (UK: Palgrave, 2012).

4 Tammy George, "Race and Belonging," in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces Through Diversity and Inclusion*, eds. Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 114-134

5 Sara Ahmed, "A Phenomenology of Whiteness," *Feminist Theory 8*, no. 2 (2007): 149.

6 Ahmed, "Phenomenology of Whiteness," 152.

7 Ahmed, "Phenomenology of Whitenes," 159.

8 Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

9 In this article, the term Black will be capitalized and white will be in lower case unless otherwise specified in a direct reference. Capitalizing "Black," aligns with the long-standing practice of capitalizing other racial, ethnic, or cultural groups, such as Latino, Asian, Indigenous, Native American, and others. While "white" is also racialized, white supremacists routinely capitalize "white" in their writing and I do not want to risk conveying legitimacy to such beliefs. Lowercasing 'white,' therefore, acts to distance us from the beliefs and writings of white supremacists, but carries significance in its social construction.

10 Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 1-2.

11 Richard Dyer. *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007).

12 Dyer, *White*, 2.

13 Frankenburg, *White Women, Race Matters*.

14 Tammy George, "Be All You Can Be or Longing to Be: Racialized Soldiers, the Canadian Military Experience and the Im/Possibility of Belonging to the Nation," Dissertation (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2016).

15 Earl Babbie and Lucia Benaquisto, *Fundamentals of Social Research* (Toronto: Thomson Canada Limited 2002).

16 Canada. Parliament. House of Commons. Standing Committee on National Defence. Improving Diversity and Inclusion in The Canadian Armed Forces 1st sess., 42nd Parliament, 2019.

17 Interview with Blaze, 2015.

18 Interview with Maya, 2014.

19 Interview with Chester, 2014.

20 George, "Be All You Can Be."

21 Andreas Krebs argues that the sport of hockey in Canada is intimately connected to what he calls the "whitestream". The whitestream constitutes a core assemblage of masculinity, whiteness, and classism that reproduces and sustains the colonial order in Canada. See: Andreas Krebs, "Hockey and the Reproduction of Colonialism in Canada," in *Race and Sport in Canada: Intersecting Inequities*, eds.,

22 Simon Darnell, Yuka Nakamura, Janelle Joseph (Toronto: Canadian Scholars Press. 2012), 81-106.22 George's use of the word totem pole is interesting here. The totem pole is the result of over two centuries of cultural contact, exchange, and colonialism. It is about a long complicated process of settlement, Native responses to settlement, changing policies, practices of representation, and artists responding to these changing historical circumstances. George's evocation of use of totem pole, illustrates the Indigenous imagery he relies on to describe his positioning. See: Aldona Jonaitis and Aaron Glass, *The Totem Pole: An Intercultural History*, (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2010).

23 Deborah Cowen, "National Soldiers and the War on Cities," *Theory and Event 10*, no. 2. 11. DOI:10.1353/tae.2007.0057.

24 Cowen, "National Soldiers and the War on Cities," 12.

25 Cowen, "National Soldiers and the War on Cities," 12.

26 OmiSoore Dryden, "'A Queer Too Far': Blackness, 'Gay Blood,' and Transgressive Possibilities" in *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalism and the Politics of Belonging*, eds. OmiSoore H. Dryden and Suzanne Lenon (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press. 2015), 122.

27 Dryden, *"A Queer Too Far"*, 122.

28 Dryden, *"A Queer Too Far"*, 121.

29 Resmaa Menakam. *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies.* (Las Vegas, Nevada: Central Recovery Press, 2017).

30 The Canadian Press, "Systemic failures and racism: Hearings for Desmond Inquiry conclude in Nova Scotia." *CBC News*. April 20, 2022. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/lionel-desmond-ns-inquiry-concludes-1.6425302

Friends and family anxiously wait for members returning from the last mission in Afghanistan at Ottawa International Airport on March 18, 2014.

Image by: MCpl Patrick Blanchard, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

Supporting Military Families: Challenging or Reinforcing Patriarchy?

LEIGH SPANNER

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The strength and resilience of military families are recognized by the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) as contributing to the operational readiness and effectiveness of the forces. This acknowledgment was formalized in the Military Family Covenant,[1] which was issued in 2008. It reflects an institutional shift from previous decades. Previously, the support provided by military families, and by wives, was expected based on love and devotion to their husband and a sense of patriotic duty, where the ideal military family was a nuclear one.[2] Military families are now recognized as "partners"[3] in operational endeavors, and consequently the CAF commits to supporting modern families with a variety of programs and resources.

This article draws on the well-established body of feminist International Relations research, which shows that militaries are deeply patriarchal institutions that sustain unequal relationships of power by privileging masculinity and exploiting women and feminized practices of labour.[4] To be sure, militaries have long depended on civilian women who prioritize their husband's military service, arrange their practices and identities accordingly, and are socialized to view doing so as being in their best interest.[5] Heteropatriarchal schemas of the family are deeply tied to a gendered division of labour,

which enables masculinized subjects to participate in military life because a feminized subject remains behind to sustain the home.[6] This work is feminized by its taken-for-granted, invisible, and unpaid status, and sustains male dominance in militaries and in families. However, these gendered dynamics are not naturally occurring. Rather, women's commitment to their spouse and contributing labour for militaries are achieved by social, cultural, and political reproductions, such as institutional policies and programs. This article considers whether changing demographics of Canadian military families as well as institutional attempts to respond to the changes in military families might be undoing the privileging of patriarchy that characterizes military culture.

Since the implementation of the Canadian Forces Family Covenant by the CAF, which acknowledges the military family's contribution to operational effectiveness and consequently commits to supporting it in return, Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services (CFMWS) has attempted to modernize its services and programs to better respond to the changing needs of military families. This commitment is outlined in military policy, Defence Administrative Order and Directive on Families 5044-1, noting the CAF's commitment to supporting military families, especially considering "the ever-changing structure, composition and function of Canadian families."[7] Thus, a significant component of this change is the institutional acknowledgement that Canadian military families look different than they once did. That is, military families are less likely to consist of a male CAF member supported by a female civilian spouse who is primarily devoted to the home.[8] One might then expect the CAF to be less "married" to patriarchal configurations of the family, however, as will be seen, this article suggests otherwise.

This article considers whether the CAF's current efforts to support military families represent a departure from previous gender orders, which privileged a patriarchal composition of the family. I ask, do the CAF's updated initiatives that support military families represent a change in culture, to one that promotes more equitable gender relations in families and that services a variety of family forms? Asking this question is important in considering military families that do not fit the mold of the nuclear family, such as single mothers, dual-service couples, and LGBTQ2S+ families, and is an important concern considering recruitment and retention efforts by the CAF.

This article employs a critical feminist perspective to consider the policies and programs related to Military Family Services (MFS), which was established by the Department of

Dive Task Force members show their diving equipment to students of the Simon Alaittuq School in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut during Operation NANOOK-NUNALIVUT on March 16, 2023.

Image by: Cpl Antoine Brochu, Assistant Deputy Minister (Public Affairs), Canadian Armed Forces photo

National Defence (DND) in 1991 and offers support to military families to enhance their health and social wellbeing. MFS programs and policies are the focus of this research because they provide the bulk of support to military families; MFS was created in response to feminist activism in the CAF by military wives,[9] and it continues to be amended to better serve the changing needs of military families. Moreover, by interrogating MFS programs and policies, which was developed in response to women's activism, this article is responding to feminist efforts to initiate culture change. Specifically, I undertake a feminist policy and content analysis of the MFS website. The goals of feminist policy and content analysis are to make women's lives and gendered assumptions visible. Accordingly, I pay particular attention to the CAF's efforts to mediate gender relationships between the state, market, and family. This approach is critical because it understands that policies can structure and reinforce power dynamics by maintaining privilege and silencing the disempowered.

In this article, I argue that while institutional supports for military families and spouses appear progressive in that they acknowledge and respond to family needs as well as recognize a variety of family configurations, these supports and policies rely on antiquated gendered and neoliberal logics to secure the labour and loyalty of spouses and families to the CAF. Neoliberal policies are characterized by privatization, which involves the transfer of social services and goods from the state to private markets, households, and communities. Familialization is an outcome of privatization, and increases

the individual's reliance on families and households, which increases women's unpaid labour.[10] The article begins with an analysis of Military Family Resource Centres (MFRCs) documents pertaining to childcare. MFS delivers its programs locally through MFRCs. MFRCs are located on thirty-two military bases across Canada and provide frontline services to military families ranging from childcare, deployment information, training counselling, and education. The article then turns to a discussion on the recent and increasing attention to changing family dynamics, including care for aging parents and for the families of CAF members transitioning to civilian life on release from service.

Childcare and MFRCs

To safeguard the loyalty of military recruits, the CAF is paying increasing attention to family wellbeing. As militaries are committed first and foremost to their missions, institutional attention to family wellbeing is done with a view to guarantee and improve operational effectiveness, and not necessarily to support families in their own right. The Forces require families to relocate to new postings, endure periods of separation during deployment and training, and manage the risks associated with having a loved one in service. In particular, the military spouse's satisfaction with military life is recognized as being essential to operational effectiveness.[11] Thus, the CAF has a special interest in supporting military spouses to assure their continued labour and loyalty. The CAF's family-focused initiatives respond to the burden of care placed on civilian spouses, especially women. More than half of Regular Force (Reg F) members are in a relationship, 84% of spouses are women,[12] and almost half (47%) of all Reg F personnel have children.[13] Consequently a significant component of the services provided by MFS, through MFRCs, is around childcare and supports predominantly female civilian spouses.

A Canadian Armed Forces Medic assists Afghan refugees who supported Canada's mission in Afghanistan disembark a CC-150 Polaris aircraft at Toronto Pearson International Airport on August 13, 2021.

Image by: Cpl Rachael Allen, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

The childcare services provided by MFRCs emphasize their emergency childcare services.[14] While such an initiative might be intended to be flexible and to respond to a variety of family arrangements and needs, the emergency emphasis reinforces a downloading of childcare responsibility onto civilian spouses. The *Emergency Childcare Services* brochure is the first item under "Childcare" on the MFS webpage.[15] Within this brochure, the first "service" outlined is the Family Care Plan (FCP), which is effectively a plan that has CAF members "identify primary and secondary caregivers who should be contacted in the event of an emergency military tasking, your FCP supports your family in your absence."[16] The FCP represents neoliberalism's paradox of autonomy and downloads the responsibility for caregiving to individuals and families, which has gendered implications and outcomes.[17] That is, the FCP is a way to download child caregiving onto civilian spouses and/or the private market, in order to prioritize the (usually) male service person's career.

The second "support" outlined in the brochure is the MFRC Emergency Child Plan. The Emergency Child Plan encourages members and their families to develop a strategy for emergency childcare, where reliance on the MFRC should be a last resort only: "Be proactive!…Deal with things before an immediate need arises."[18] The most substantive service outlined in this brochure is the Military Family Service Program Emergency Child Care, which provides "up to 96 hours of subsidized childcare per emergency, to help you address your short-term emergency childcare needs."[19] The emphasis on short-term and emergency childcare support by the CAF reinforces the idea that, during periods of normalcy, the military family does not rely on the institution for support. Instead, under normal circumstances, military families are "proactive" and arrange personal solutions to childcare challenges, such as relying on informal networks. There is social pressure to create informal networks of support so as not to rely on the emergency services provided by the MFRC. This means in practice that it is mostly women who are responsible for finding alternate caregiving arrangements when the service person needs to be away for service reasons, and who are tasked with dealing with any childcare crisis in the face of service-related separations and absences.

Crucially, the short-term emergency "supports" that are outlined in the brochure are for the express purpose of facilitating "operational readiness."[20] Despite the military's

contemporary concern for the wellbeing of the family, Denise Horn argues, "below the surface of the military's family programs is the constant awareness that the military is designed to fight wars, not provide social welfare programs."[21]

The assumption that the civilian spouse is responsible for caregiving of children is the logic behind the majority of the supports offered by the CAF, such as the foundational Family Care Assistance—a benefit that a member can access if the caregiving plan outlined in the FCP cannot be met. Family Care Assistance provides financial reimbursement for single-parent CAF members and dual-service couples under exceptional circumstances, such as "increases in the normal costs for childcare or attendant care when service requires you to be absent from home for 24 hours or longer."[22] This benefit is only available to "members who do not have a spouse or common-law partner, or who have a spouse or common-law partner who is also a CAF member and who is away from their place of duty for service reasons."[23] On the surface, this benefit appears progressive in that it acknowledges and accommodates non-heteronormative families and is a provision of social support by the military. Both the single member and dual-service couple challenge the heteronormative requirement that military families have a feminized spouse devoted to childcare and the domestic sphere. However, giving financial compensation for childcare only to families of single service members or dual-service couples reinforces the assumption that military families normally include a civilian spouse who is primarily responsible for childcare. When there is a civilian spouse as a part of the family, there is no additional compensation to offset caregiving costs, because the assumption is that this will be taken care of in the private/unpaid sphere. In fact, there are no respite programs for military spouses during operational absences[24] and an overall inequality between service spouse and civilian spouse on the institutional support provided. The "exceptional circumstance" that Family Care Assistance responds to is the non-nuclear family. It is only when the caregiving void cannot be performed by the civilian spouse because she does not exist, that the state intervenes with support.

What's more, the Family Care Assistance is also an "emergency" form of support. When considered alongside the expectation outlined in the FCP, the Family Care Assistance program's emergency principle suggests that the member will resume being self-sufficient once the "emergency" has passed. The military member will devise personal solutions to their non-normative family, and corresponding caregiving void, through personal solutions, likely by paying for childcare. In this instance neoliberal philosophies of self-sufficiency obscure how patriarchal families continue to be idealized in the military community and reinforced through CAF policies and programming.

In 2020, an additional emergency-based childcare program was implemented by MFS in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such an initiative suggests ongoing attention to the shifting and increasing challenges faced by families throughout the pandemic, such as lockdowns and isolations. For military families, these strains are likely exacerbated by operational separations and postings away from families. This program is intended for exceptional periods of crisis, and is thus available "after all other avenues of support provided by the CAF and Director General Compensation and Benefits (DGCB) have been explored and/or enacted and insufficient to meet military family's emergency needs."[25] While MFS is responding to modern challenges due to the pandemic, in emphasizing the emergency nature of the benefit, and in offering this benefit based on the service person's employment status, while not considering that of the civilian spouse, revives assumptions of the "wife" at home. While studies show how the pandemic had a particular impact on women, there is no institutional acknowledgement of this fact by the CAF, despite attempts to be culturally aware of "ever changing structure and composition and function of military families."[26]

Notwithstanding the emphasis on emergency support, MFRCs provide some form(s) of regular childcare services, such as full-time daycare, before- and after-school care, and, most popular among military families, casual care. Childcare services are highly sought after by military families because MFRCs understand and are responsive to the unique schedules and needs of military families. Certainly, MFRC childcare goes a long way to support military families, offsetting the challenges associated with separation and reducing the labour burdens that fall on military spouses.

Although childcare at MFRCs is partially subsidized, there are limited spots and long waiting lists. Additionally, MFRC programs are criticized for being directed at very young children, at the expense of school-aged children or teens. Elsewhere, MFRC programing has been critiqued for focusing on deployment support at the expense of other service-related absences. Indeed, often military families are unable to avail themselves of the services that are specifically designed for deployment, even if the service member is separated from the family for other service-related reasons, such as being on exercise or on course.[27]

While the programs and services provided by MFRCs are a great source of support for many military families, they

struggle with capacity and to adequately respond to the needs of modern military families.[28] For example, the only military daycare center in Halifax closed in March 2023, because of staffing issues.[29] Scarce resources and reduced public responsibility require that military families reduce their reliance on MFRCs as the primary source of regular childcare. For example, the Petawawa MFRC hosted a Childcare Fair in February 2019, a networking event between parents and childcare providers in the Renfrew County area, in response to the number of families having difficulty finding suitable childcare options. The Childcare Fair "encouraged parents to be open to look at various ways childcare challenges can be resolved,"[30] effectively devolving responsibility for military childcare away from MFRCs onto individual families. This form of institutional support, which responds to modern challenges of military families, calls for greater self-sufficiency among families by encouraging market-based solutions to challenges that are the result of military requirements such as relocation and separation. At the same time, these neoliberal schemes require a militarization of privatized childcare, where the market is responding to and capitalizing on the vacuum of CAF-subsidized childcare in service to the military.

Alongside neoliberal influences on MFRC programing and culture, many of the programs and services provided by MFRCs are produced by and reproduce the association of the female civilian spouse with primary caregiving of children. For example, a "Me and My Dad" special event was offered by the Gagetown MFRC on Saturday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in April 2017. The description of the event read, "Dads enjoy an outing with the kids (mom gets a break!)."[31] Programs for fathers, which are scheduled on the weekends, reinforce the gendered labour dynamics that "dad" engages primarily in paid work and parents as a special occasion. Indeed, "giving mom a break" entrenches the assumptions further.

Ideas about gender, parenting, and employment inform the culture of MFRCs, and consequently their service delivery, despite efforts to respond to a variety of family configurations. Certainly, the service delivery at MFRCs is directed at the largest demographic, which is civilian women. However, upholding and reinforcing gendered ideas about division of labour within families is an implicit critique of families that do not fit this mold, such as the single male parent and queer families. This raises questions about gender equality within the CAF. As MFRCs emphasize support to women who are the primary caregivers of young children, the military logic of protection, which contends that men, through their military service, protect the home front where women and children are located, is upheld and reinforced. Indeed, research on and programs for civilian men spouses is an area that represents significant opportunities moving forward.[32]

Caregiving for the Modern Military Family: Aging Parents and Veterans

While a significant focus of the supports offered by the CAF is directed towards childcare, MFS is increasingly recognizing the variety of structures and caregiving dynamics within military families. The CAF has begun to recognize and support families of veterans, members who are taking care of aging parents, and parents of CAF members. Consequently, the CAF is embracing a wider definition of "family," beginning to recognize the array of caregiving labour and relationships that characterize "families," and in so doing might be disrupting the privileging of patriarchal/heteronormative family forms and the reliance on women's unpaid labour.

The recent and growing political attention to veteran families in Canada parallels the attention to veterans' transition from military to civilian life. The past decade has seen an emergence of reports and initiatives on the importance of integrating families and spouses in the transition process and of Veterans Affairs Canada's (VAC) responsibility to support veteran families.[33] In 2015, VAC acknowledged that informal caregivers make a vital contribution to the health and well-being of ill and injured veterans through the implementation of the Family Caregiver Relief Benefit. Through the grant, VAC recognized the informal care provided by caregivers such as "making appointments, coordinating household tasks and providing basic assistance with daily living."[34] This initiative was a step forward in acknowledging and offsetting the sacrifices born by caregivers.

The CAF appears to be responding in kind by devoting attention and resources to the wellbeing of service members through their military-to-veteran transition, as well as the wellbeing of their families. In 2018,[35] MFRCs expanded their supports to the family members of medically releasing members, through the Veteran Family Program. The Veteran Family Program includes services like group sessions on transition topics, mental health first aid courses, specialized referral services, and continued access to traditional MFRC programming.[36] The Veteran Family Program is funded through Veterans Affairs Canada in partnership with the CFMWS.[37] However, many of these services are self-help in nature and formalize the downloading of responsibility back onto families rather than provide support in a more concrete or substantive sense. For example, a service listed is entitled "Care for the

Caregiver," and provides caregivers of veterans and medically releasing military members living with an Operational Stress Injury (OSI) "education as well as self-care tools to support the caregiver role."[38] These "supports" celebrate neoliberal models of citizenship, whereby people become less reliant on social services.[39] Instead, more substantive support could involve institutional resources being invested into offsetting the burden on the caregivers of members with an OSI, such as providing reprieve, rather than investing in caregivers teaching themselves how to better handle said burden. The programs formalize the dependence on women's unpaid labour in military and veteran families.

Expanding notions of "the family" also include MFS' acknowledgment of this generation's increasing responsibility for aging parents. "Elder Care" offers resources for military families taking care of elderly parents, which at present are predominantly information-based tools and resources.[40] Support for these family configurations (whether sharing a household or not) may be in particular helpful to female CAF members, who have disproportionate caregiving responsibilities relative to their male counterparts.[41] These resources may be particularly important for CAF members who are living in intergenerational households, especially newcomer and Indigenous families.[42] However, at present, the supports for military families taking care of elderly parents do not include a financial element to deal with, for example, deployment-related or emergency issues and care, which is made more difficult for military families who are posted away from families of origin. In a 2015 study, 25% of CAF members who provide elder care reported that their caregiving responsibilities could result in them requesting an early release from the CAF, and relocations especially were seen as an area where the level of support they currently receive could be improved.[43] Therefore, recognizing various forms of family caregiving arrangements might result in leveling the playing field for service women, and thus rewriting gender relations of power in the military.

MFS is also providing support to parents of CAF members, expanding notions of the family to include "extended family members." Indeed, there is an official acknowledgment that supporting CAF members in their service and post-service life is a community endeavor that extends beyond the nuclear family:

> *It is important for parents, grandparents, and extended family of military members to support one another. It doesn't matter whether a member is deployed, posted out of province, out of the country, or around the corner, every circumstance is different and requires this special population to band together.*[44]

These "supports" are also information and self-help based. Importantly, MFS appears to be struggling with adapting more robust supports to the realities of elder parents of CAF members, such as those who might not live near MFRCs. Moreover, MFRCs do not consistently offer supports to elder parents of CAF members, and certain avenues of support are not available to them, such as health promotion programs.[45]

While the attention to varied family forms is increasing and might be disrupting the privileging of a patriarchal family formations in the military community, much of the actual support programs directed at these subpopulations and/or non-traditional families lack substance. Indeed, the more substantial programs, such as those providing reimbursement, are still only eligible to those in nuclear families; that is, a spouse and dependent children living under the same roof. In fact, the definition of "family member" varies among different programs of support/resources, making it confusing to navigate for certain groups of people, if not promoting a degree of vulnerability in military life. In a revision of the Military Family Plan, Anne Chartier explains that an inconsistent definition of "family member" risks making vulnerable certain types of families and family members. She notes:

> *Parents of single CAF members, single parent CAF members, children with special needs or dual service couples have been refused the services they need, either because they are not eligible, or because the program is not geared toward the segment of the population to which they belong. Furthermore, dislocated families (legal status in transition, custody problems) also have difficulty accessing services or benefits because of the inconsistent definition of "family".*[46]

Certainly, a modern military family definition is called for to respond to the needs of all military families and to destabilize the idealization of a patriarchal family formation. A modern definition of the family would expand notions of kinship beyond marriage, and beyond sharing a household. Doing so would likely have an impact on recruitment and retention diversity and equity goals.

Conclusion

MFS provides a suite of services, supports, and resources to Canadian military families, with a view to reduce the burdens of military life. In recent years there has been increasing attention paid to improve the quality of services offered to families, especially considering the ever-changing dynamics, and consequently needs, of modern military families. In responding

to these shifts, MFS has offered a host of childcare services, and is increasingly expanding who they consider to be family members and thus "clients." This article evaluated some recent initiatives by MFS to consider whether they represent a change in military culture—one that is less reliant on traditional gender roles in the family, such as the reliance on the unpaid labour of military spouses. This article showed that in some ways the privileging of patriarchal formations of the family, and the reliance on the unpaid labour of women, appears to be eroding. For example, the CAF has begun to expand their definition of family to include various relations and caregiving dynamics, such as CAF members who are caring for their aging parents. Moreover, the CAF officially, and in policy, now recognizes the labour and sacrifice of military families. Acknowledging these contributions as enabling operational readiness and effectiveness is a shift in institutional culture, in contrast to previous eras which took these contributions for granted or acknowledged them informally.

Despite some cultural changes, this article revealed that subtle, and not-so-subtle privileging of patriarchy remains through the institutional relationship with military families. Inequitable gender relations persist due to programming that idealizes a patriarchal family that is comprised of a masculinized service member and a feminized civilian spouse, as well as an institutional commitment to the heteropatriarchal definition of the family, which informs who can access MFS services. Indeed, much of the financial support provided to military families remains tied to the operational status of the CAF member. Consequently, many support services risk alienating and/or disadvantaging military families that do not take a traditional shape, such as single parents, and members of LGBTQ2S+ communities. This undoubtedly influences recruitment and retention of underrepresented groups in the CAF, such as women.

Considering the institutional concern with recruitment and retention, and corresponding commitments to equity and diversity, the CAF might consider how a new generation of service members may be defined less by traditional gender norms, have a variety of family and kinship relationships, and seek employers that promote a more robust work-life balance. Continuing to modernize MFS services in such a way that responds to the new generation of would-be service members would benefit from broader recognition of the "family" and a better understanding of how work and home life is negotiated. While the CAF has begun to respond to the cultural changes that characterize military family life, and has in response embraced related initiatives, this article suggests that there remain opportunities for change that more meaningfully challenge patriarchy in Canada's military. Considering how patriarchy in military family life is perpetuated and resisted is an important component of understanding broader military culture and its variations.

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Search and Rescue Technician, Master Corporal Matt Sankey, practices decompression stop procedures during the deep diving phase of the Dive Supervisors Course at Fleet Diving Unit (Pacific), CFB Esquimalt, BC on November 2, 2022.

Image by: Master Sailor Valerie LeClair, MARPAC Imaging Services

Understanding and Addressing Opposition to Transforming Military Cultures: Moving from Technical and Humanist to Critical Learning

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Military training has focused historically on socializing new recruits, teaching task-based skills, developing leadership through formal courses and exercises, and conducting informal on-the-job training.[1] More recently, Western militaries have included courses intended to prevent sexual harassment and racism. This training fits into two broad learning categories: technical (task-based) and humanist (understanding self and others). Military personnel also engage in situated learning in everyday practices, as they learn to accept and conform to the status quo of military culture, policies, and practices.[2] Although the status quo is institutionally constructed (and therefore neither inherent nor natural), it is treated as an unproblematized given.

In the Department of National Defence (DND) and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF),[3] attention has turned to engaging in culture change, to "tackl[e] all types of discrimination, harmful behaviour, biases and system barriers."[4] Such work is contradictory in a military organization, where the aim is to reproduce uniformity in a collective and consistent culture, with personnel honouring tradition and obeying orders through a hierarchy, and not questioning the organization. There has been much resistance and outright opposition within the CAF to critiquing the warrior ideal—which privileges white, male,

cisgender, heterosexual, able-bodied men while marginalizing those viewed as other—and engaging in cultural change.[5]

This article focuses on a significant reason for such opposition and resistance to culture change: the reliance on technical and humanist training with a concomitant underestimation of the role of situated learning in sustaining the warrior ideal. If the DND/CAF is to transform its problematic hypermasculine "toxic and sexist culture"[6]—which is "hostile to women and LGTBQ members, and conducive to more serious incidents of sexual harassment and assault"[7] as well as imbued with "systemic and cultural racism…institutionalized in regulations, norms, and common worldviews"[8]—then the organization must frame policies, practices, education,[9] and learning from a critical paradigm. This article defines technical, humanist, and critical learning[10] and applies these concepts to the context of formal education in the CAF. The article explains how CAF personnel learn to value and emulate a warrior ideal through informal situated learning. The article applies a transformative learning lens to challenging military cultures, demonstrating how DND/CAF can support and engage in critical education.

Technical and Humanist Training: Formal Education in the CAF

Formal military training typically occurs through two of three adult educational approaches: technical and humanist (to the exclusion of the third, critical).[11] Each of these approaches is underwritten by a differing set of beliefs and aims, relating to a specific set of military orders, policies, and expectations. The technical approach focuses on objectivity, efficiency, and measurement applied in task-based education, where an instructor is the expert and student success is assessed through the replication of skills. This approach can be found in weapons training, drill exercises, and physical fitness testing, based on related orders and manuals (e.g., *DAOD 3002-3, Ammunition and Explosives Safety Program*; *The Canadian Armed Forces Manual of Drill and Ceremonial; DAOD 5023-2, Common Military Tasks Fitness Evaluation*). At an order to shoot, halt, or run, students obey and perform, without question.

This technical approach also includes higher-order skills, such as planning a deployment, repairing a ship's engine, flying an aircraft, and strategizing a battle plan. Although there may be much learning as well as personal finesse in succeeding in these areas, success continues to be measured from a skills-based perspective: logistics ensures that the proper equipment gets to the proper location, a mechanic fixes an engine, a pilot flies the aircraft, and the artillery fires on the enemy.

In contrast, the humanist approach is concerned with understanding others, acting ethically, and working for individual self-actualization. Teaching in this approach is discussion-based, exploring how people think and act in certain ways. Teachers guide students in their thinking, with questioning encouraged to assist students in learning content and applying it to particular situations through case studies and role-plays. In the military, this approach is used for leadership, anti-harassment, and ethical training, based on related policies, orders, and manuals (e.g., Canadian Armed Forces professional development framework; *DAOD 5012-0, Harassment Prevention and Resolution*; *The Path to Dignity and Respect*). Sometimes, students learn much about their own thinking, how they react in certain situations, and how they can become a better military member, though "better" is framed within taken-for-granted assumptions of ideal military membership.

In both these approaches, the expectation is that neither individual worldviews nor the organizational status quo will change. The focus is on students' ability to attain organizationally set and valued skills and thought processes. In the military, student achievement is measured through becoming skilled in one's occupation, contributing as a team member, and demonstrating leadership, with a focus on operational effectiveness. The aspect of the military that is expected to change are the individual abilities of members, not the institution. Therefore, using technical or humanist training to challenge and transform the military's hypermasculinized and sexualized culture is bound to fail, given the core mismatch between the educational philosophy, aims, and processes of such training, and the goal of transformational culture change.[12]

To date, evidence suggests that work toward DND/CAF culture change has taken place from these two approaches. For example, Operation HONOUR, a mission "to eliminate harmful and inappropriate sexual behaviour within the CAF,"[13] used an informational and order-based approach, which reflects the technical paradigm. Members were expected to read the orders and change their behaviour accordingly, with a focus on "communication and application of discipline."[14] A "Respect in the CAF" app was created, with an associated "DO YOUR PART" "soldier card," which "*reminds* members…that sexual misconduct diminishes operation readiness[15]" (Government of Canada, 2021, italics added) and "is not acceptable."[16] The app and card list support services and details on reporting an incident.

The problem with this technical approach is that it assumes falsely that members simply need to be reminded that sexual misconduct is unacceptable and given access to resources in order to address the issue.[17] Furthermore, this approach

ties the inappropriateness of sexual misconduct solely to operational effectiveness. Work against sexual misconduct is reduced to giving individuals information so they will change their behaviour, access supports, and achieve the mission. Such an approach (also reflected in PowerPoint decks and multiple-choice quizzes) ignores institutional responsibility and keeps military culture and priorities intact.[18] The aim is supposedly to meet organizational responsibility by positioning the problem as one of individuals who simply need information.

The "Respect in the CAF: Take a stand against sexual misconduct" workshop takes similar content but presents it from a humanist approach, with a "one-day interactive workshop [that] uses scenarios, discussions and small group practical activities."[19] Further, "the workshop addresses cognitive, affective, and behavioural domains: what people know, how they feel, and how they behave."[20] This approach differs from the technical, as it goes beyond increasing awareness of sexual misconduct definitions, policies, and supports, with its aim to address and engage with understandings and attitudes, as relates to what actions people take. Organizational culture is a topic (i.e., "promote a culture in which bystander intervention is widely accepted, expected, implemented and supported"[21]) but is positioned as an individual element, in that personnel should act within organizational expectations, not bring about broader institutional transformation.

Both technical and humanist training aim at reproducing military culture and ideals. Training is one size fits all, without an analysis of how the institution itself was created to privilege a particular form of military membership—of those who fit into a warrior ideal—and marginalize others who do not. The stated outcome of such training is the elimination of sexual misconduct yet the hypermasculine and sexualized nature of military culture itself supports gender and other forms of discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault.[22] Military personnel learn about the privileging of this culture not only in formal training, but in everyday practices, with the former supporting the latter and vice versa, which are combined forms of socialization into the institutional status quo. As such, situated learning must also be problematized to engage in transforming military cultures.

Situated Learning: Valuing a Warrior Ideal

Military personnel typically spend their entire careers learning to value and emulate a warrior ideal.[23] When new recruits enter basic training, they exchange their civilian clothes for military uniforms, are assigned to units, and are marched around the base, as they are taught the importance of conformity and uniformity. Curriculum content and delivery focuses on respecting tradition, obeying senior noncommissioned members and officers, and appreciating the military profession as the highest form of service. The Universality of Service policy and soldier-first principle[24] promote the idea that personnel must always be physically, mentally, and logistically able and willing to deploy; anyone who cannot deploy, for whatever reason, is viewed as a less-than-dedicated military member[25] (see Leigh Spanner this issue, in relation to how military family life intersects with military ideals and policies).[26]

CAF personnel learn these lessons in formal contexts but also in situated ones, in that official training intersects with learning in everyday practices, such as in the barracks, at the mess, and in the gym. In communities of practice, situated learning explores how "newcomers" learn to think and act in organizationally privileged ways through their interaction with "old-timers."[27] This interaction is, for example, institutionalized at Canadian Military Colleges, where third- and fourth-year students are given leadership positions over first-year students in the First Year Orientation Program.[28]

Newcomers learn how to perform masculinities and femininities in a variety of ways, depending on their own embodiment within the organization,[29] with women learning to walk a tightrope between being just masculine enough while retaining certain aspects of femininity, as they navigate organizational needs, gender discrimination, and sexual harassment.[30] As described by Tammy George (this issue), racialized service personnel are continually reminded of their difference from a white norm, which requires them to constantly navigate the ways in which they are viewed as different. As such, marginalized members must learn not only general military and specific occupational skills, but also how to *fit into* an ideal that is defined in opposition to them, in a form of self-policing.[31] This is work that those who are viewed as embodying a warrior ideal—the unearned privilege afforded to them through their white, male, cisgender, straight, able bodies—do not have to conduct.

Despite different generations joining and serving in the CAF, there has been little change to organizational norms over the years. Newcomers learn to conform to—not challenge—norms. Those who conform to norms are more likely to succeed, while those who do not are more likely to retire and/or remain at middle-management ranks.[32] This conformity is reflected in the personnel who have been promoted to the CAF's general and flag officer (GOFO) ranks, which are overwhelmingly comprised of white, masculine, cisgender, straight men from combat occupations.

While formal technical and humanist training might promote a more inclusive vision of military membership, this vision requires related changes to situated learning. For instance, the new dress instructions, which officially allow for a more diverse expression of gender identity and religious or spiritual beliefs,[33] have been communicated to military personnel through policies, Frequently Asked Questions, and YouTube videos. However, there has been much criticism of the revised policy by some old-timers, with the changes joked about, denigrated, and contested.[34] Personnel are likely to learn that, despite the official move to inclusive dress, individual acceptance at an informal level may occur only with conformity to the previous dress expectations, which were founded on white, male, Christian norms within a gender binary.

One way to challenge this situated learning is by utilizing the critical paradigm. Within this paradigm, there is an acknowledgement that the military was created by men, for men, with colonial, racist, heteronormative, ableist, classist, and patriarchal perspectives embedded in its structures and values (see Maya Eichler and Vanessa Brown, this issue, for a discussion of how these root causes are at the foundation of the DND/CAF's problematic culture). As such, critical education and learning are positioned as questioning and re-thinking the very ideals upon which Canadian military service is conceptualized.

The Critical Paradigm: Transformative Learning Theories

Recently, DND/CAF has begun to explore transformative culture change. Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) was established to "unify and integrate all associated culture change activities"[35] with the aim of "creat[ing] a more inclusive organisational culture that respects the dignity of all members of the Defence Team."[36] Although the initiating directive uses terms such as "new perspectives," "new structure, frameworks, and strategies" as well as "new approach" and "new path,"[37] the language in the directive focuses on becoming "more inclusive"[38] in order to "progress"[39] and "adjust"[40] strategies and culture. In its Frequently Asked Questions section, CPCC states that "the organization has been created to lead cultural transformation."[41] What is still unknown, however, is what exactly is meant by cultural transformation. In 2022, CPCC introduced the term "culture evolution"[42] to describe their work, problematically communicating the idea that the CAF's culture simply needs to evolve with changing societal norms, which obscures the oppressive foundations of the institution from its personnel and the Canadian public.

From the general standpoint of the critical paradigm, learning in relation to cultural transformation would entail radical action that questions power relations, deconstructs privilege, supports the empowerment of diverse marginalized groups, and promotes social justice. Therefore, at its core, the critical paradigm stands in stark juxtaposition to a military culture that demands adherence to uniformity, obedience, hierarchy, and tradition,[43] so it is telling that *transformation* has been replaced by *evolution*. As critical pedagogue Paulo Freire stated, "No oppressive order could permit the oppressed to begin to question: Why?"[44] Militaries aim to socialize their members to conform to its status quo not to transform it.

Scholars and educators who research and teach from the critical paradigm do so using a variety of critical theories, including critical race theory, decolonial theory, intersectional feminism, critical disability studies, and queer theory, which collectively explore issues of class, gender, Indigeneity, race, ability, and sexuality, and the ways in which they intersect.[45] The critical paradigm contests the ways in which historical, ideological, cultural, and institutional forms of oppression, power, and privilege operate.[46] Applying these theories in the DND/CAF context means critiquing the ways in which the military as an institution enables and engages—through culture, policies, practices, and training—in systemic colonialism, racism, misogyny, ableism, and heteronormativity. Therefore, using the critical paradigm means questioning the very foundation on which the military is built and perpetuated, which is the same foundation military personnel are taught throughout their entire careers—in formal technical and humanist training as well as situated learning—to value and protect. It is little

The Canadian Ranger Patrol – Inukjuak from 2nd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group participates in an annual training event designed to refine valuable skills in Inukjuak, an Inuit community, located on the north bank of the Hudson Bay in Nunavik, Northern Quebec, on February 7, 2023.

Image by: MCpl Matthew Tower, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

wonder that the CAF as an institution and military personnel themselves may be doubtful about a critical approach.[47]

Instead of accepting time-honoured military values, for transformative culture change to be achieved it is important to challenge them, by critiquing how obedience, discipline, hierarchy, and uniformity promote binary ways of thinking with respect to male/female, masculine/feminine, protectors/protected, military/civilian, friend/foe, winner/loser, and self/other, with a privileging of the former aspects of these binaries to the detriment of the latter.[48] These values and ways of thinking are embedded in CAF culture, such as with the Universality of Service policy and soldier-first principle. While work is ongoing to revise this policy and principle (as well as related training and promotion processes), they continue to privilege white able-bodied men in operational occupations with a (typically female civilian) spouse to care for the home and family,[49] leading to an overall homogeneity of CAF leaders at the GOFO ranks and in the position of Chief of Defence Staff.

The questioning of these policies and practices often leads to oppositional responses against change, such as:

- the size, demographics, and mandate of the CAF prevent any other way of organizing the work of the institution;
- personnel who demonstrate absolute dedication to the military should be rewarded with valued training, promotions, and postings; and,
- operational positions provide for necessary command experience.

These responses deserve to be engaged with, but too often they shut down conversation and inhibit imaginative thinking.

Transformative learning theories—that are foundational to the field of adult education but seldom applied to the military context—can assist with asking and addressing tough questions that challenge long-held military assumptions. Transformative learning is that which results in changes to worldview perspectives in relation to self, others, and society.[50] This type of learning can be conceptualized through four different lenses: "liberation from oppression"; "rational thought and reflection" as a result of experiencing a "disorienting dilemma"; a "developmental approach" that is "intuitive, holistic, and contextually based"; and, spirituality "soul work,"[51] with differential foci on connectedness, embodiment, emotion, and the arts, as well as race, class, and gender.[52] When learners are presented with ideas or experiences that fall outside their own understandings, beliefs, values, and expectations (a disorienting dilemma), they have a choice: ignore whatever does not fit into their worldview by devaluing it, dismissing it, and/or closing their mind to it; or, engage with it, with an open mind, consideration of its value, and willingness to incorporate it into a new belief system as they transform the way they view the world. Transformative learning varies in its focus on individual and structural levels of change. In this article, my focus is both these levels, in the vein of bell hooks' *Teaching to Transgress*, which engages with the "interplay of anticolonial, critical, and feminist pedagogies"[53] in a critique of structural forms of oppression, power, and privilege that challenges the status quo.

Transformative learning can be applied to militaries by calling for problem-posing education[54] that aims to deconstruct gendered, racialized, and militarized military power relations by challenging and changing the ways in which civilians and military personnel see and interact with military organizations and ideals, as well as with orders and policies. Problem-posing education stems from a stance of asking critical and creative questions, instead of searching for quick straightforward solutions. In the military, such questions include: Who benefits from the warrior ideal? Where did it come from? Is it needed? How can military service be re-imagined? How can DND/CAF structure, orders, and policies be re-imagined? These questions demonstrate a quite different focus from that of the technical and humanistic paradigms.

Here, I provide an example of my own unexpected experience with transformative learning to demonstrate how the theory can work in practice, how long-established mindsets can be changed, and how problem-posing education can support the transformation of military cultures at both individual and structural levels. When I served in the military, although I was privileged due to my white able-bodiedness, officer rank, and occupational trade, I was marginalized due to my status as a woman. Although I recognized this to some extent, I resisted critiquing my experiences. In retrospect, I believe I did so for two reasons. First, I observed that women who protested their organizational status were punished for it. Second, I valued the military and my own service, and did not want to critique either. I had been taught that, to be a dedicated military officer, I had to embrace the military *as is* and embody a stoic toughness with a get-it-done attitude, which did not include any sort of questioning.

When I began my Master of Education degree at a civilian university and was introduced to feminist and transformative learning theories, I began to see my experiences from a different angle.[55] My rational thought and reflection on these theories, in relation to my military service, precipitated a disorienting dilemma. I now understand that this dilemma was not a singular event brought on solely by formal education, but rather had been percolating over the years, as I struggled with

the gendered nature of my experiences. It was difficult and emotional learning, to challenge what I thought and believed, and it took quite some time before I embraced feminist theory, and even longer before I began to call myself a feminist. However, engaging with critical theories enabled me to both value *and* critique my military service and the military as an institution. Transformative learning creates an uncomfortable space fraught with tension, but it can contribute to positive change. Indeed, it is from a position of discomfort that the greatest learning can occur.[56] It was only when I engaged in learning *outside* the DND/CAF that I began to question military culture. Therefore, what is needed is for education *within* the DND/CAF to do the same, by bringing critical theories into the institution itself. The transformation of my individual worldview with respect to the military directly led to my academic work engaging in structural-level change, as I turned to critiquing and recommending changes to CAF culture, policies, practices, and education.

As the literature and my own experiences indicate, in order to engage in military cultural transformation, it is imperative to work within the critical paradigm,[57] to learn about, understand the need for, and gain a desire to change military culture, policies, and practices. Once individuals transform their own perspectives, they can then begin to engage with structural transformation. As CPCC acknowledges, "culture change targeting attitudes and beliefs cannot be 'ordered.'"[58] Culture change cannot be taught through technical and humanistic paradigms; instead, it must be learned through situated learning and in critical education. For education from the critical paradigm to be supported, the content and policies to be learned and taught must themselves stem from a critical perspective.

Recommendations

Engaging in education from the critical paradigm is complicated and complex, requiring continual commitment to ongoing change. Critical education is not straightforward, quick, or easily measurable, which is why it is often dismissed in favour of technical and humanist training that is viewed as demonstrating immediate progress. Delivering a PowerPoint presentation about sexual violence statistics, inclusive policies, or an organizational mandate for culture change and assessing learning with a multiple-choice quiz can be viewed as a measurable outcome, with a particular percentage of military personnel completing the training and receiving a grade. But any such result is largely meaningless for cultural transformation, with little opportunity for learner engagement and no insight into what learners are thinking, understanding, accepting, or resisting. Instead, I recommend the following educational practices:

- Connect individual experiences to structural forms of power and privilege as relate to colonialism, racism, sexism, misogyny, ableism, and heteronormativity.
- Recognize that "disorienting dilemmas" will occur as military personnel encounter difficulties in challenging established military values and worldviews.
- Accept and embrace discomfort in learning.
- Understand how unearned privilege is granted to those who appear to emulate the ideal warrior and how those who do not appear to emulate it are marginalized.
- Engage with critical theories.
- Participate in small group discussions facilitated by those familiar with critical theories.
- Ask questions and challenge assumptions with a focus on problem-posing.
- Examine situated learning for what is learned in everyday practices and work toward an environment where situated learning supports cultural transformation.
- Be committed to ongoing education and work for cultural change.

While teaching and learning in the critical paradigm is challenging, it can create the path for military cultural transformation. DND/CAF's educational approach must be transformed from one that promotes an acceptance and policing of the status quo to one that contests it. CMJ Canadian Military Journal

Notes

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Sergeant François Lapointe of the Sherbrooke Hussars talks to members of his section, Cpl van zuiden and Pte Forand to coordinate the rest of the day during Operation VECTOR in Sherbrooke, QC, on January 18, 2022.

Image By: Sgt Vincent Lafond, 35 CBG Public Affairs.

Trauma and Military Cultures: Transformation Through Community

ASH GROVER

Ash Grover is the TMC Network doctoral research assistant. She is a PhD candidate in Educational Studies at Brock University, where her research focuses on the intersection of trauma-informed and culturally sustaining pedagogies in the university context. Her interest in transforming military cultures is informed by research in the areas of feminist anti-militarism, public pedagogies, and militarism in academic life, as well as decolonial and intersectional feminist praxis.

This article explores the overlapping discourses of trauma and culture in the Canadian military context. It examines trauma-informed methods in culture change efforts, particularly as they relate to targeted supports for historically underrepresented groups and unpacking the warrior ideal. I apply intersectional feminist and critical race theory to draw connections between concepts from anti-oppressive theory and the military context, illustrating how acts of "othering" can result in responses typically associated with post-traumatic stress disorder. Thus, trauma and its related symptomology are important considerations when examining military culture change, due to the pervasiveness of violent, stressful, and discriminatory events in military contexts. I begin by briefly reviewing literature on trauma and trauma-informed practice as it relates to military contexts, as well as literature on military and organizational cultures. Then, I explore connections between concepts such as the warrior ideal, double consciousness, and space invaders. Ultimately, the research demonstrated here suggests that an effective framework for military culture change is one that is systems-focused, in addition to being human-centered.

Expanding Understandings of Trauma

When investigating trauma in relation to military contexts, it is necessary to acknowledge how trauma can encapsulate interpersonal harm as well as structural violence. Research indicates that trauma may result from such processes as violence, abuse, and neglect.[1] However, more recently the research also indicates that trauma is often caused by structural oppression such as sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, poverty, and colonialism.[2] These growing fields of research illustrate that consistent and single experiences alike can trigger psychological disorders where persistent systems of harm or instances of domination are unable to be processed and thus can trigger a set of symptoms associated with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), or complex-post traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD).[3] It follows that trauma can occur as the result of enacting violence, experiencing violence, ambient or environmental oppression and consistent discrimination, or a chronically stressful experience.

Discussions of culture change tend to circulate around the question of why military members are resistant. I argue that trauma can serve as a valuable "way-in" for those working on transforming military cultures. Members who have undergone significant psychological stress may not wish to be further othered by such initiatives, or they may feel as though they have gone through great trials to get where they are, internalizing a sense of inferiority. For example, in my equity work I have witnessed many individuals targeted by equity initiatives wanting to distance themselves from discourse on culture change, because they are tired of being singled out and wish to avoid further harm. The sociological and feminist research on trauma caused by oppression can act as a powerful lesson in these situations. If we regard military members' hesitation to engage with anti-oppression from a trauma-informed lens, we might more effectively witness how often such individuals have spent years trying to escape being cast as the "other," sometimes as a survival strategy born out of C-PTSD/PTSD, as a means of aligning more closely with the ideal warrior in order to avoid harassment.[4] While instances of harassment against straight white males exists, statistics clearly indicate that rates of assault are higher for those furthest from the warrior ideal, such as women, 2SLGBTQIA+, and racialized military members. As H. Christian Breede and Karen D. Davis have noted, "[t]he assumptions embedded within the warrior paradigm have provided powerful motivators for the historical exclusion of women from combat and LGBTQ persons from the military."[5] Feminist researchers working in the military context commonly hear of women who have worked tirelessly to present as though they are genderless, in order to not draw attention to themselves or be othered.[6] Similarly, research examining the lived experience of both racialized and 2SLGBTQIA+ military members has shown that many diminish their individual subjectivities in order to fit in with the warrior ideal, and thus align with their CAF colleagues.[7] These instances stray from the assimilation of white, cis, straight, male CAF members because the marginalization of women, racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ military members is compounded socially. In other words, certain groups are marginalized both within and outside of the institution—and while white, cis, straight men certainly face subjugation in the CAF, the unique circumstance of those who enter the institution from a standpoint of being dually othered must not be overlooked. These experiences of othering, and the processes which accompany them, can create emotional barriers for those who subsequently become centered in or associated with culture change efforts.

PTSD and C-PTSD in Military Contexts

Laura Brown extends definitions of trauma beyond traditional and clinical notions of events abnormal to the "range of human experience," by emphasizing how dominant conceptions of human experience are often limited to the straight, white, upper-class, male.[8] Brown discusses the role of trauma caused by systemic oppression, and while she acknowledges that such structures may not be directly violent in the physical realm (although many often are indirectly), they do produce "violence to the soul and spirit."[9] Similarly, Richard Linklater defines trauma as "a person's reaction or response to an injury."[10] Thus PTSD and C-PTSD could be defined as a person's or community's ongoing response to such forms of violence or injury. It is critical to note that not every individual who experiences a traumatic event, or repeated traumatic events, will develop PTSD or C-PTSD. As Morgan Bimm and Margeaux Feldman state,

> *What distinguishes those living with trauma (diagnosed or undiagnosed) from those who have experienced a traumatic event are the presence of three hallmark symptoms: hyperarousal (the persistent expectation of danger), intrusion (flashbacks), and constriction (numbing out).*[11]

The above symptoms are markers of PTSD, whereas C-PTSD is a relatively recent concept birthed out of an acknowledgement that not all traumas we experience are "one and done," C-PTSD (yet to be included in the DSM-5 as its own disorder) is differentiated through its resulting from repeated, consistent

traumatic events over a longer period, sometimes described as complex trauma. Subsequently, C-PTSD involves a wider set of symptoms including negative self-concept, interpersonal disturbances, and affect dysregulation.[12] Each of the symptoms discussed resulting from PTSD and C-PTSD could be significantly triggered in military members by the language and messaging of culture change. For those who culture change efforts seek to support, the language could produce flashbacks, interpersonal challenges, and evoke feelings of negative self-concept, and they may deal with threatening feelings through dissociation or a division of their personality.[13] For military members adapting to culture change efforts, similar feelings are heightened, as well as a sense of danger and a desire to resist altogether due to intense emotional responses.

Furthermore, as discussed by other authors in this special issue, there are aspects of military culture that show up in places far out of reach of those higher in command, including practices and values that are inherited from previous generations and reproduced without much critical attention. In her life history research with women in the military, Nancy Taber has found that there are consistent reminders for women that they are different from men, and that often women themselves prefer to associate with men, going as far as to describe other women as too "catty" in interviews.[14] Further, this research highlights how women in the military consistently experience moments of discomfort, to the point where an individual's ability to make sense of such an environment could be significantly impacted. For example, whenever she advocated for herself and her role as a mother, one woman was told she was "making a woman thing" out of a separate issue.[15] Upon joining her unit, one participant recalled being told, "You better not get pregnant while you're here."[16] Immediately positioning her and her body as deviant and establishing her role as other within the supposedly cohesive unit. Likewise, Tammy George's exploration of the experiences of racialized soldiers in the Canadian military revealed similar results for members who consistently felt othered or hyper-visible based on their race.[17] According to George's interviews, soldiers deviating from cultural norms within the CAF are "reminded that they are not part of the norm and are encouraged to conform to ensure operational effectiveness."[18]

In developing a framework for military culture change, it is important to understand membership within a historically marginalized group does not free one from the effects of socialization in an oppressive social reality. The research above indicates that many military members undergo a process of othering and harmful assimilation to adapt to a masculine, heteronormative, and white warrior ideal, often resulting in dissociation. The trauma of assimilation can cause individuals to internalize an image of themselves *and others* through the dominant group's eyes, through the development of a double consciousness. Thus, it will not only be the dominant or institutionally powerful groups who are called upon to grow through culture change efforts, as women, racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ members will also be asked to shift their thinking in one way or another.

Space Invaders, Double Consciousness, and Dissociation

Double consciousness is a theory exploring how oppressed groups view themselves through the eyes of an oppressive dominant culture.[19] According to this theory, the colonizer or colonizing group creates the "other" in their own image, as a means of feeling superior. As Frantz Fanon said, "It is the racist who creates the inferiorized."[20] He expands on this below:

> *All colonized people—in other words, people in whom an inferiority complex has taken root, whose local cultural originality has been committed to the grave—position themselves in relation to the civilizing language: i.e., the metropolitan culture. The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush. The more he rejects his blackness and the bush, the whiter he will become. In the colonial army, and particularly in the regiments of Sengalese soldiers, the "native" officers are mainly interpreters. They serve to convey to their fellow soldiers the master's orders, and they themselves enjoy a certain status.*[21]

If we extend the concept of double consciousness to the realm of military culture, we might envision how processes of othering are inherent to an institution that privileges universality, uniformity, and the warrior ideal.[22] Thus, I argue that the ethos of military culture, which strives to ensure operational effectiveness through strict adherence to the warrior ideal, can indirectly lead to the development of double consciousness in military members. This splitting of the consciousness takes place through a process much alike the one Fanon theorizes, where individuals are asked to subjugate aspects of their subjectivity to be a "successful" military member. For women, racialized, and 2SLGBTQIA+ members, the subjugation goes beyond personality traits and into the realm of core pillars comprising their subjectivity (e.g., gender, race).

Exploring the phenomenon of both the warrior ideal and double consciousness through the lens of trauma-informed

Captain Cristy Montoya (centre) of 430 Squadron, Valcartier, Québec serves as a Spanish interpreter as she explains the procedures for towing a CH-149 Cormorant helicopter to members of the Peruvian Air Force during Exercise COOPERACIÓN III on April 20, 2014. The Cormorant was partially disassembled so it could be transported onboard a CC-177 Globemaster aircraft to Lima, Peru. Upon arrival, IMP technicians worked to reassemble the Cormorant to allow for expedient and safe flying operations.

Image by: Capt Trevor Reid, 19 Wing Public Affairs

practice offers new insights into root causes of the problematic military culture. Contemporary trauma-informed practice acknowledges that the conditions of historical, ideological, cultural, and institutional oppression often result in an internalized sense of inferiority in groups that are positioned as the other.[23] This internalized inferiority splits one's understanding of the self, described by Fanon as traveling across a distance, far away from oneself, ultimately casting an objective gaze over the self. Similar processes of internalized oppression are discussed in different fields, such as Nita Mary McKinley's research on objectified body consciousness in women, whereby they internalize an understanding of themselves as an object of men's desire through socialization in a patriarchal culture.[24] Considering George's framing of the experiences of racialized military members, we are reminded that an individual's understanding of the world around them is shaped by the discourses to which they have access.[25] In other words, our subjectivity is negotiated in relation to the varying, but often-limited, meanings and practices of communities or cultures of which we are a part. Thus, double consciousness is a process that can result in a false sense of inferiority in marginalized groups caused by a conscious splitting of the self, which may ultimately lead to the development of trauma symptoms.

Recent psychological studies on dissociation and culture have indicated that double consciousness is not exclusively a result of racial difference but can be borne out of "being a foreigner in a relatively inflexible host cultural environment."[26] While the connection between double consciousness and dissociation requires more study, this research indicates that a relationship exists, and that the bond is more nuanced for racialized individuals. Thus, for a framework of military culture change to avoid further othering those communities historically harmed, it must be designed to interrogate the underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values which seek to produce "others." Importantly, this could have meaningful impact on the vision of a Canadian military. As pointed out by authors in this special issue, processes of othering are often believed to be a necessary step in preparing members to enact forms of violence expected from our military. If the CAF were to acknowledge how the process of othering is a microcosm of larger social structures that were developed as part of a colonial project, they might begin by viewing double consciousness as a systemic issue that requires accountability throughout the entire organization. As Bimm and Feldman state, "[t]rauma-informed approaches shift the focus away from the individual and onto the collective."[27] This assertion builds on critical research which emphasizes the "systems of attachment and meaning that link individual and community" as key avenues towards healing.[28] Thus, developing an effective framework for military culture change will require a close investigation of the systems of attachment and meaning that link the individual with their community within military organizations.

Naming the Problem: Ambient Trauma in the Canadian Military

In discussing organizational cultures, Edgar Schein identifies three main aspects of a culture requiring examination: artefacts, beliefs and values, and underlying assumptions.[29] Discussing Schein's three aspects, Leonard Wong and Stephen Gerras write:

> *While artifacts are the observable clues of a culture, an organization's values reveal more of the motivations and rationale of the organizational culture. Of course, an organization's stated values may not match its demonstrated values. In order to determine the values and beliefs that an organization actually puts into use (as opposed to merely espousing), it is necessary to look deeper into the next level of cultural analysis. Beneath an organization's beliefs and values is the third level of an organizational culture—the* underlying basic

> assumptions...*This underlying consensus of unseen and usually unconscious assumptions affects the perceptions, thought processes, and behaviors of an organization.*[30]

The analysis here is based on Schein's description of organizational culture as it effectively highlights how culture change requires a critical examination of the underlying basic assumptions that inform an institutional culture as well as overt and subtle consequences. For instance, in the context of the CAF, an underlying assumption of the current organizational culture is that increased diversity of membership will lead to incremental culture change. However, Alan Okros argues culture change efforts must first examine "how diversity will be constructed and how the experiences of those in underrepresented groups will be understood."[31] Furthering this line of reasoning, I ask: If a foundational cultural assumption of the CAF is that uniformity will enhance operational effectiveness, what happens to marginalized military members on a socio-emotional level when they are purposefully brought into the institution to meet a diversity quota, and then positioned as space invaders? Nirmal Puwar explores the phenomenon of space invaders and found that their inclusion within historically exclusionary sites comes at a cost, as they often face heightened scrutiny for errors which "are less likely to be noted in others, and if they are noted they are less likely to be amplified. Disproportional surveillance finds errors in those who are not absolutely perfect."[32] Due to the hyper-visibility attached to being othered, Puwar describes how space invaders are overly scrutinized, and within the CAF context research indicates that these others instinctively become viewed as a threat to the overall goals and effectiveness of the institution.[33] Thus, this trend illustrates how an emphasis on increased representation of those who have been historically "othered," without addressing foundational assumptions, beliefs, and values of an institution that directly or indirectly contradict such inclusion, fails to create meaningful change and may in fact reproduce systems of harm. Indeed, the underlying values and assumptions that are created and reinforced by a concept such as universality of service, for example, hinder those historically excluded from the institution of the military through both encouraging their assimilation and simultaneously setting limits on how far they might ascend within the organization. Puwar's research on space invaders demonstrates that race is inextricably linked to our social understandings of universality, where individuals within the civil service and who are othered based on race are less likely to be viewed as an adaptable leader.

Trauma-informed Culture Change: Building Community without Erasure

Based on sociological and feminist definitions of trauma discussed above, I identify the following common principles of a trauma-informed practice: an acknowledgement of trauma as being widespread and connected to social structures; an emphasis on how trauma is a systemic and community-wide (not individual) issue; and, the promotion of healing through overall systems change and community accountability. Applying a trauma-informed lens to conversations surrounding military culture change, there is not a simple nor one-size-fits-all framework for addressing inequities in the CAF. However, these principles offer a way into conversations regarding member engagement with culture change efforts.

Through close examination of the underlying assumptions, beliefs, values, and artefacts of Canadian military culture, researchers well versed in anti-oppressive practice can work with CAF membership to identify those aspects of the culture to maintain and other aspects requiring transformation via a trauma-informed lens. For instance, current CAF culture effectively demonstrates the strength of a cohesive community when members feel as though they belong and are affirmed.[34] To an extent, the CAF achieves this through its emphasis on unity. In terms of recognizing our socio-emotional wellbeing as deeply intertwined—this sense of interconnectedness is incredibly valuable. However, in failing to address the foundational culture of complacency around sexism, racism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression, the CAF is reproducing such systems of harm when asking for uniformity from their members. Building a sense of community and responsibility to one another is powerful, but this must go beyond operational effectiveness and into the realm of mutual and holistic well-being, defined by Staci Haines as "an embodied capacity to widen our circle of care, without disappearing ourselves."[35] Importantly, this form of mutual connection is a foundation to engaging in moments of interpersonal conflict, where individuals are able to hold onto complexity, without being reactionary or needing to label people or actions as bad.[36] Generative conflict and the ability to deal with discomfort are necessary in an organization seeking to be anti-oppressive.

An underlying assumption of CAF culture is that being in the military requires emotional fortitude on the part of individual members, rather than a reliance on collective fortitude and community belonging. This assumption prioritizes the warrior ideal, which supports an individualization of strength and effectiveness through subjugating vulnerability and difference. So, moving forward the following question emerges: In the

context of the CAF, what would it look like to foster a culture that witnesses and affirms the experiences of its members, seeking unit cohesion through mutuality across difference? There is a critical difference inherent to an institutional culture that asks its members to be emotionally intelligent and community-minded, rather than emotionally stoic with a fighting spirit. We might see that only the first option can lead the CAF towards collective healing. This will of course require less emphasis focused directly on operational effectiveness. However, an argument could be made that the wellbeing of membership individually and collectively, supports the overall effectiveness of the organization.

The research above suggests that for members of the CAF to feel a sense of belonging, and for meaningful change to take place, members need to be supported in developing a community founded in mutuality and trust. Ultimately, the critical and anti-oppressive literature on trauma and military culture can inform culture change efforts guided by three principles: prioritization of safety, belonging, and dignity of members by addressing the role of trauma in their lives; an acknowledgement that trauma and culture change are systemic issues by emphasizing mutuality and responsibility between members; and, a commitment to follow the lead of marginalized groups in implementing anti-oppressive practice across the institution. These fundamental steps provide pathway towards true inclusion—building community without erasure—within the Canadian Armed Forces.

Notes

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Anticipating Future Culture Struggles Over Contested Military Identities

CAPTAIN (NAVY) RETIRED ALAN C. OKROS

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Corporal Melissa Gaumond, a Construction Engineer from the Second Combat Engineer Regiment (2 CER) works on the brand new building called the Kill House. The Simulated Training House (Kill House) helps support training for new soldiers during qualification trades training here at CFB Wainwright.

Image by: Cpl Tina Gillies, Image Technician, Canadian Forces Base Imagery Wainwright

Decades of failure to effectively incorporate women and diverse individuals into the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has resulted in calls for substantive changes[1] and a body of critical academic work on central culture issues. Expanding on Raewyn Connell's foundational work[2], the literature on militarized masculinities highlights the problematic standardization of specific masculine behaviours associated with white male heterosexuality and normalized performances of these behaviours within militaries that stand to privilege most men over women, and subordinate some men to others.[3] Sandra Whitworth notes that, in the CAF, masculine behaviours are founded in relation to general principles of "violence and aggression, institutional unity and hierarchy."[4]

Ending harmful behaviours requires addressing hegemonic systems: the dominance of cultural practices which work to maintain a particular form of constructed social order. Chief Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC) recently identified four key facets of military culture to be addressed: the concept of service before self; the practices used to build teams; the enactment of controlling leadership; and the construction of military identity. This article examines the fourth issue: why military identity remains contested. I start by considering how CAF members might respond to changes to the dominant identity, and then weave together disparate topics related to evolving military roles and broader social changes to suggest where and how the next round of contested military identity may play out.

Change Initiatives and Predictable Pushback

Echoing the call from scholars, the CPCC shift in CAF identity is from a singular ideal hero warrior to recognizing multiple ways to demonstrate military identity. This initiative acknowledges that the warrior image is rooted in an outdated hero archetype which emphasizes combat/kinetic functions performed by those who are strong, stoic, and physically resilient (along with being white, male, and cisgender). The intent is to expand and enable all individuals to incorporate their own identity into their professional one, give greater emphasis to character than task completion, and encourage individuals to be emotionally

flexible. Subsequent internal 'debates' have been taking place with attitudes ranging from 'about time' to 'fine for you to have purple hair and a nose ring, just don't look to me to do the same,' to expressed concerns about 'slippery slopes' and unintended consequences.

The key issue here is the need to attend to the operation of hegemonic systems. Based on chairing the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Senator Murray Sinclair stated:

> *... if you remove all the racists... in government, policing, justice and health—you will still have a problem. Because you will have a system that is functioning based upon policies, priorities and decisions that direct how things are to be done, that come from a time when racism was very blatant.*[5]

The explanation of why the problem remains starts with the intentional processes used to convert the civilian into the soldier. This involves enacting elements of sociologist Erving Goffman's total institution with the use of de-individualization and social isolation to dislocate the individual from previous social influences and focus them solely on the identity and practices endorsed by the institution.[6] Those familiar with entry level recruit training recognize that new enrollees quickly learn three tactics to deal with the demands placed on them: pay attention to the person in charge; when in doubt, do what everybody else is doing; and, make friends—in other words, the importance placed on obedience to authority, normative conformity, and group loyalty. These become accentuated through the conduct and narratives of instructors and, subsequently, unit leaders who emulate the preferred identity and behaviours.[7] Seniors leading by example to demonstrate 'what right looks like' often draw on historical examples and engage in (often distorted) myth making.[8] It is through these types of daily practices that previous legacies including inherent biases and awarded privileges are perpetuated.

As articulated by Nancy Taber, a contributing factor is the presentation of 'boss texts' that construct specific narratives around the military as a way of life.[9] In assessing the 2003 publication of *Duty with Honour*, she stated: "The CF boss texts perpetuate the idea that military members must act and think within very narrowly defined ideological codes and textual representations, supporting ruling relations that work to exclude competing ideas and anyone who does not fit the military's dominant narrative."[10] The component of *Duty with Honour* presenting the military ethos was recently updated with the publication of *Trusted to Serve*.[11] Taber commented that this update is intended to answer the question "Who is an ideal military member?"[12] She observed several changes between *Duty with Honour* and *Trusted to Serve*, however, concluded that "it remains to be seen how the ethos is incorporated throughout the organization; how personnel perceive, enact and informally teach the ethos; and, therefore, how effective *Trusted to Serve*, as a boss text, is at engaging the organization as a whole in cultural change".[13]

As reflected in Taber's comment, the construction of military identity most often occurs through informal social exchanges within small groups. Vanessa Brown illustrated that a key element of hegemonic systems is the construction and policing of social hierarchies which serve to award status and power within the group and signal to individuals acceptable group norms around behaviours and projecting one's identity.[14] The nature of this social policing is explained by Victoria Tait-Signal:

> *Theories of hegemonic masculinity emphasize that although gender norms are socially constructed, gender performances will be judged against a standard or ideal of masculinity that has become hegemonic within a given sociohistorical moment. Accordingly, someone in a body coded as male may not meet masculine ideals; they may fail to meet these socially constructed standards, or they may disregard them of their own volition. Likewise, someone in a body coded as female may not perform in ways that are considered feminine, or they may fail in their attempt to live up to the standards of idealized masculinity in the case of military service.*[15]

An additional facet of military hegemonic systems pertains to practices that preserve a 'tight' culture rather than authorizing a looser culture.[16] The CPCC initiatives are a clear move towards the latter. Tight cultures put an emphasis on homogeneity, normative conformity, social cohesion, role obligations, the common good, and a reliance on history, customs, and traditions, and thus focus on a past to inform the present. Conversely, loose cultures authorize individual choice, flexible norms based on values rather than rules, personal responsibility rather than imposed obligations, and expectations that societies and social norms will evolve, hence an orientation to the future as something to be created rather than a past to be preserved. A good example of tight culture is the Royal Military College tradition of cadets memorizing the names of the 'Old Eighteen,' and the badging ceremony in which members of the 'Old Brigade' who entered RMC 50 years

earlier formally engage with new cadets.[17] The messaging conveyed clearly serves to connect newcomers to the not to be forgotten past. The fact that the first women will not enter the Old Brigade until 2030 is illustrative of the time lags in updating military ceremonies and customs.

These factors combine to produce leaders concerned over the potential consequences of adapting military identity. A central issue pertains to combat motivation and building cohesive, effective teams that will succeed under arduous conditions. Reservations that changing CAF identity may erode teams and motivation are predictable if leaders are not enabled to envision alternate identities or equipped with the tools to be able to do so. The focus on teams explains the emphasis given to small group cohesion and the personal judgements that occur in policing social hierarchies: individuals assess whether their peers will be able to 'cut it' when the moment arises and if they will have their buddy's back.[18] As illustrated in Brown and Tait-Signal's work, the challenge is that many military members are using gendered and racialized stereotypes to erroneously judge others.

Thus, facets of professional (hegemonic) systems and daily practices can intertwine to create the conditions under which the dominant identity is reproduced. Further, changes continually occur regarding the types of missions assigned to the military, equipment, doctrine, tactics, and training. These are integrated in *Duty with Honour* in a framework which reflects how changes in the profession's jurisdiction can require updates to identity, responsibility, expertise, and, potentially, the values incorporated in the military ethos.[19] The ethos component was updated in *Trusted to Serve*; however, there are emerging issues related to jurisdiction, responsibility, and expertise which may result in new 'debates' over military identity.[20]

The Force of Last Resort

Andrew Abbott identifies that professions work to preserve a monopoly over their unique jurisdiction while avoiding straying into that of others.[21] The received CAF worldview is that the military should generally be allowed to focus on its core business and not be tasked with extraneous activities. Military members see the CAF as the force of last resort which should only be committed to combat when all other options have been exhausted, and not assigned tasks which are outside of their core role.[22] The tendency for local governments to call on the CAF in response to domestic circumstances is not new, however, yet again has CAF members worried about the misuse of military capabilities resulting in the 'this is not what we do, this is not who we are' debates. This is a predictable response: the CAF has a long history of telling itself stories which work to rebut the resilient view of many Canadians of soldiers in blue berets armed with teddy bears doing random acts of kindness.[23]

While CAF members hope the current defence policy update will provide clear articulation of what the CAF is to do and to be, the 'desperate search for certainty' is likely to remain unanswered.[24] Many in uniform resist Peter Feaver's observation that the 'people' have the right to choose what kind of military they want—and have the right to be wrong.[25] The 'mess discussions' over the government not understanding the purpose of the armed forces are likely to continue as the CAF is tasked with responding to more natural disasters and serious pandemics. While the work performed by CAF members in the middle of COVID was of importance to those assisted, changing bedsheets in care homes challenges the heroic warrior as doing work the 'average civvy' could do, and erodes the military exceptionalism of being capable of achieving extraordinary feats that others could never accomplish.

Backlash to Gender Equality

Work on Canada's National Action Plan for Women, Peace and Security has recognized that those advancing gender equality are increasingly under attack.[26] Judicial and legislative actions in several countries that have eroded hard-won equality rights and women in public life in Canada and elsewhere are being subject to increased hate and threats.[27] The CAF is not immune to these trends.[28]

One explanation is that patriarchy is the most powerful hegemonic system, constantly operating to preserve the power and status of those privileged. Kimberlé Crenshaw illustrated that patriarchy and structural racism create the conditions of social struggle where work to advance equality rights is never done; it is constantly at risk of being eroded.[29] As illustration, Canada has had 55+ years of formal activity to advance gender equality—including in the CAF—but the Arbour Report indicates there remains much to be done.[30] The concept of social struggle against patriarchy suggests that those influencing military identity have to be constantly vigilant as the pressures to revert to the dominant masculinist form will continue to resurface.

These forces help explain the contrasting responses of those 'about time' versus the 'slippery slope' sub-groups in the CAF. Those with concerns may use external narratives to justify the status quo and argue changes are not warranted or wise. Conversely, those who see meaningful advances as being under attack will increase their efforts to confront systems of

oppression. Generational analyses indicate that young women in North America are increasingly impatient with the pace of social changes, with a perceived need for significant advances and heightened vigilance to monitor erosions.[31]

The Rise of Prevention

The next thread comes from evolutions in UN and NATO approaches to military tasks. As per UNSCR 1325,[32] the professional view has been that the role of the military is to provide protection; however, the emerging issue is its expansion to prevention. The 2017 Vancouver Principles require the military to not just deal with encounters with child soldiers, but to prevent their recruitment. This is also now included in NATO direction on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV): "NATO planners will identify objectives, tasks and related assessment tools to prevent and respond to CRSV."[33] Similar consideration of prevention roles are emerging under the NATO human security themes of Children and Armed Conflict and Cultural Property Protection and will come under another NATO human security issue of combatting trafficking in human beings.

Back to the professional framework, a shift in the military role to prevention will require updating assigned responsibilities, required expertise, and constructed identity. The latter will, again, lead to internal debates as to who 'we' are, what 'we' are expected to do and what 'we' value, and ultimately, changes to the military worldview.[34] This worldview directly frames 'sense making': especially how information is collected, analyzed, and acted on.[35]

More broadly, the expansion of potential military roles or military contributions to integrated 'whole of mission' approaches to addressing prevention will have several consequences. As the military will not be the lead actor, this will require the CAF to work closely with, and often subordinate to, others who have the lead. Further, while ensuring physical protection can draw on expertise that is associated with the combat warrior role, prevention requires new knowledge and skills to effectively engage with civil society organizations and local communities. Thus, increased emphasis on prevention has the potential to disrupt the broadly constructed identity as well as the internal social hierarchies of who is the most important for mission success.

AI and Cyber

A topic of increased attention in the military is the exploitation of artificial intelligence (by own and hostile forces). Evolutions in this domain are also likely to cause disruptions to collective identity and internal hierarchies. In a 2022 webinar organized by the Transforming Military Cultures network, Australian sociologist Samantha Crompvoets stimulated a discussion by observing that AI, cyber, and robotics are changing not only how the military conducts activities but what activities are being conducted and by whom, with disruption to the ideal military identity. This starts with 'cyber warriors' and remote UAV operators—who clearly do not have to meet common military fitness standards. This issue has been identified as problematic for the CAF when held against the current universality of service policy.[36] Again, changes in what work needs to be done can lead to amendments to who does these tasks, the nature of the work environment and, ultimately, the image of the military member who performs this work. Internal jokes over remote drone operators wearing flight suits are one example of contested military identities.

The issue of drone operators is of importance for two other reasons, and especially for those who are actively engaged in the 'kill chain.' One narrative had been that drone operators are well removed from the battle zone and physical risk, hence not seen as 'real combatants.' These narratives have implications on the social hierarchies of relative importance and also extend to how individuals are seen by others. For instance, some drone operators are at high risk of mental health issues but were not initially acknowledged as such by the military medical system.[37] The degree to which a military member's identity and employment match the prototype ideal, the more likely they are to be given institutional and peer support when in need.

An extension for all working with autonomous systems pertains to the moral and ethical consequences of actions taken.[38] Articulated professional values, constructed identity, and internalized responsibilities merge to inform not just 'who I am/what I do,' but 'how I am to do it.' Just War Theory and the Laws of Armed Conflict provide the principle-based moral foundations for military decision-making regarding the application of lethal force. Other than the fact that flight suits have pockets in the right places for drone operators, the practices of the total institution consistently remind the military member of who they are and the values to be given emphasis when making complex moral judgements. Returning to Goffman's total institution, the assumption is that wearing the uniform connects the individual to their profession.

To extend, a more critical shift has been that the information domain has become a battle space on its own. The net result is that the fight is often now over the narrative not territory. Shifts in military roles and in who engages in

which battles serves to displace the supremacy of those who use kinetic actions to take and hold ground. It is plausible to predict that evolutions regarding AI, cyber, and robotics will not just alter military tactics, but lead to ongoing cultural scuffles over roles, social standing and, ultimately, professional identity.

Implications

This article is based on the recognition that patriarchal hegemonic systems work to preserve the status quo and that these systems are deeply embedded in not only policies but daily practices. This is not accidental or merely a side consequence of military functioning: as a centuries-old profession, the CAF engages in intentional processes which are specifically designed to inculcate novices into the espoused professional identity, values, and worldview and then sustain these characteristics over the course of military service. The mechanisms enacted to do so include rites of passage such as course graduations, promotion or change of command ceremonies, and formal parades; ritualized actions such as saluting, scripted language for exchanges between subordinates and seniors, and the conduct of mess dinners; constructed narratives such as Taber's described boss texts and ideological codes as well as those conveyed in formal training and informal oral histories; enforced social ordering which starts with ranks and the use of military discipline, and surfaces in daily exchanges in which individuals place themselves in relation to others; and the pervasive use of symbolism in artwork, customs, traditions, regalia, and the naming of roads, buildings, and other infrastructure. As indicated with the reference to tight cultures, each of these facets is based on the concept of conveying a past that must be preserved.

As stated in the introduction, the daily communication of these professional functions serves to continuously remind each person of not just the role and purpose of the armed forces but of the way in which the prototype ideal member is to be constructed and performed and of their status within the institution and in relation to all others. In doing so, identity and self-image emerge as central to professional belonging. It is for this reason that efforts to shift identity attract the attention of CAF members and often evoke significant debate. The presentation of the rationales for the predictable pushback illustrated why some see it as their professional duty to express concerns when they perceive that such shifts may put mission success at risk.

Through the actions of collectives such as the officer or non-commissioned corps or of individuals, CAF members are encouraged to have agency in how their profession functions and how their actions align with espoused values, beliefs, and expectations. Culture, writ large, is the embodiment of an array of components which continuously interact to retain valued characteristics and repel what can be seen as dangerous changes. This is the reasoning behind Peter Drucker's observation that culture eats strategy for breakfast. What is of greater importance is that when the strategy is to change culture: culture will eat that strategy for lunch, dinner, and midnight snack.

A central point offered is that sociologist Morris Janowitz was right: the military does not exist in a social vacuum but is constantly buffeted by external changes which influence the profession, including shared and individual identity.[39] The emerging issues discussed are presented to illustrate that there will always be multiple internal and external forces at play which can influence military culture. Each of the topics described have or are likely to provoke internal discussions pertaining to central aspects of identity: who are we, and who am I, in this social environment? As such, the constructed identity will often be under negotiation: by the profession with government and society; by military leadership with subordinates; and, amongst military members at the small group level.

The CPCC initiatives to shift aspects of military culture are seen as intended to contribute to negotiations in all three domains. While top-down initiatives can serve as one influence on identity, these can be received as background noise which is drowned out by daily exchanges stimulated by other factors of importance to how military members see themselves and each other. Having multiple factors at play informs Taber's observation that it will take time to determine what effects *Trusted to Serve* will have; the same goes for proposed CPCC initiatives.

Organizational change initiatives will likely shift where and how subgroup tensions over identity, social hierarchies, and allocated privilege will become visible to senior leadership. When 'disturbed' by external forces or internal initiatives, narratives will be constructed to counter the changes and preserve key characteristics of the dominant identity.[40] Those working to shift culture would be wise to monitor these informal spaces and especially the narratives that are likely to emerge.[41]

Finally, those seeking to influence identity and culture must recognize the permeability of professional boundaries and the implications of evolutions in broader society. Applying critical analyses to understand these social dynamics and to monitor evolving tensions is of importance; doing so with future-focused assessments of social evolutions, especially, amongst young Canadians and, especially, of their views of the CAF can avoid EPSs (easily predicted surprises). CMJ Canadian Military Journal

Notes

1 The Arbour Report (Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces*, Borden Ladner Gervais, 2022) is only the latest in a string that date back to at least the 1967-71 Royal Commission on the Status of Women and extend to Brooke Claxton's fight in 1946-48 with the senior officers of the day to overcome inherited British classism to allow non-commissioned members to be commissioned and attend Military College.

2 Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* (Stanford Press, 1987).

3 Claire Duncanson, "Hegemonic Masculinity and the Possibility of Change in Gender Relations," *Men and Masculinities 18* (2015): 231-248; Maya Eichler, "Militarized Masculinities in International Relations," *Brown Journal of World Affairs 21* (2014): 81-93; Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (University of California Press, 2000).

4 Sandra Whitworth, "Militarized Masculinities and the Politics of Peacekeeping: The Canadian Case," in *Critical Security Studies in World Politics*, ed. Ken Booth (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2005), 93.

5 Padraig Moran, "Sen. Murray Sinclair Urges Canadians to Reckon with Systemic Racism," *Social Sharing CBC News*, January 27 2021, https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-jan-27-2021-1.5888592/sen-murray-sinclair-urges-canadians-to-reckon-with-systemic-racism-1.5888597.

6 Erving Goffman, Asylums: *Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Doubleday, 1961).

7 Chief of the Defence Staff, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2004), 51-56.

8 An example is the Australian 'digger' identity from the Gallipoli Campaign. The constructed digger emphasizes endurance, courage, ingenuity, good humour, and egalitarian mateship. Sheffield commented: Historians have critiqued this 'Anzac Legend': the supposedly egalitarian nature of the Australian Imperial Force has been exaggerated, while larrikinism shaded into racism and criminality (https://www.historyextra.com/period/first-world-war/the-myths-of-the-battle-of-gallipoli/).

9 Nancy Taber, "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice 34* no. 1 (2009): 27-36.

10 Taber, "The Profession of Arms," 34.

11 Chief of the Defence Staff, *Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve* (Canadian Defence Academy Professional Concepts and Leader Development, 2022).

12 Nancy Taber, "Trusted to Serve: Rethinking the CAF Ethos for Culture Change," *Canadian Military Journal 22*, no. 3 (2022): 13.

13 Taber, "Trusted to Serve," 18.

14 Vanessa Brown, "Situating Feminist Progress in Professional Military Education," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice 41,* no. 2 (2020): 26-41.

15 Victoria Tait, "Regendering the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice 41*, no. 2 (2020): 13.

16 Vanessa Brown and Al Okros, "Dancing Around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada's Post-Deschamps Military" in *Culture and the Soldier: Identities, Values, and Norms in Military Engagements*, ed. H. Christian Breede (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 32-56; Al Okros, "Rethinking 'Diversity' and 'Security'," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics 47*, no. 4 (2009): 346-373.

17 Danielle Andela, "The Return of the Old Brigade," *eVeritas*, September 28th, 2014, https://everitas.rmcclub.ca/the-return-of-the-old-brigade/.

18 The literature demonstrates the key is task not social cohesion; see Robert MacCoun, Elizabeth Kier, and Aaron Belkin, "Does Social Cohesion Determine Motivation in Combat?" *Armed Forces & Society 32*, no. 4 (2006): 646-654.

19 Chief of the Defence Staff. *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2003/2009).

20 Chief of the Defence Staff, *Canadian Armed Forces Ethos*.

21 Andrew Abbott, *The System of Professions: An Essay on the Division of Expert Labor* (Chicago IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1988).

22 Alan C. Okros, Sarah Hill, and Frank Conrad Pinch, *Between 9/11 and Kandahar: Attitudes of Canadian Forces Officers in Transition* (Kingston, ON: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 2008).

23 Consistently reported in opinion surveys including 2022 Earnscliffe "Views of the Canadian Armed Forces."

24 Douglas L. Bland, *Issues in Defence Management* (Kingston, ON: School of Policy Studies, Queen's University, 1998), since the mid-60s; the response to 'what do you want us to do?' is 'be flexible'; 'what is our budget?' is 'a dollar less than the bare minimum'; and 'who do you want us to be' is 'friendly'.

25 See Peter D. Feaver "The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control," *Armed Forces & Society 23*, no. 2 (1996): 149-178. http://www.jstor.org/stable/45347059 for the conceptual presentation and Okros et al (2008) for CAF officer responses.

26 Luna K.C., *Cyber and Women, Peace and Security: Current Practices and Future Research Needs* (Dallaire Centre of Excellence for Peace and Security, 2023).

27 Fernando Arce, "Online Hate Against Women on the Rise, Alarms Advocates," *New Canadian Media*, June 15 2022, https://newcanadianmedia.ca/online-hate-against-women-on-the-rise-alarms-advocates/.

28 Murray Brewster, Canadian Navy Cancels Training Course After Alleged Racist and Sexual Misconduct Incidents," March 18, 2022, https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/navy-sexual-misconduct-racism-1.6389223.

29 Kimberlé W. Crenshaw, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

30 Counting from PM Pearson's Feb 1967 Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada.

31 Alan Okros, *Harnessing the Potential of Digital Post-Millennials in the Future Workplace* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020).

32 Prevention, participation, protection, relief and recovery.

33 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), *NATO Policy on Preventing and Responding to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*, May 2021, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_184570.htm.

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35 Often explained with reference to the discipline's ontology, epistemology, and methods.

36 Tony Keene, "Relaxing Universality of Service Rule Risks Creating a System of Two-Tiered Military Service," *CBC News*, October 21st, 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/opinion/universality-of-service-1.4363985; John P. Southen, *Balancing University of Service with Critical Skill Retention*, Service paper: *Forces* (Toronto: Canadian Forces College, 2016)

37 Kinsey B. Bryant-Lees, Lillian Prince, Tanya Goodman, Wayne Chappelle, and Billy Thompson, "Sources of Stress and Psychological Health Outcomes for Remotely Piloted Aircraft Operators: A Comparison Across Career Fields and Major Commands," *Military Medicine 186* (2021): 784-795; Rajiv Kumar Saini, M. S. V. K. Raju, and Amit Chail, "Cry in the Sky: Psychological Impact on Drone Operators, *Indian Psychiatry Journal 30*, no. 1 (2021): 15-19.

38 Robert Bailey, *The Challenges Created by Autonomous Systems and Artificial Intelligence*, Canadian Forces College, 2015; A. R. W. Jordan, *The Ethics and Morality of Armed UAV Strikes by Armed Forces*, Canadian Forces College, 2016; Peter Olsthoorn, Risks, Robots, and the Honorableness of the Military Profession. In *Chivalrous Combatants? The Meaning of Military Virtue Past and Present*, ed. Bernard Koch (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2019), 163-168.

39 Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*; Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (New York: Free Press, 1960). A recurring comparison is between Huntington's assertion that the military culture needs to be unique enough to be kept apart from society; Janowitz argued that the military needed porous borders to be kept part of society.

40 Jennifer Louise Petriglieri, "Under Threat: Responses to and the Consequences of Threats to Individuals' Identities," *Academy of Management Review 36*, no. 4 (2011): 641-662.

41 As an illustration, during my time involved in the late 1980s with the planned research for the Combat Related Employment of Women (CREW) trials, the narrative that emerged in many quarters was that all men could leap a tall building in a single bound; no woman could climb a flight of stairs.

A member of HMCS EDMONTON's quick response team stands guard as part of a refresher exercise during Operation CARIBBE, October 31, 2018.

Image by: Op CARIBBE Imagery Technician

Gender Identity, Professional Identity, and Military Culture: Challenges in the Implementation of Gender Policies in the Argentinian Armed Forces

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Gender policies in the area of defence in Argentina were created in 2006. They occurred in a context of the consolidation of democratization and modernization of the Armed Forces, which began when the last military dictatorship ended in 1983. This article explores the complexities and intersections between gender identity, professional identity, and military culture in the Argentinian Armed Forces. I analyze the challenges in the implementation of policies aimed at achieving greater gender equality by looking at the hierarchy of women's positioning in the Argentinian Armed Forces (AAF) and their corresponding professional identities (Officers, Non-Commissioned Officers, Command Corps, Professional Corps). I examine the specific barriers faced by women in the command corps and discuss the institutional space that holds the most power and prestige within the AAF.[1] To this end, I draw on the sociology of professional groups and feminist concepts of gender, masculinity, and gendered institutions.

This article is the result of research work about women in the command corps carried out in 2018–2019 as part of the research project "Evaluation of Gender Policies in the field of Defense: advances, obstacles and challenges (2007–2017)" which was led by me and supported by the National Defense University, and informed by my own professional experience in the Armed Forces.[2] My experience as a researcher, as a member of the Gender Policy Council of the Ministry of Defense (2007–2019), and later as Director of Gender Policy of the Ministry of Defense (since 2020) has provided me different points of view on the institution and women's positioning when analyzing my research data.[3]

I found that, within military culture, women who are part of the command corps, which is the most prestigious and powerful corps, do not identify with gender policies and do not want to make use of their benefits.[4] From their perspective, these policies work against achieving their full integration into the institution, and the possibility of fully identifying with being part of the military culture.

In spite of differences in the contemporary historical timelines regarding the expansion of women's roles in the military, my analysis reinforces the impacts of shared foundational values, across the Canadian Armed Forces and other militaries, when the primacy of male heterosexual values-based hierarchies intersects with national policy calling for social change.[5] This article contributes to the development of gender policies focused on the transformation of military culture and the promotion of greater equality.

National Context

Since 1958, the Armed Forces of the Argentine Republic have been under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defence; and since 1983, the ministers have been civilians. After six coup d'états during the 20th century and the end of the last military dictatorship (1976–1983), which resulted in the forced disappearance and exile of thousands of Argentine citizens, the elected democratic government outlined guidelines to democratize the AAF. The Trial of the Juntas that took place in 1985 condemned those most responsible for crimes against humanity committed during the dictatorship.[6] From 1988 onwards, legislation was approved in favour of a new regulatory framework that separated national defense from internal security and laid the basis for the "civilian management of defence."[7] However, this process was not easy. The 1985 trials were suspended by the enactment of two national laws, and a presidential decree did not resume until 2003.[8] Within this context, gender policies within the defense sector were introduced in 2006 with the support from Argentinian civil society that promoted and accompanied, through the solid activism of the human rights movement, the process known as "Memoria, Verdad y Justicia" (Memory, Truth, and Justice). This is an example of how social factors (such as civil society demanding, through social activism, respect for human rights), in a political scenario in which the Armed Forces are discredited, influenced military policies on the integration of women.

In 2005, the first female defence minister, Nilda Garré, promoted a series of measures to deepen the democratization of the Armed Forces. The most important were: a) the reform of the military justice law which abolished military jurisdiction (Law 26394);[9] b) the regulation of the defence law passed in 1988 that prohibits the military from intervening in internal security affairs; c) the modernization of military education, with officer training programs to be approved by the Ministry of Defence, not only by the Ministry of Defence; and d) the participation of the military in technological production and development in coordination with civilian research institutions and universities.

Gender policies were oriented towards the creation of institutional mechanisms, such as gender offices, normative transformation, spaces for debate and advice, and gender training programs. Gender policies also focused on the resolution of disciplinary cases related to violence against women and LGBTQI+ persons and the development of protocols for

Members from 41 Canadian Brigade Group (CBG) pose for a group photo while conducting fire prevention operations, in Drayton Valley, Alberta, on May 16, 2023, in support of Operation LENTUS 23.

Image by: MCpl Genevieve Lapointe, Canadian Forces Combat Camera, Canadian Armed Forces photo

action on gender-based violence. In 2006, the Observatory for Women in the Armed Forces and the Gender Policy Council, an advisory committee to the Minister of Defense, was created. In 2008, a Gender Office was created for each branch of the military (Air Force, Army, and Navy) and in 2009, the Gender Policy Directorate was created under the National Directorate of Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law of the National Defense University.

In 2021, after 16 years of institutionalization of the first gender mechanisms, the gender policy was prioritized through the creation of a Gender Department in each branch of the military with a total of 16 Gender Offices and more than 150 focal points. Their functions are to receive inquiries and complaints of discrimination and gender-based violence, provide training, advise commanders, and build a statistical database. The Directorate of Gender Policies elaborated an Integral Plan of Gender Policies (2021-2023), approved by the Minister of Defence, which defines the fundamental concepts and common objectives for the three military services and the Joint Chiefs of Staff. To involve the highest ranks in the discussions, the Working Groups for the Mainstreaming of the Gender Perspective in the Armed Forces were created, which are composed of the general directors of personnel, health, education, legal affairs, and the heads of the gender departments of each military service. Likewise, National Law 27499 (Micaela Law) is being implemented, which stipulates mandatory training on gender and gender-based violence for all the staff working in the public service as well as in the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of the government, including all armed forces personnel. In terms of formal education, two degrees are currently being offered in the armed forces, one exclusively for armed forces personnel and the other for civilians and military personnel, as well as a post-graduate program in Gender Policies in Institutional Management through the National Defence University.

That is to say, through the existence of a solid policy and by the means of different efforts sustained over time, all of these practices provided the framework in which discrimination and violence complaints are resolved. However, cultural change for the achievement of equality and inclusion of diversity is still a challenge. The Argentinian situation presents a similar picture to other armed forces like Canada's, which is noted in the Final Report of the Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination for the DND/CAF (DND 2022).[10] Some members have left the AAF because they are not willing to work towards a more inclusive society; some members are fighting against these cultural changes; some members "shut up and put up." They do not agree with the changes but resist silently, and many other members understand and try to adapt to this new environment.[11] In short, there is a diverse situation of inequity for women and each situation must be analyzed in its own context, because not all women face the same types of obstacles in military culture.

Review of Women's Integration into the AAF

Currently, 19.5% of AAF military personnel are women and 80.5% are men.[12] The percentage of women is relatively high compared to other armed forces in the world. However, the percentage of women varies with respect to their positioning within the institution. When I compare the number of women in the Command Corps to the number of women in the Professional Corps, the percentage is significantly lower:

	Command Corps (%)	Professional Corps (%)
Army	6.6	47.74
Navy	9	26
Air Force	5.4	49.7

Table 1: Women in the Command Corps and women in the Professional Corps[13]

The difference in the percentage of women in Command Corps and Professional Corps reflects women's long term integration process in the AAF. The integration of women into the institutional structure took place at three different points in time: the early 1980s, the 1990s, and in 2012. The first stage was in the early 1980s, during the last years of the military dictatorship and the Malvinas War, with the incorporation of female personnel into the Professional Corps (as nurses) and into the NCO Corps. The second stage was promoted by a democratic government and began with a reform in the recruitment of soldiers for compulsory military service. In 1994, The Compulsory Military Service was suspended and replaced by a Voluntary Military Service that also allowed the incorporation of women. Since the compulsory military service was one of the mechanisms of citizenship reserved only for males,[14] the voluntary military service challenged these mechanisms, allowing women into military service. This stage was followed up in 1997 with the incorporation of women into the Command Corps. Both changes were extremely important in the way that they transformed the exclusively male identity of two very significant institutional spaces. The Army was the first element to allow women into the Command Corps, in 1997; but the last one to open all branches for women's access. In 2012, the third stage led to the opening of the cavalry and infantry to women.

The representation of women's incorporation into the AAF shows that they initially accessed positions with less power and prestige; subsequently, they reached positions with greater professional opportunities. Currently, there are no restrictions on women's access in the AAF. However, reports of psychological harassment and the low retention of women in some branches, show that there is still resistance to the presence of women in the military.

Theoretical Framework

In order to describe the challenges for the integration of women into AAF, I will reflect on the feminist concepts of gender, masculinity, and gendered institutions. According to Joan Scott's[15] traditional definition of gender, in her article "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," gender is a primary factor in power relations. What I would like to add to this sociological definition of gender is Raewyn Connell's considerations about gender as a sexual difference, concentrating on masculinity. Connell defines masculinity, as being inherently relational and only existing in contrast with 'femininity' in the modern European/American dualistic conception.[16] Connell also states that women are certainly regarded as different from men, but different in the sense of being incomplete or inferior. Finally, she considers that to define masculinity we need to focus on the processes and relationships through which men and women carry out gendered lives. For Connell, 'masculinity' "is simultaneously a place in gender relations, the practices through which men and women engage that place in gender, and the effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality, and culture."[17] With respect to gendered institutions, I draw on Joan Acker's key text.[18] She considers an organization to be "gendered" when advantages and disadvantages, exploitation and control, action and emotion, and meaning and identity are modeled through (and in terms of) a distinction between men and women, and between masculine and feminine.

In more recent work, Helena Carreiras considers gender as a significant element to understand the structure of advantage and exploitation in the military, along three dimensions. First, the military's organizational structure is based on gender divisions, both in terms of opportunity and power (hierarchical divisions) and in terms of occupational structure (gender-based division of labor). Secondly, it is male dominated in terms of numeric representation, especially in the areas that are more closely related to the core functions of the institution, exactly those are that confer not only more prestige and rewards, but also possibilities to access the higher hierarchical ranks. Third, from the point of view of culture and the structure of cathexis, hegemonic masculine definitions of military conflate with hegemonic masculine culture and ideology.[19]

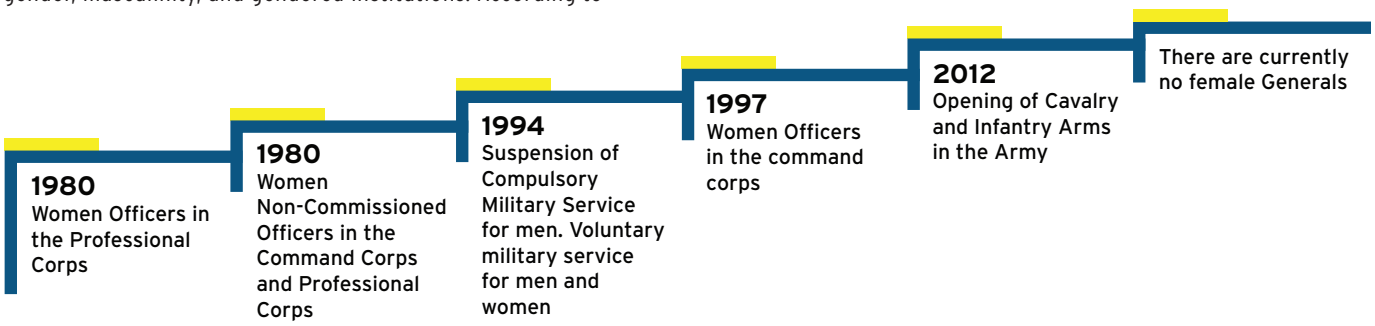

Figure 1: Incorporation of women in the AAF

To understand the specificity of the female command corps officers' experience, I will analyze the professional and gender identity, which is inherent to the culture of the AAF. Based on the framework of the sociology of professional groups and the aforementioned gender concepts, I will construct an ideal typology and assign positive or negative values to professional and gender identity, following the values of military culture.

Luc Boltanski's work on *cadres* in French society shows that we can only unveil singular, daily, and fleeting phenomena, which belong to the psychological order, if we know the history of the group we are analyzing and its structures.[20] Only in this way is it possible to construct an argument about the formation and attributes of the cognitive instruments (schemas, categories, concepts, etc.), based on what people think about the group and their belonging to it. The author quotes Eleonor Rosch to show that there is an important difference between practical taxonomies and constructed concepts. While in constructed concepts, each category is clearly differentiated from the other; in practical taxonomies, the cognitive process follows a different logic. These are organized around a *core meaning*, consisting of the best examples of a category, for example, those that are considered as "clear cases." Rosch shows that this category has an internal structure that is not composed of undifferentiated and equivalent elements. The cases that are considered as paradigmatic are covered by a sort of halo by the other members of the category; and that halo expands in an order of "decreasing similarity."

I will use these considerations as a starting point to analyze the core meaning of the military institution and its internal hierarchy. To this end, I will consider the professional identification, on the one hand, and the gender identification, on the other.

The Intersection of Gender Policies and Military Culture

My fieldwork and my experience as a policymaker showed me that women's involvement in gender policies depends on their position within the structure of the armed forces. That is to say, gender policies are more accepted among professional military women and NCOs than among officers in the Command Corps. My argument is that this is because the former belongs to support bodies, while the latter are part of the "heart of the institution's identity."

The first internal difference in the military category is between officers and non-commissioned officers. All officers, both in the Command and in the Professional Corps, are hierarchically superior to the non-commissioned officers. However, within the Officers there is a distinction between Command Corps Officers (CCO) and Professional Corps Officers (PCO), which is based on the difference in training that translates into institutional legitimacy and into the possibilities of promotion to the highest hierarchies. The only ones who can "command" the Armed Forces are the CCOs, who have greater power and prestige over professions such as medicine, odontology, nursing, psychology, physical education, and computer science, among others.

By the same token, there are also distinctions within the CCO category. In each force, there is a career field that ideally represents the identity of the force. For the army it is the cavalry, for the air force it is the pilots; and for the Navy, it is the naval officers. If I take the air force as an example, a new distinction is applied within the category of pilots. Among them, the most valued are fighter pilots, to the detriment of transport and helicopter pilots. In short, in this example, the core meaning of the air force is fighter pilots.

Regarding the sex-gender identities, I analyze male and female identities, taking into account the exclusion of the women from the legitimate use of arms in the process of bureaucratization and professionalization of the armed forces. From that moment on, the identity of the armed forces was constructed exclusively as a masculine identity and opposite to the feminine identity, the former acquiring greater value than the latter. I will add to this what Françoise Héritier calls the "differential valence of the sexes."[21] According to Héritier, these data are "at the origin of cognitive categories: operations of classification, qualification, hierarchization, structures in which the masculine and the feminine are enclosed."[22] The author emphasizes that these categories, beyond the specific content in each culture, are extraordinarily durable. This is the case because they are inculcated through education and the cultural environment at a very early stage and are perpetuated through all the explicit and implicit messages and signals of everyday life.

Based on professional and gender identities, the paradigmatic example or the core meaning for the military is a heterosexual man in the Command Corps; and, depending on the force, he will be a cavalryman, a pilot, or a naval officer. In the following table, I show the values of the Command Corps and Professional Corps, and of the gender identities in relation to the core meaning of the category.

Command Corps	+
Professional Corps	-
Men	+
Women	-

Table 2: Values assigned to sex-gender and professional identifications in relation to core meaning

We can see, through the different examples that I propose in the following table, that in each position the signs are combined and the combination forms different identifications. I will call "pure" those for which the same sign gets together, whether positive or negative; and "hybrid" those for which the different signs are joined.

Women command corps	- +	Hybrid
Male command corps	+ +	Pure
Women professional corps	- -	Pure
Male professional corps	+ -	Hybrid

Table 3: Pure and hybrid types in relation to core meaning

According to this classification, there are two pure and two hybrid identifications. The pure ones, which are formed by the grouping of the same value signs are stable and they reinforce an ideal identity and are not disruptive in relation to the core meaning. Thus, the female Professional Corps Officers add up to two negative value signs (they are not men, and they do not come from the Command Corps) which means that they are positive in favour of the reinforcement of a feminine identity. The same happens with male CCOs, they add up to two positive signs that place them in a central position in the military category. Hybrid identifications, for which the different value signs are grouped, are disruptive and they can produce contradictions and alterations. For instance, the CCO women category has a negative value (women) and a positive value (Command Corps).

Based on my interviews, the treatment of CCO men (especially the older ones) towards PCO women is different than their treatment towards CCO women. In the former case, CCO men highlight PCO women's sexual/gender identity as women over their professional identity as military. They usually call them by their first name instead of their family name and do not sanction them or reprimand them for the non-regulated use of the uniform (high heels, certain types of earrings, etc.). Since they are not considered "real military," their presence and appearance do not interfere, in a significant way, with the military's core meaning. On the contrary, they can function as the contrast from which the military identity is reinforced.

In the case of female CCOs, with whom different value signals are associated, male CCOs find it difficult to treat them the same as the other male officers, but they also do not treat them the same as the female PCOs. For example, they tend to be stricter with female CCOs in wearing the uniform and keeping with their schedules. But on some occasions, such as the military parades, they order them to be together with the women, most of them being the PCOs. For them, trained in the "military spirit," not being considered strictly as military is considered as "a form of degradation." A young female officer describes it as follows:

> *In the first ceremony I attended in my time in the Condor Building, as an Ensign in my third year, I was to be placed among the male Officers. That's how I was used to it. That's what we learned in the [Aviation] School. Because we considered ourselves one of the Corps. Then a Chief Officer of the Professional Corps called me to tell me that the women were in a separate section (where they were all professionals). INCONCEIVABLE to me. But I left the men's section and went to the other section, which by the way I was in charge of, so that's what I did. (Subordinate Officer)*

The interviewee used the word "degradation" which for her is considered as "very harsh." If we move away from the common sense meaning of the word (to dishonor, humiliate, and degrade) and place it in the military logic, the meaning of "de-grade" acquires its full sense, which means "to remove the rank." This is the feeling that female CCOs experience when they are treated as PCOs. When CCOs identify them as women and not as military, the figure of the "military woman" as an oxymoron clearly appears.[23] Faced with the constant demand to belong and the lack of their full recognition, they experience a sense of frustration and disappointment with the institution. Their presence in the CC is a wound to the heart of the identity of the institution. However, currently the experiences are varied and complex. While they are still rejected by some CCOs, there are signs of acceptance and assimilation by others.

In the case of the second hybrid category, that of the PCO men, as with the CCO women, gender identity takes precedence over professional identity. However, since in this case it is a

positive value (masculine), their integration into the institution takes place in a climate of complicity and of camaraderie that does not generate major conflicts. As the interviewees say, the CCOs feel comfortable and relaxed when they are dealing with the male PCOs.[24]

In such an institutional space where demands made on women are stronger and the possibility of recognition of them is lower, gender policies are resisted by women CCOs. Most of them, although they are aware of the existence of these policies, do not identify them as a tool intended for them, and somehow, consider the approach of the Gender Offices as branding that could discredit them. For those, who "do not want to be different," adherence to gender policies would mean accepting the difference. Drawing on the words of another of my interviewee, one expressed that, "We do not identify with gender policies because we adhere to the supposedly neutral concept of institutional places and we want to be part of it." From their perspective, gender policies, as they are conceived, affect the honor and the military values associated with masculinity. They instead sacrifice their femininity to these masculine values. Many have endured harassment and intimidation without making any complaints.

Although, at first, they denied any difficulty, during the interviews, some of them identified certain experiences as negative, and (often visibly distressed) they reported situations of harassment, bullying, and/or humiliation.[25] Some have been asked to leave, others have endured in silence, without even thinking of resorting to the Gender Offices for help or advice. There is one fact that unfailingly connects CCOs to gender policies: motherhood. In this sense, it is essential to consider the importance of the bodily experience for them. It is the pregnant body that may show them the non-neutrality of the professional career path of the military. Nancy Taber analyzes how military women who are mothers learn to understand, accept, shape and/or resist personal, professional and organizational gender discourses and embody various ways of masculinity and femininity that enable them to negotiate in the military context.[26] There is a big difference in the perception of CCO women between those who are not yet mothers and those who are going through the stage of pregnancy, puerperium, breastfeeding, and care. Those who have not yet become mothers maintain the illusion of assimilation, while those who have already had children wonder if there is a real possibility of being considered part of the core meaning of the institution in a career that is explicitly masculine, but which claims to be neutral. The position of CCO women in the AAF is an oxymoron, where everything in the CCO that denotes femininity is seen as a contradiction of terms. Therefore, it is not uncommon that the absences due to pregnancy and/or care are conceived as "abusive," especially by senior male officers, but also by other women who have been in the institution without gender policies or who do not yet have children.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In this article, I focused first on the context in which gender policies within the realm of defence were developed in Argentina. I showed how these policies were shaped and constituted by civil society's demands to democratize the armed forces. These policies, which were developed for 16 years, and have been expanding, showed their limits when they were rejected by some of their beneficiaries: the female officers of the Command Corps.

The Argentinian case is useful to the Canadian Armed Forces as well as to other armed forces for several reasons. First, it shows the relevance of civil-military relationships for the achievement of cultural change in military institutions. A mobilized and active civil society demanding cultural change in the armed forces is a key tool for institutional transformation. Second, it shows that one of the limitations of the gender policies comes from considering "women" as a homogeneous category, without regard to the particularities of military professional identity and the different positions women occupy within the armed forces. It also shows that: a) the obstacles to women's full integration depend on the prestige and power of the positions they intend to access, b) that the most prestigious positions, which define the ideal identity of a military man, are gendered since gender identity takes precedence over professional identity, and c) that motherhood, as an experience of bodily transformation, is an obstacle for CCOs to access full integration through assimilation strategies that they use when they have not yet become mothers.

Therefore, the objectives of transforming the military culture through the incorporation of the gender perspective should take into consideration that the identity of military women is not homogeneous. Military women's interests and expectations change according to their positioning in the institutional structure. Most gender policies are usually designed through a conception of gender which is based on a homogeneous female identity. This homogenous /monolithic conception of female military identity leaves out key aspects of gender policies to achieve adherence and promote cultural transformation within the armed forces.

Not all women are integrated into the armed forces in the same way. Subordinate identities, whether for reasons of

gender, sexual identity, or race, will assimilate more easily into subordinate positions within the armed forces, but if we want to integrate them into the core meaning of the institution, gender, anti-racist and pro-diversity policies must bear in mind the differences in power and prestige that exist in the institutional architecture. There is no single strategy for achieving equality. If we do not consider the subtleties and intersectionality of professional identities, there is a good chance that policies will be rejected even by their own beneficiaries. To achieve cultural change towards greater equality, it is necessary to combine different strategies that are articulated within the logic and values of the military.

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Notes

1 In this article, I do not analyze structural racism in the AAF, but I discuss it elsewhere. See Laura Masson, "Women in the Military in Argentina: Nationalism, Gender, and Ethnicity", in *Gender Panic, Gender Policy*, eds. Vasilikie Demos and Marcia Texler Segal (Advances in Gender Research, Vol. 24), (Emerald Publishing Limited, 2017), 23–43, https://doi.org/10.1108/S1529-212620170000024002.

2 The fieldwork was conducted in 2018 and 2019 in the Army, Navy, and Air Force, and included semi-structured interviews, open-ended interviews, focus groups, statistical data, and analysis of situations of gender-based violence complaints. An earlier version of this article was published in Laura Masson, *Militares Argentinas. Evaluación de políticas de género en el ámbito de la defensa* (UNDEF Libros, 2020).

3 Laura Masson, "The Impact of Social Research on Gender Policies in the Argentine Armed Forces," in *Understanding the Impact of Social Research on the Military: Reflections and Critiques* 1st ed., eds. Eyal Ben-Ari, Helena Carreiras and Celso Castro (London: Routledge, 2021), https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003165217.

4 In 2022, the Gender Department of the Argentinian Army received 483 complaints from women (civilian and military) for gender-based violence. Of this total, only 25 were from officers, but none were from officers of the Command Corps (Data provided by the Gender Department of the Argentinian Army).

5 On the primacy of hierarchies based on male heterosexual values in the Canadian Armed Forces see Vanessa Brown, "Locating Feminist Progress in Professional Military Education," *Atlantis 41*, no. 2 (2020): 26–41.

6 Paula Canelo, *La Política Secreta de la Última Dictadura Militar Argentina (1976-1983)* (Buenos Aires: Edhasa, 2016); María José Sarrabayrouse Oliveira and María Josefina Martínez, *Crímenes y Juicios: Los Casos de lesa Humanidad en Argentina* (Buenos Aires: TeseoPress, 2021).

7 The objective was that the defense policy should be a public policy decided by the Executive Branch with contributions from the Congress and the academic community. See Ruth Diamint, "La Historia Sin Fin: El Control Civil de los Militares en Argentina," *Nueva Sociedad 21*, no. 3 (2008): 96. The laws approved during this period were the National Defense Law (1988); Internal Security Law (1991); Suspension of the Compulsory Military Service — Voluntary Military Service (1994); Armed Forces Restructuring Law (1998) and National Intelligence Law (2001).

8 After the trial in 1985, the *Punto Final* law was approved, which established the expiration of the criminal action against those who were accused as criminally responsible for having committed the crime of forced disappearance of persons. In 1987, the *Obediencia Debida* law was approved, and considered crimes committed by those below the rank of colonel are not punishable. In 1990, a presidential decree pardoned the civilians and the military personnel who had been condemned. Finally, in 2003, the Law 25.779 was enacted, which declared the nullity of the *Obediencia Debida* and *Punto Final* laws, and the trials were resumed.

9 The military obtained rights such as the impartiality and independence of the judge, the right to defense and the possibility of appealing the sentence, and together with the abolishment of the military code of justice. The death penalty was eliminated from all Argentinian legislation.

10 Minister of National Defence (MND), *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a Focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy*, 2022.

11 MND, *Advisory Panel*, ix.

12 Data provided by the Ministry of Defence, Argentina.

13 Ministry of Defence, Argentina.

14 On this subject see Nira Yuval-Davis, "Género y Nación, Articulaciones del Origen, la Cultura y la Ciudadanía," *Revista de Historia de Mujeres 3*, no. 2 (1996): 163-175; Bernard Boëne, "La Professionnalisation Des Armées: Contexte et Raisons, Impact Fonctionnel et Sociopolitique," *Revue Française de Sociologie 44*, no. 4 (2003): 647-693; Edna Lomsky-Feder and Orna Sasson-Levy, *Women Soldiers and Citizenship in Israel: Gendered Encounters with the State* (London: Routledge, 2018).

15 Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review 91*, no. 5 (1986): 1053-1075.

16 Raewyn Connell, *The Social Organization of Masculinity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

17 Connell, *Social Organization*, 71.

18 Joan Acker, "Hierarchies, Jobs, Bodies: A Theory of Gendered Organizations," *Gender and Society 4*, no. 2 (1990): 139-158.

19 Helena Carreiras, *Gender and the Military: Women in the Armed Forces of Western Democracies* (London: Routledge, 2006).

20 Luc Boltanski, *Les Cadres: La formation d'un Groupe Social* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1982), 463.

21 Françoise Heritier, *Masculino/Femenino: El Pensamiento de la Diferencia* (Buenos Aires: Ariel, 1996).

22 Heritier, *Masculino/Femenino*, 27.

23 Laura Masson and Julia Dominzain, "Mujeres Militares: La Batalla por la Igualdad," *Revista Anfibia* (2017), http://revistaanfibia.com/cronica/la-batalla-porla-igualdad/.

24 Callaghan shows that the approach currently being used to understand culture misses the nuances of how local-level subculture dynamics interact with the organization-level hegemonic culture of the CAF. See Walter Callaghan, "Masculinity and Culture Change in the CAF: Why a Focus on Hegemonic Systems-Level Organizational Culture Will Likely Have Limited Success," Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society (Canada, Ottawa: Carleton University, 2022).

25 Edna Lomsky-Feder and Orna Sasson-Levy, *Women Soldiers and Citizenship in Israel Gendered Encounters with the State* (Routledge, 2018): 9. In their analysis of military women and citizenship in Israel's military, they argue that, in male organizational culture, women are placed in a dual position of outsiders within.

26 Nancy Taber, "'You Better Not Get Pregnant While You're Here': Tensions Between Masculinities and Femininities in Military Communities of Practice," *International Journal of Lifelong Education 30*, no. 3 (2011): 331-348, doi: 10.1080/02601370.2011.570871.

Pte Bédard greets residents and offers them a sterile mask upon entering a COVID-19 vaccination clinic in Drummondville, Qc during Operation VECTOR, January 8, 2022.

Image by: MCpl Richard Hallé, Canadian Armed Forces photo

Power and Culture Change in the Military

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In 2021, following decades of change initiatives in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to address misconduct and support gender integration and diversity, the Canadian military found itself in the midst of another crisis. Parliamentary Committees heard from experts, practitioners, advocates, and defence representatives; the consensus was a need to shift focus to the systemic and cultural elements of the military that perpetuated the behavioural, policy, and structural conditions enabling misconduct and discrimination.[1] This pivot in approach has also been observed internationally, with NATO's *Diversity and Inclusion Programme and Action Plan* asserting its role "as a roadmap to guide organisational efforts that improve diversity, equality and inclusion, and promote cultural change."[2] This review dives into two recently published books which contribute to understandings of military culture, organizational behaviour, and conduct. In this essay, I draw on these important works to provide an overview of key areas of focus for policy makers, practitioners, and scholars. The spotlight on culture change and power provided by these two books is a welcome shift for scholars and advocates who have long called for initiatives that address upstream causes of harm in the military.

In *The Ones We Let Down*, Charlotte Duval-Lantoine guides the reader through gender integration initiatives of the CAF with a focus on the 1990s, which were characterized by an organizational culture that failed to develop leadership accountability—a "toxic culture of leadership."[3] Samantha Crompvoets' *Blood Lust, Trust, and Blame* focuses on the Australian Defence Forces, and calls for an attention to power as a means to change culture long-term.[4] Both authors probe how military organizations approach complex problems, with the failure to do so leading to repeated mistakes. Crompvoets depicts how climate, social networks, and influence operate within a military organization. Ultimately, these systems and structures perpetuate misconduct within certain subgroups, suggesting that change occurs through specific, targeted initiatives. Recognizing the impact of a "total institution" such as the military, Duval-Lantoine shows how tactical action plans that were not tied to accountability or strategic goals have failed to hold leaders accountable. Duval-Lantoine argues that such toxic leadership is based on self-preservation and limited organizational and individual accountability of the Canadian Armed Forces.

Both authors problematize, implicitly or explicitly, the missing connection between broad change initiatives, actions on the ground, and accountability of enacting change. Leveraging the authors' contributions and gleaning insights from critical scholarship, I argue that there is a need for greater attention to the inherent links between culture and power, particularly in the military context. Furthermore, the role of institutional and individual accountabilities requires further exploration.

Culture and Power

There is little disagreement among the authors about what culture is. While they engage with a wealth of literature cited, their discussion of culture can be summarized as the values, norms, and beliefs of an individual or organization, akin to Schein and Schein's framings since 1990 (and beyond).[5] Where the authors diverge is the value placed on culture as a framework and the heavy lifting expected from it. Duval-Lantoine argues that toxic leadership culture is what has limited culture change in support of gender integration.[6] Crompvoets critiques the use of the term culture for its nebulous and unspecific nature and compels the reader to consider power instead of culture, noting that one must dismantle and change how power is distributed in order to change culture. In this sense, culture and power are argued by Crompvoets to be separate and distinct, with Crompvoets' prioritizing climate and social relationships over culture's impact. Throughout Crompvoets' book, however, this stated distinction is not as clear as it could be, due to the frequent deference to norms, values, and beliefs (key facets of culture, simply defined) that uphold the power structures the author seeks to critique.

Addressing the limitations of culture as a framework, Crompvoets calls for tailored approaches to individual misconduct challenges, providing two key examples: a previously successful legislative change to support part-time work hours, and a recommendation to focus on "influencers" within the organization who may be junior.[7] The author calls for readers to question how informal and formal power operates within an organization, who holds power, and how power can shape the type of change pursued or obstruct the progress of change.[8] However, in Crompvoets' otherwise strong pocket-sized work, most examples provided are general calls for challenging prevailing power structures,[9] replicating the author's own critique of culture-focused efforts that are broad and unspecific. To challenge this perspective, I argue that scholars often do not take culture as a monolith and recognize that a culture lens alone may not be sufficient. Some scholars, on the contrary, situate their work within particular contexts, such as the intersections between culture and gender norms.[10,11]

While not opposed to the importance of tangible actions (on the contrary, calling for a more intentional change program), Duval-Lantoine argues that the CAF's habit of developing new initiatives has often missed the forest for the trees. Duval-Lantoine provides several examples of how action plans and recommendations—such as the CF 1993 *Action Plan to Achieve Complete Gender Integration* and the 1996 Defence Diversity Council's goals for diversity and inclusion within the CF—remained disconnected from the broader, systemic issues, such as a sexualized culture, and thus resulted in limited change.

This is where power and culture inevitably meet. The power structures that exist within the military are complex and ubiquitous, and inherently linked to culture. Intersectional and critical scholars continue to call attention to the role of power and intersecting structures of oppression,[12] and in a military context, these insights are ever-growing as scholars call for an understanding of how "intersecting identities and systems of power inform the everyday experiences and institutional culture" of the military.[13] Like culture, power has multiple manifestations, comprised of intersecting systems that perpetuate inequalities.[14] As a result, to only look at power structures—separate from the cultural contexts that uphold them—runs

the risk of losing the contextual details that both Crompvoets and Duval-Lantoine call attention to in their work. The lack of accountability—a critique brought forward by both Crompvoets and Duval-Lantoine—is one example of how patriarchal powers and cultures can uphold the status quo and challenge substantive action and progress.

One can observe the impact of detaching culture from power by considering Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA Plus) in the Canadian case. While GBA Plus is intended to mitigate discriminatory outcomes in policies and programming, military culture has been found to be a deterrent in and of itself for its institutional uptake.[15] The accountability and responsibility mechanisms—linked to the valuing of hierarchy and order within military culture—that Crompvoets calls attention to have also been found to hinder the uptake of GBA Plus in Canada. Internationally, another example of the codependence between power and culture is observed in how military leaders in UN operations are less likely to be removed for underperformance if the officer stems from a powerful country,[16] demonstrating a culture of impunity and the importance of power to the culture.

In short, power is inextricably linked to culture. Power is embedded in the military raison d'être (culture of force/protection), in rank structure (culture of hierarchy and education of senior officers), in team building (culture of camaraderie), in how gender and identity are ignored or harmed (sexist or heteronormative culture),[17] and in how the organization is a colonial agent of the state (settler colonial/racist culture).[18]

Contributions and Conclusion

Duval-Lantoine, Crompvoets, and critical scholars more broadly have dedicated their research to articulating how military organizations have yet to develop initiatives that address the systemic cultural and power structures that perpetuate misconduct, and the impact of limited follow-through accountability on maintaining change efforts. Both books provide an opportunity for scholars and policy makers to understand the diversity of approaches to support organizational change and encourage a dialogue at the policy level. The impact of toxic leadership cultures, and the systemic power structures inherent to military organizations that uphold these cultures, contribute to the overall challenges that military organizations must address should lasting change be the objective.

Moving forward, there are opportunities to build on and prioritize the work of critical scholars who challenge the persisting and prevailing power structures that permeate military cultures. This holistic, cohesive approach—one that recognizes and appreciates how individual behaviours, organizational responsibilities, culture, and power are intertwined[19]—encourages critical reflections for policy makers and military personnel as organizational change efforts continue. Reflected throughout this special issue, neither culture nor power can be ignored when discussing issues of misconduct in military organizations. Power and culture are not simply 'buzz words' to be used in policy documents; they are critical structures that can uphold or upend the shared challenges that Western militaries face.

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Members of the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, participate in fire prevention operations in Grande Prairie, Alberta in support of Operation LENTUS 23-01 on May 11, 2023.

Image by: MCpl Cass Moon, Canadian Armed Forces photo

Women's Deployment Experiences: Safety, Barriers, and CAF Culture Change

SANDRA BISKUPSKI-MUJANOVIC

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Most Canadians consider peacekeeping to be an important part of the country's identity.[1] With the election of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in 2015, the Liberal majority government promised to re-engage Canada in peacekeeping—a promise that also entailed increasing the involvement

of women on peacekeeping operations (PKOs).[2] The Elsie Initiative, a project that aims to help overcome barriers to increasing women's meaningful participation in peacekeeping operations, includes a $15 million global fund to accelerate the deployment of women, as well as additional funding dedicated to the UN Department of Peace Operations to improve their ability to support and benefit from women's presence in higher numbers on peacekeeping missions. The Elsie Initiative also supported the creation of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) methodology, which identifies universal and context-specific barriers to women's full integration in military or police organizations and their access to UN PKO deployment opportunities.[3] The CAF applied this methodology and released its MOWIP assessment in August 2022.

Like other intervention spaces, such as training and education, special attention should be paid to deployment contexts as a site of military culture change. In this perspectives article, I apply my dissertation research about the experiences of servicewomen during deployment on peacekeeping operations (PKOs), as it relates to safety, to the matter of military culture change. I begin with a brief overview of literature on Canadian peacekeeping and gender, then discuss my research findings to better understand women's barriers on deployment, specifically regarding safety. In order to foster culture change in the CAF, women's unique gendered barriers on deployment must be addressed in a meaningful way, moving away from operational effectiveness arguments to justify women's increased representation.

Literature Review

Conversations about the increased representation of women in the international arena were formally institutionalized with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325, the basis of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. UNSCR 1325 includes four pillars: participation, prevention, protection, and relief and recovery. It calls for the increased participation of women in peace processes, the protection of women and girls from sexual and gender-based violence, the prevention of violence against women, and the need to address international crises through a lens of gender equality. UN member states have shown their commitment to UNSCR 1325 through the implementation of National Action Plans (NAPs) in which governments identify their priorities and responsibilities and commit to operationalizing and implementing WPS. Canada's current NAP on WPS, along with the Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), the Elsie Initiative, and Canada's defence policy, *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, form the basis of Canada's feminist foreign policy.

Canada's NAP stresses that women have "vital roles in establishing and maintaining peace" and must be involved in conflict prevention and peacemaking in order to achieve global peace and security; to this end, increasing women's participation in peacekeeping is a priority for Canada.[4] Similar logic is applied by the CAF in its goal to increase the representation of women, the Elsie Initiative, and the United Nations Gender Parity Strategy. The focus remains on metrics and instrumentalism—increasing the number of women so that they can improve operational goals, rather than for the sake of rights-based justifications based on gender equality. When it comes to women's representation in peacekeeping, Kathleen Jennings argues that "it is not what women *do*, but who they *are* that makes the difference."[5] The major justifications for increasing the number of women in peacekeeping have remained both instrumental and essentialist: deploying more women is assumed to lead to kinder, gentler, less-abusive and more-efficient peacekeeping missions.[6] This thinking, or "smart peacekeeping," is not primarily about equality; it is about expecting women to improve security outcomes on PKOs without changing underlying issues within peacekeeping and in the national militaries that contribute personnel.[7] Similar instrumentalist logic is espoused when promoting CAF culture change—that a more inclusive culture will make the CAF more effective.

Since the height of Canada's participation in peacekeeping in the 1960s to the 1990s, when Canada was one of the world's largest contributors of "blue helmets," its reputation as a peacekeeping nation has been diminished by scandals and the failure of UN PKOs in countries such as Somalia and Rwanda.[8] Scholars have emphasized how Canada's peacekeeping past is fraught with contradictions and inconsistencies, with nostalgic yearning for a coherent past rooted in Canada's identity as a "good" middle power with altruistic geo-political interests and even as a "helpful hero" in Afghanistan.[9]

Several scholars have emphasized that peacekeeping may increase the insecurity of local populations rather than

alleviate it[10] and research documents sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) of local populations perpetrated by (male) peacekeepers.[11] However, less is known about the experiences of women peacekeepers. According to the UN Department of Peace Operations, in 2020, women constituted 4.8% of military contingents on peacekeeping operations and 10.9% of formed police units.[12]

A central contradiction in peacekeeping is that the vast majority of peacekeepers are soldiers, "people skilled in the arts of violence and the protection of nation and territory," where the blue beret is supposed to be "benign, altruistic, neutral and capable of conflict resolution in any cultural setting, a warrior-prince-of-peace."[13] Masculinized environments dominate national militaries, and in turn, UN peacekeeping, where women continue to be excluded and marginalized in numerous ways.[14] Even with increased attention to SEA committed by peacekeepers (where people of all genders are victims, but women are over-represented), less is known about the risks and challenges that women peacekeepers experience while deployed. There are unavoidable challenges on deployment experienced by everyone, including managing operational tasks and expectations and the difficulty of being separated from loved ones. However, women face uniquely gendered challenges with regards to their safety. When discussing safety during deployment, I focus on equity and women's physical and psychological safety while on base. Gretchen Baldwin and Sarah Taylor (2020) argue that some women are "more worried for their safety within military camps and bases than on the battlefield or on patrol."[15] Likewise, Arbour argues that some CAF members are "more at risk of harm, on a day to day basis, from their comrades than from the enemy."[16] Arbour's statement is an important contribution to understandings of CAF culture; however, while her mandate was to examine sexual misconduct and leadership, there was a missed opportunity to pay attention to safety and sexual misconduct when deployed abroad, as this is an important aspect of CAF culture.

Methodology

In 2020, I conducted interviews with 40 Canadian women who were current or former members of the CAF to understand their experiences, opportunities, and challenges while deployed on United Nations PKOs and while serving in the CAF more broadly.[17] I was committed to a feminist methodological perspective[18] and I relied on thematic analysis to organize the data that I collected.[19] A feminist methodological perspective takes women's everyday experiences seriously and looks at larger structures and strategic concepts as gendered.

A key component of this research was ensuring participants' confidentiality and anonymity. It is for this reason that my discussion is devoid of any identity markers that may put participants at risk, including details on where they deployed, when, and in what capacities. As women's participation in peacekeeping has at times been extremely marginal, I am committed to protecting participants, especially as many shared intimate experiences of discomfort, discrimination, and sexual misconduct that they were worried may be attributed to them or to those who caused them harm.

Of the 40 women I interviewed, 26 were current CAF members and 14 were former CAF members. They ranged in service from a couple of years to a few decades. Participants represented a wide variety of support occupations (medical, administrative, and supply technicians) and several worked in operational occupations (infantry, artillery, and armoured). Participants also represented a range of ranks, from junior non-commissioned members to senior officers. Collectively, the women I interviewed deployed to 20 different missions, of which 11 were considered peace support operations and included deployments to Bosnia, Haiti, South Sudan, the DRC, and Mali, among other missions. Nearly half of my research participants also deployed to Afghanistan. Eighteen explicitly identified having experienced some sort of sexual misconduct during their time in the CAF and 22 did not.[20] Of the women who did not experience sexual misconduct firsthand, all knew someone who did.

Findings

A quarter of my participants agreed that women's presence improved mission effectiveness in key ways, such as: gaining trust and access to local populations, prioritizing women's issues, and acting as role models. However, even if women, and men alike, wanted to be more compassionate, caring, and approachable to local populations, they are constrained by UN mandates, volatile environments, socioeconomic differences, and hyper-masculine military cultures. Likewise, very few women are deployed in capacities that would require using these skills, for example, as Military Liaison Officers or UN Military Observers who typically have regular contact with local communities. As such, most of my participants thought essentialist and instrumentalist justifications for their presence were ridiculous, unfounded, and a couple even found them insulting. Participants challenged essentialized notions of womanhood and smart peacekeeping logics. One participant explained how her own mother could not tell who she was with all of her equipment on; therefore, her gender would likely be

Trooper Rebecca McDowell of the Queen's York Rangers dangles above the water pit during the rope obstacle at Canadian Forces Base Borden, during Rogers Challenge 2016, the Regiment's annual dismounted patrolling skills competition on October 15, 2016.

Image by: Pte Jesse Kalabic, 32 CBG Public Affairs

indecipherable to local populations as well. Another participant asserted that most women she knew did not want to be the face of how so-called progressive Canada is in terms of gender integration. She argued, "not a lot of women want to become the poster girl for women in the army, they didn't sign up for that, they signed up to do their jobs." Her comment suggests that the burden to improve gender integration often falls on the shoulders of women, which is neither fair nor desirable.

Women's ability to participate on PKOs can be inhibited if they do not feel safe while deployed. Based on my research findings, two participants noticed a clear improvement in overall safety over time based on their experiences on deployments prior to the early 2000s in comparison to those in the last decade. Earlier deployments were fraught with challenges as several participants found it difficult to negotiate between, what one participant explained as, "walking in the boys club without being groped and still being a value to the team." Another participant who deployed to Bosnia in the late 1990s explained that women were briefed about rape and rape kits. It bothered her that "men could do things women couldn't" as men did not have to participate in precautionary briefs on sexual assault as, in her opinion, the threat of rape on base did not exist for them. Only briefing women about rape does not resolve rape culture if men are not proactively part of the conversations at the same time. Another participant explained that the opportunity for sexual assault in the Bosnian camp was high and she found it exhausting to always think of her own safety in this regard. Participants from more recent deployments, such as the mission in Mali, had fewer gendered safety concerns overall. However, due to the risk to the UN camp in an active conflict zone, the base had to be dark so as not to be targeted. As a result, one participant noticed that it seemed like an area where the chance of rape was high. So while women's safety may have improved over time, gendered risk is present in very similar ways as it was two or three decades ago.

Further, in order to cope with the real and perceived unsafe environments that some participants were subjected to while deployed, they used a variety of strategies to keep safe that required constant vigilance. Some strategies that they employed included partnering up, having a colleague act like a 'big brother' when they needed to exit a situation or be walked back to their rooms, and even avoiding leisure activities altogether, especially when they involved alcohol (as the perception was that alcohol increased women's insecurity as some men became more aggressive or demeaning after drinking). One participant explained the lengths she went through to protect herself that she thought her male colleagues did not need to be conscious of, and probably never even considered. Her risk mitigation strategies included paying close attention to details outside of her room, ensuring door numbers and key numbers weren't labeled incorrectly or didn't match, making sure her room number was not audibly mentioned in front of other people, letting colleagues know that if she screams to come help her immediately, and carrying a knife. She also recalled occasions that she had to sleep with her lights on and fully clothed "just in case." The risk mitigation strategies that my participants explained are not uncommon as similar strategies have been documented by servicewomen in the US military.[21] Safety risks were perceived to come from personnel from other nations and from Canadian colleagues. This is unsurprising given that sexual misconduct continues to persist in the CAF. Fostering culture change cannot be accomplished without eliminating sexual misconduct in the CAF's ranks.[22]

Conclusion

Deployment experiences shape and are shaped by overall CAF culture. Based on my research, this includes instances of women feeling that essentialist and instrumentalist justifications for women's increased participation are mostly unfounded. Even if women wanted to contribute to mission effectiveness in unique ways, they are inhibited from doing so while feeling unsafe when deployed. Sexual misconduct and other harms continue to persist in the CAF at home and abroad, from both Canadian colleagues and international ones. To foster culture change, my research demonstrates the importance of understanding women's everyday military experiences,

particularly on deployment. Future research should consider identity factors beyond sex and gender, including but not limited to: race, ethnicity, age, and mental or physical ability. Women's deployment barriers, and harmful CAF culture, cannot be changed without recognizing how all identity markers shape women's experiences and how these are rooted in systemic discrimination. It is critical to consider the multiple and overlapping ways that discrimination and oppression function to marginalize some people more than others and in varying, nuanced, and complex ways. Similarly, culture change in the CAF must go beyond an instrumental approach to operational effectiveness, starting with naming problems and addressing systemic and institutional barriers meaningfully, through an intersectional perspective, with the inclusion of voices from those who have been harmed or impacted.

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Members from Joint Task Force Atlantic's Immediate Response Unit conduct Type 3 Wildland firefighting under Operation LENTUS 23-02 in Shelburne County, Nova Scotia on June 10, 2023.

Image by: Warrant Officer James Roberge, 5th Canadian Division Public Affairs, Canadian Armed Forces photo

Hidden in Plain Sight: Ritual Items as Inhibitors to Culture Change

WALTER CALLAGHAN

Walter Callaghan is a PhD candidate in medical anthropology at the University of Toronto. His doctoral research has focused on how veterans come to understand, explain, and make meaning of psychological distress, particularly moral injuries. He previously served as a health care administration officer in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2001–2010.

The incidents of racism and sexual misconduct in the military that have surfaced, and been exposed by news media, are now recognized as issues that go beyond the actions of individuals within the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF).[1] After years of repeated and failed attempts to address the problem, there seems to finally be acknowledgement that much of the problem lies with the existing culture in the CAF.[2] This recognition can be found most clearly in the report from the Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination: "Racism in Canada is not a glitch in the system; it is the system. Colonialism and intersecting systems such as patriarchy, heteronormativity and ableism constitute the root causes of inequality within Canada."[3] The report further states:

> *The Defence Team's foundational values were chiselled from Canadian ones, and formed the basis of all its practices, assumptions and approaches. The Defence Team's work schedules and holidays which are mostly based on its Christian traditions, the food prepared in mess halls which often revolves around traditional recipes from Euro-Canadian meals, and the gendered language of French—and of some English words—these are all cornerstones of unintentional biases. These practices are codified, personally and collectively, into the daily lives of each member of the Defence Team.*[4]

In this perspectives piece, I argue for paying more attention to nuanced elements of culture, such as the role that traditions and rituals play in the maintenance and transmission of culture. There is an unspoken culture that exists at all levels which escapes notice, but which is lived—a culture that has to be

experienced and witnessed to be understood, a culture that exists below the surface, hidden in plain sight, even for those who live it.[5]

In what follows, I focus on two cultural examples hidden in plain sight: (1) ritual items that exist on the periphery, almost invisible, until they are brought forth and utilized in traditional activities like regimental dinners; and (2) the battle honours that regiments carry to commemorate their history, especially the language used to describe that history. These examples are drawn from personal experience during my service as a health care administration officer in the CAF (2001–2010) and my observations during a long-term ethnographic project with veterans of the CAF as part of my doctoral research. This project has involved extensive, prolonged, and repeated interaction with close to 40 key informants over the past decade, with open-ended two-way ongoing contact between myself and my interlocutors, as well as regular participant-observation of social media groups dedicated to serving members and veterans. Participants cover a range of service periods from the 1960s to 2020, come from a variety of ethnocultural backgrounds, and come from across the spectrum of sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Veterans play a key role in the maintenance and transmission of culture within the CAF, yet their role seems to be missing from official government analyses and the overall effort directed at culture change.

"Ritual" Items: Colonel Nobody

An example of these semi-hidden aspects of culture is the existence of what could be understood as "ritual items." I am referring to items that are used to transmit and convey tradition and culture, items that do not operate in the everyday but are brought out during special occasions and play a role in initiations or other ceremonies.[6] These are items that may reside on the shelves of senior members of regiments, or in curio display cases in demarcated social spaces like messes, or in regimental museums large and small, items that reside simultaneously within sight but also in the periphery until they are brought out for special occasions, such as regimental dinners. The question is: what are these items, and how is their function understood and explained within the regiment, especially when they have a controversial or problematic story attached to them? Unless one is present when these items are brought out and the stories are told, one would miss their significance within the regiment. The very act of being present when these items are brought out marks the individual as being an insider, as being fully part of the group, in comparison to outsiders who are not granted access to the knowledge and meanings conveyed by these items. Within my own regiment we had some of these ritual items.[7] One example that I draw upon is: Colonel Nobody.

I was first introduced to Colonel Nobody when I was called into the Commanding Officer's (CO) office and briefed on what my duties were going to be as the newest and most junior officer at one of our upcoming regimental dinners. I was going to be responsible for Colonel Nobody, and to introduce "him" to all the members of the regiment, past and present, who would be in attendance. My CO briefly told me the history of Colonel Nobody and I was placed immediately in a very difficult position, one that caused friction between me and the other officers in my regiment: Colonel Nobody was a human skull, with the top of the skull on a hinge and with a snuff box contained inside. But Colonel Nobody was not just "any" skull, for the tale of the skull held it to be that of a Zulu Warrior who had been defeated by members of the regiment during the Boer War. While I had been with the regiment for the better part of the year by this point, this was the first time that I had encountered Colonel Nobody or heard anything about this item. In the end, I made the decision to refuse to be Colonel Nobody's escort. Thankfully, that CO was willing to listen as I explained the ethical problems I had with the use of a human skull as a war trophy, and the way it was used in our regimental dinners. I was relieved of that responsibility, and when the regimental dinner occurred, Colonel Nobody did not make an appearance. A number of members of the regiment, especially from within the officer cadre, made known their complaints about the breach of tradition. However, a number of the Black members of the regiment privately thanked me for having put an end to something that always made them feel unwelcome, given who Colonel Nobody was supposed to have been and the casual racism underpinning the grotesque use of this skull as a trinket of ceremony.[8]

Addressing the existence of ritual items such as Colonel Nobody, to determine where these items are and their significance, requires an intensive and prolonged effort at exploring the hidden elements of CAF culture. Given the ephemeral nature of these items, existing on the periphery until they are brought forth and used in traditional rituals, they will go unnoticed until they are directly encountered or experienced. By not noticing their existence in a liminal space until brought forth, their role as emblems of regimental culture, and how that culture adapts or resists macro-level culture change, will also continue to be ignored.

Battle Honours

Continuing at the regimental level, I provide another example of where the desire to enact culture change in the CAF can be inhibited: the existence and role of "battle honours." Battle honours have a long tradition in the CAF, with a lineage traced directly back to the British crown prior to Confederacy and the creation of Canada. Such honours "are awarded to provide public recognition of the deeds and activities of formed military bodies, beyond the demands of normal duty and the high standards expected of Canadian Forces (CF) members"[9] and "to publicly commemorate a battle or campaign, the memory of which will be a constant source of pride for the unit involved."[10] As such, battle honours hold a privileged place within regiment traditions and history.

The issue of specific battle honours, notably those granted to units that were mobilized in response to the Northwest Rebellion/Resistance, is a key example of how such items can serve to inhibit culture change. The very name used to refer to this incident is indicative of how commemoration itself can be a source of tension and conflict between tradition/colonialism (Rebellion) and Indigenous peoples (Resistance). The very choice of term has implications for reconciliation, in that the colonial term continues to subjugate, while the Indigenous-preferred term provides an entry point to understanding the complex nuances of this moment in Canadian history by disrupting the taken-for-granted colonial perspective.[11] The controversy surrounding these particular battle honours was also raised by the Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination, which recommended the "elimination of current and historical references of First Nations People as enemies of Canada."[12] As it argued:

> *Symbols, names of distinguished people or historical references are often used in the interest of creating pride in and belonging to a specific unit or base. Within the CAF, these references sometimes include battle honours or hero worship of people who fought against Indigenous Peoples. Flags, statues, commemorative coins and names of bases or teams need to be revised if they portray only the colonialist/settler perspective and symbolize a system of "us against them". There should be no honour in flying a unit flag that bears symbols of victory against this nation's original peoples.*[13]

Based on observations made over the last decade of my ethnographic research with CAF veterans, I have noticed that the maintenance of a regiment's history is frequently delegated by the active component of the regiment to the veterans who make up the regimental association, and part of this responsibility includes teaching newer members of the regiment and the general public about this history.

Soldiers from the Canadian Armed Forces Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) store water jugs into a gymnasium in order to distribute them to the local population during Operation RENAISSANCE in Mambusao, Philippines on December 5, 2013.

Image by: MCpl Marc-Andre Gaudreault, Canadian Forces Combat Camera

While almost every single one of the regimental associations representing the eighteen regiments that hold battle honours for the Northwest Resistance make some reference to their regiment's participation in that campaign, most of them do not go into detail. One notable exception is the Queen's Own Rifles (QOR), currently a Reserve Force infantry regiment located in downtown Toronto. On the webpage for the QOR Museum, the regimental association of the QOR, a lengthy description of the regiment's actions is provided, along with links to a number of historical texts written by previous members of the regiment. Within this digital text is this passage that attempts to explain why the military was mobilized:

> *In Ottawa the politicians hit the roof. It looked like the whole west was on the verge of rebellion. Sir John A. MacDonald's plan to secure the west with the Canadian Pacific Railway was supposed to protect us from the threat of American expansionism. Now the west was in danger of being lost to Meti [sic] and natives. Ottawa mobilized the army.*[14]

Unfortunately, this type of problematic and uncritical representation of history is not simply something of the distant past. During Remembrance Week 2022, at an event honouring the history and traditions of the QOR, I saw displays of memorabilia from the regiment associated with this particular action. No one seemed at all phased by the language in the display materials or that these items were on display in the first place, particularly without any material to provide a more nuanced contextualization of the events.

The framing of Indigenous peoples as enemies, in texts and displays uncritically celebrating the historic actions and traditions of this regiment, is perhaps what the Minister of National Defence's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination was referring to in the explanation for their recommendation that such battle honours be eliminated. Veterans who have acted as key informants throughout the course of my research have relayed stories of the efforts they have made while involved in other regimental associations (particularly that of the Royal Canadian Regiment) to at least shift the battle honours to a less prominent position, and not to be central components of the regiment's "colours" (flags), if they are to be retained. Other efforts are being made to provide more balanced context to the narratives surrounding the Northwest Resistance, including referring to it as such instead of under the colonial name of Northwest Rebellion. Currently, the way that these honours are displayed and are part of the cultural history and heritage of these regiments reveals the racist overtones evident both implicitly and explicitly. This example highlights another moment in which the potential for open resistance to culture change efforts within the CAF is apparent.

Culture Change: Possible, But Challenging

This perspectives piece has provided two examples of the types of hidden culture and associated behaviour that exist within the CAF, both of which demonstrate that there are aspects of culture and behaviour that exist in a more liminal form, on the edges of awareness and in ways where they remain unquestioned. From ritual items that reinforce elements of tradition, to symbols of tradition, it is evident that objects entrenched in old ways have the possibility to create resistance towards culture change. So long as they are left in place, even on the periphery, hidden in plain sight, they hold significance. The new *CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve* states that: "It is equally important to recognize past inequities and exclusion in CAF history and traditions, and to humbly work to change them in order to realize a more competent national institution that embodies our ethos."[15] While noting this role of history and tradition, and the potential to correct it, the way that history and tradition can exist on the periphery and be relayed by or through items rather than verbal communication indicates a need to actively look for moments, places, and things that demonstrate and reinforce the problems that the CAF acknowledges exist. In each of these examples, there are moments of possibility for change or resistance. Knowing where these moments are, where these sticky points reside, will better enable the CAF to finally have a chance at succeeding in changing its culture. Having these moments continue to exist unidentified and unexamined on the periphery, in liminal spaces, runs the risk of hindering significant and meaningful change in the CAF. CMJ Canadian Military Journal

Notes

1 The presence of a systemic problem within the culture of the Canadian Armed Forces has been highlighted and explained in-depth in four extensive reports: Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*. External Review Authority, 2015; Morris J. Fish, *Report of the Third Independent Review Authority to the Minister of National Defence*. Department of National Defence, 2022; Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces*. Borden Ladner Gervais, 2022; Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination – Final Report*, 2022.

2 Karen D. Davis, "Socio-Cultural Dynamics in Gender and Military Contexts: Seeking and Understanding Change," *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health 8*, supplement 1 (2022): 66-74; Charlotte Duval-Lantoine, *The Ones We Let Down: Toxic Leadership and Gender Integration in the Canadian Forces* (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022); and Marcia Kovitz, "Sexual (Mis)Conduct in the Canadian Forces," *Critical Military Studies* 7, no. 1 (2021): 79–99.

3 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 21.

4 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 21.

5 Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge University Press, 1977).

6 Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Aldine Publishing, 1969).

7 In the course of my doctoral research, CAF veterans have made me aware of a number of such items. Because of the potential risk of retribution that could result from openly discussing the problems associated with such items, risk that I do not think I can ethically subject any of my interlocutors to, I have chosen to use this example from my own personal experience.

8 After presenting this paper at the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces & Society in Ottawa, Ontario in October 2022, the Canadian Armed Forces queried the existence of "Colonel Nobody." The official response that I received as a result of this query was that it had been determined that this item was a carefully constructed replica and not an actual human skull, that it had been donated to the regiment in 1963, and that it has been placed in storage until a proper means of disposing of it can be determined. While this is of some comfort, it does not address the extremely problematic story that had become attached to this item. I have since heard from two other former members of that regiment that this item had been prominently displayed behind the bar in the mess, and brought out on special occasions, as recently as November 2019.

9 Department of National Defence, *The Heritage Structure of the Canadian Forces*, 1999, Chapter 3.1.1.

10 Department of National Defence, *The Heritage Structure*, Chapter 3.2.18.

11 For deeper analysis, see: Janet C. Gaudet, "Dismantling the Patriarchal Altar from Within," *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples 10*, no. 1 (2014): 58–66; Cody Groat and Kim Anderson, "Holding Place: Resistance, Reframing, and Relationality in the Representation of Indigenous History," *Canadian Historical Review 102*, no. 3 (2021): 465–484; and Matthew J. McRae, "Remembering Rebellion, Remembering Resistance: Collective Memory, Identity, and the Veterans of 1869–1870 and 1885," Dissertation (London, ON: University of Western Ontario, 2018).

12 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 35.

13 While the Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination made this recommendation, they did not directly name those regiments that fly colours holding battle honours from the Northwest Resistance. Unfortunately, due to space limitations, I cannot include a list of those regiments here, but it is available upon request. Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*.

14 "Northwest Rebellion 1885", The Queen's Own Rifles of *Canada Regimental Museum and Archive*, accessed December 26, 2022, https://qormuseum.org/history/timeline-1856-1899/northwest-rebellion-1885/.

15 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve* (2022), 51.

Members of 3rd Canadian Ranger Patrol Group, 1st Battalion, The Royal Canadian Regiment and Councilor Redfern Wesley offload boxes of food for the community of Kashechewan First Nation during Operation LASER, June 18, 2021.

Image by: Cpl Justin Dreimanis, 4th Canadian Division Headquarters Public Affairs

Feminism and the Military: Misconceptions and Possibilities

KAREN D. DAVIS

Dr. Karen D. Davis served for over four decades as a non-commissioned member, officer, and civilian defence scientist. As a senior defence scientist, she led numerous domestic and international research initiatives related to gender, leadership, and culture in the military. She holds a Master of Arts in Sociology from McGill University, and a PhD in War Studies from the Royal Military College of Canada, with a focus on gender, war, and society.

This discussion draws from my personal military and defence experience to reflect on the influence of feminism. In doing so, I position this experience as an illustration of both the challenges and the possibilities that feminism offers for culture change in the military today. I identified as a feminist for over ten years of my 22 years of military service, and for well over 30 years combined as I held military staff and civilian research positions in defence. Although feminism has contributed to my conceptualization of culture-related challenges, I have cautiously negotiated my relationship with feminism. In this perspectives piece, I reflect on this experience to explore the intense scrutiny of feminism in the military, and the misconceptions that I encountered. Recognizing that critical feminist perspectives have been presented as an essential contributor to culture change, I argue that these misconceptions represent barriers to the opportunities that

feminism offers for bringing new perspectives to change agendas. Finally, acknowledging the risks inherent to feminist identity in the military, the discussion closes with questions regarding what a strategy for the effective mobilization of feminism might consider.

My journey with feminism began in 1988 when I read *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*,[1] a book first published by critical anti-militarist feminist Cynthia Enloe in 1983. At that point I had served for 10 years as a non-commissioned member of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). Although a successful experience overall, like many other women and men, I had experienced some challenges. In the introduction to the second edition of her book, Enloe observed that several young women were quite angry when they read her book. I joined the ranks of those angry women when I read the book! As is often the case, when we are confronted with a new perspective that challenges our identities and understandings of the world, we look for flaws and ways to discount or undermine that new information or the person who conveys the information. Not only was Enloe questioning the merit of the participation of women in the military, she made reference to a situation which I had experienced—the accusations, interrogations, and subsequent dishonourable release of several of my friends who were rooted out as lesbians while serving in Shelburne, Nova Scotia in the early 1980s.[2] The experience was still raw, and how dare this civilian woman propose to speak about that experience! And aha! She spelled Shelburne wrong[3]—the quickest reason I could find to dismiss the knowledge and assertions that she presented.

As I look back, I had underlined this passage from the book:

> *One reason why so many women feel strongly about women's entrance into and rights within the military is that many women are fighting hard to make their country's military a place where they are accepted on equal terms with men. Those women, exerting so much energy inside the military establishment to overcome barriers to training and promotion may find it insulting when a civilian feminist like me argues that a military is so fundamentally masculinized that no woman has a chance of transforming that military into a place where women and men can be equal…* [4]

Enloe further noted

> *…when a 'feminist-in-khaki' hears another woman arguing that the military is basically misogynist, she hears someone telling her that she can't accomplish what she's set out to do, that she's letting herself be duped if she persists in trying. The message reeks of condescension.*[5]

Indeed, regardless of the status of women in the military, some Canadian military women have always believed they were treated equitably and have expressed frustration with the feminists who push for change without really understanding military experience.[6]

Notwithstanding my initial reaction to feminism and its critical analysis of the military, I did have questions about my experience. I wanted to learn more, so I read more, including Zillah Eisenstein's book, titled *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism*.[7] I soon realized that feminism has its own diversity and complexities. According to many, liberal or mainstream feminism is limited in its ability to facilitate meaningful progress toward equality. Eisenstein, for example, claims that contemporary liberal feminism has no theory for understanding the "very substantial struggles of women,"[8] works within existing legislation and systems, and is a small step away from accepting, even reinforcing, the status quo. The potential for real change, claims Eisenstein, requires the development of theory which includes close attention to the experiences of "diverse groups of people,"[9] and the contributions of all feminists in pushing equality as far as possible within the existing legislative and structural boundaries to uncover the structures that prevent equality.[10] While acknowledging the need for change within existing structures, she also asserted that if "equality of opportunity were genuinely extended to women, it would require deep structural changes in society."[11]

Feminist theory and analysis not only significantly disrupted my worldview, it provided a framework for understanding some of my own challenges and experiences in the military. As things started to make sense on a personal level, I soon realized feminism's potential for social change beyond my own experience. This mirrors the experience of Nancy Taber in an autoethnographic account of her military service. Feminist theory allowed her to not only make connections between personal experience and the broader social world, but to reveal phenomena that were previously not visible to her.[12] In my case, this was particularly relevant to my capability to critically examine and reveal gender-based patterns that could be applied to challenges with gender integration throughout the 1990s.[13] I embraced feminism and integrated feminist analysis into my toolkit, but it was a tenuous relationship. It was clear to me that the only way to be a

feminist in the military, or any Canadian public institution at the time, was to be a liberal feminist.

However, I experienced the contradictions that many of us struggle with as we work toward change—in my heart and mind, I recognized that equality demanded more fundamental change than I could seek as a member of the military—indeed, feminism represented a potentially deeply disruptive proposition. I rationalized that I could live with liberal feminism if it meant that I would still be making relevant contributions to future equality in the military. Eisenstein's thesis gave me hope and my mission was set. I had overcome the first obstacle to change; that is, opening my experience to the possibilities of a different way of understanding the relationship between my experience and the world I lived in, and how I might leverage that to contribute to positive change.

With guidance from my wise feminist mentor,[14] I also confronted the real possibility that this new knowledge did not come without challenges. Somehow, I would have to navigate the tension between the anti-feminist agenda, which was dominant in the CAF, and pushing the boundaries of the liberal feminist agenda toward equality. This challenge loomed at a time when feminism was the scapegoat for what was perceived as a significant threat to military operational effectiveness; that is, including women on the battlefield with men.[15] Some in the military also suspected that this went beyond the right of women to serve, and that feminists were making a bid to challenge, even dominate, the (patriarchal) status quo by embracing the woman warrior as a powerful image of sisterhood and separatist philosophy.[16] So I needed a strategy to protect myself from repercussion within a military culture that abhorred feminism, while still using the knowledge for positive change. Further, the capacity to critically reflect, which I had only recently gained, would be at risk in a world with no feminist connections, so I intentionally looked for opportunities to participate in communities outside the military where I would find feminist discussion and analysis.

Within the military, I was careful not to identify as a feminist. Yet at times, because of my perspective on personnel policies and activities, I was called out as a feminist, and in some cases a radical feminist. In one case, I was publicly admonished by a senior officer for conducting analysis from a feminist perspective. Sometimes these accusations undermined the credibility of my contributions and sometimes they silenced me. Although there were others like me who understood the power of feminist theory, they too were negotiating their own feminist identities so that they would have a better chance to be listened to and to belong. As a result, those who

Cpl Gloria Didiodato operates a forklift at Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait during Operation IMPACT on January 16, 2022.

Image by: Cpl Eric Greico, Canadian Armed Forces photo

wanted to further explore opportunities for change through the lens of feminism were marginalized and provided with virtually no space to have safe conversations with like-minded feminist colleagues or with non-feminist women and men outside of these marginalized spaces. They were denied an opportunity to employ shared language, explore perspectives, and to determine how, in whole or in part, feminist foundations, principles, and objectives offered possibilities for change. These missed conversations were missed opportunities for learning, among feminists and non-feminists, and for progress in the organization.

Since my introduction to feminism, feminist identity and language in the organization continue to be non-existent for many, denied by others, and consciously negotiated and camouflaged by some. More recently, others openly and proudly claim their feminist identity.[17] In select circumstances, such as those engaged in knowledge work in the realms of policy, education, or research, there are opportunities for shared feminist identity and critical analysis in ways that contribute to important conversations around cultural transformation. In recent analysis of the systemic relationship between masculinity and militarism, Victoria Tait finds that some servicemembers are engaging in critical examination of the military's gendered culture and their positions within it. She cautiously suggests this dialogue may be contributing to "regendering" of the Canadian military.[18] Notwithstanding, much work remains to be done to realize the possibilities offered by the frameworks and language of feminism, critical race theory, anti-colonial theory, and the anti-oppression framework put forward by the MINDS collaborative network, Transforming Military Cultures.[19]

I continue to struggle with what this means in the day-to-day experience of military members, what it tells about the changes

that have taken place, and the continuous change that needs to happen. What I do know: Feminist theory and practice has a role in strengthening equality in the military, and despite the barriers to its employment, it has had a profound impact on today's status of equality, and it will make a difference to the future. Feminist theory has also evolved considerably as its foundations continue to guide the development of insights and knowledge regarding gender, gender relations and experience in society, and our institutions. While it has been important to move away from essentialism and assumptions regarding the homogeneity of two gendered categories—woman and man—it is also fundamental to feminism to recognize woman as a category. Suggesting a genealogy of women, for example, Alison Stone claims that "although women do not form a unity; they are nevertheless assembled through their location within…history to a determinate social group,"[20] with unique experiences and outcomes from men. Feminist theory provides the key to meaningful and impactful gender mainstreaming, gender-based analysis plus, and intersectionality, all of which have been declared in recent years as high priorities for the Canadian military. The frameworks and language of feminism, along with critical race theory and anti-colonial theory, represent the possibilities for future conversations, belonging, and change. However, the possibilities depend upon safe spaces for conversations to discuss, debate, and inquire, using the language of feminism and anti-oppression in the institution, and to share feminist and anti-oppression identities with others. Yet, misconceptions and significant apprehension regarding the motivations and transformative power of feminism persist.

Creating safe spaces for difficult conversations is not new but is a persistent challenge that will require expertise and innovative, engaging approaches going forward. As they reflect on their research and related encounters with the military, critical feminist researchers Catherine Baker, Victoria Basham, Sarah Bulmer, Harriet Gray, and Alexandra Hyde reflect on the role of feminist critical military studies in interrogating and challenging un-gendered assumptions that are "deeply embedded in gendering ideas"[21] and play a role in normalizing military concepts and spaces. While noting that bringing such challenging conversations to military members can be emotional, complex, and messy, they also suggest the potential for these engagements to open up more and wider conversations.[22] In developing an interactive performance to facilitate a difficult conversation on war and the military, critical military scholar Maya Eichler and military veteran and performance artist Jessica Lynn Wiebe began with a critical insight: "…engaging in dialogue comes with the risk of facing judgement, causing friction, and ending relationships."[23] Maya and Jessica engaged in performance art to stage a two-way dialogue that developed into a broader conversation with their audience. This collaborative artwork helped them to ask questions and engage each other in ways that they believe would otherwise not have been possible,[24] but also meant making themselves vulnerable "…by sharing personal information and accepting the uncertainty of how the other would respond."[25] As we think about innovative approaches to create safe spaces for conversation, our virtual world will also play a key role. In their film, *Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age*, documentary feminist filmmakers Guylaine Maroist and Lea Clermone-Dion challenge the rise of sexism and anti-feminist violence in Canada, noting that it is often promulgated through personal attacks on social media.[26] Just as feminists in the military have camouflaged their perspectives to secure their safety and protect careers, female gamers create male avatars to protect themselves from such personal attacks.[27] What can be done to help prevent the Canadian military from once again being showcased on the wrong side of Canada's social history? Drawing from themes identified in Maroist and Clermone-Dion's film, I close with the following suggestions, adapted for consideration within the Canadian military context:

- Protect and provide opportunity for those who want to talk about feminism and what it means to them.
- Seek opportunities to navigate the language and meanings of feminism and related concepts. The tools to do this are currently only available to a limited and privileged few.
- Seek to understand the various ways that sex and gender identities and representations are attacked and undermined, for different reasons and in different contexts, for example:
  - expressions of lack of confidence in abilities of women and feminized men in masculine, physical dominated spaces
  - sexual harassment, sexual assault
  - limits to opportunity for collective sharing of experience through shaping and limiting, for example, language and identity
  - subtle, yet insidious undermining of high performing women and feminized men, including those in leadership roles; and,
  - resistance to the often difficult and challenging language and concepts.

In summary, this discussion suggests that there has been resistance to feminism in the military, often based on

misconceptions and limited knowledge regarding the diversity of feminism and the possibilities that it offers for realizing equality among women and men. The relevance and power of feminism stems from its insistence that, despite the diverse identities and experiences among women and men, women have historically, and today continue, to experience fundamental physical and socially constructed conditions that are unique from men. While social change in the military today is being influenced by feminist theories and concepts, such as gender mainstreaming, gender-based analysis, and intersectionality, limited understanding of the feminist foundations of these important initiatives risks insufficient engagement with these strategies. Keeping in mind the many lost opportunities for critical inquiry and the relevance of feminist perspectives to the objectives of culture change in the past, this conversation highlights the importance of seeking and creating safe spaces and opportunities to focus on the possibilities offered by feminism, as well as critical race and anti-colonial theory, to further equality among the women and men who serve, and those who aspire to serve. CMJ Canadian Military Journal

Notes

1 Cynthia Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You? The Militarization of Women's Lives*, 2nd Edition (London: Pandora Press, 1988).

2 See Karen D. Davis, "From Ocean Ops to Combat Ops: A Short History of Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces," in *Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Perspectives & Experience*, ed. Karen D. Davis (Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007).

3 Appeared as "Shelbourne" in Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You?*, xxi.

4 Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You*, xvii.

5 Enloe, *Does Khaki Become You*, xvii.

6 Karen D. Davis, *Negotiating Gender in the Canadian Forces 1970–1999*, Unpublished PhD dissertation (Kingston, ON: Royal Military College of Canada, 2013).

7 Zillah R. Eisenstein, *The Radical Future of Liberal Feminism* (Northeastern University Press, 1986).

8 Nancy Hartsock, "Feminism, Power and Change: A Theoretical Analysis," in *Women Organizing*, eds. Bernice Cummings and Victoria Schuck (Scarecrow Press: 1978), 11–12, as cited by Eisenstein, *The Radical Future*, 4.

9 Harstock, "Feminism, Power and Change," 11–12, as cited by Eisenstein, *The Radical Future*, 4–5.

10 Eisenstein, *The Radical Future*, 224.

11 Roberta Hamilton, *Gendering the Vertical Mosaic: Feminist Perspectives on Canadian Society* (Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005, 2nd edition), 47.

12 Nancy Taber, "Learning How to be a Woman in the Canadian Forces/Unlearning it Through Feminism: An Autoethnography of My Learning Journey," *Studies in Continuing Education 27*, no. 3 (2005): 289–301. DOI: 10.1080/01580370500376630

13 See for example, Karen D. Davis, "Understanding Women's Exit from the Canadian Forces: Implications for Integration," in *Wives & Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*, eds. Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White (Bergin & Garvey, 1997).

14 Dr. Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, Professor Saint Mary's University, Halifax NS.

15 Karen D. Davis, *Negotiating Gender in the Canadian Forces*.

16 Radical feminism as described by Francine D'Amico, "Feminist Perspectives on Women Warriors," in *The Women & War Reader*, eds. Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (New York and London: New York University Press, 1998), cited within a broader analysis of feminisms in Karen D. Davis, *Negotiating Gender in the Canadian Forces*.

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18 Victoria Tait, "Regendering the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice 41*, no. 2 (2020): 9–25.

19 Maya Eichler, Tammy George and Nancy Taber, Transforming Military Cultures DND MINDS Collaborative Network, 2022–2025, https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/centres-and-institutes/transforming-military-cultures-network/.

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21 Catherine Baker, Victoria Basham, Sara Bulmer, Harriet Gray and Alexandra Hyde, "Encounters with the Military: Toward a Feminist Ethics of Critique?" *International Feminist Journal of Politics 18*, no. 1 (2016): 142. DOI: 10.1080/14616742.2015.1106102.

22 Baker, Basham, Bulmer, Gray, and Hyde, "Encounters with the Military," 140–154.

23 Maya Eichler and Jessica Lynn Wiebe, "The Art of Discomfort: Engaging in Dialogue on War," *Critical Military Studies 5*, no. 1 (2019): 83.

24 Eichler and Wiebe, "The Art of Discomfort," 88.

25 Eichler and Wiebe, "The Art of Discomfort," 83–84.

26 Guylaine Maroist and Lea Clermone-Dion, *Backlash: Misogyny in the Digital Age* (La Ruelle Films, 2022).

27 Guylaine Maroist and Laurence Gratton (school teacher featured in film *Backlash*), interview with Matt Galloway, CBC The Current, February 15th, 2023 (aired January 20th, 2023). https://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/friday-january-20-2022-full-transcript-1.6721602.

What We Mean by Culture – Reflections from the Chief Professional Conduct and Culture

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL JENNIE CARIGNAN

A graduate of the Royal Military College, Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan was commissioned into the Canadian Military Engineers in 1990. Since then, she commanded two Combat Engineer regiments leading over 10,000 soldiers and spearheaded crisis operations. She also led NATO Mission Iraq and participated in three expeditionary operations. LGen Carignan earned two Master's degrees and is a graduate of the National Security Studies Programme from Canadian Forces College. She has been invested as Commander of the Order of Military Merit and is the recipient of the Meritorious Service Cross and Meritorious Service Medal. LGen Carignan was promoted to her current rank in April of 2021 and appointed as Chief of Professional Conduct and Culture.

Lieutenant-General Jennie Carignan

Image by: Government of Canada

Today, Canada faces a complex and competitive national security environment that requires the best and brightest. Beyond well-trained individuals and transformational leadership enabled by modern equipment, a healthy culture remains the main ingredient to an effective, engaged, and operationally ready defence team.

Serving in the Profession of Arms is unlike most careers, especially because it is a volunteer military whose members willingly put themselves in harm's way to protect and defend Canada, while displaying a high standard of discipline and ethics. Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members do not stand alone. The success of Canadian defence also requires contributions from the ~28,000 civilian public servants, non-public fund employees, and contractors at the Department of National Defence (DND). Working in a mixed military-civilian environment makes for a unique and rewarding experience for both personnel, but this dynamic also makes culture evolution complex and multi-faceted.

As Chief, Professional Conduct and Culture (CPCC), my job and that of my organization is to inform and coordinate culture evolution efforts across the institution. Institutional change that targets attitudes and beliefs is complex and difficult. It takes time, a deliberate plan, and the willingness to break down old systems and build new ones. We have much work ahead, but since its inception in 2021, CPCC has made great strides. In my many years of service, I have never seen such a high-level of departmental engagement and commitment at all levels to address conduct and culture.

For years, the CAF has taken the approach that tasks must be done at all costs, at the cost of people's well-being. This zero-sum game is a false premise. Applied indiscriminately, it is also a premise that has perpetuated the negative features of workplace culture that we are transforming. Treating people with dignity and respect is not a trade-off for operational effectiveness. Dignity is foundational to trust and a prerequisite for creating the psychologically safe space the Chief of Defence Staff,

Defence Advisory Groups, stakeholders, and affected persons themselves have urged us to adopt. Let us be clear, a culture of respect is not about deferring difficult decisions or not taking responsibility for choosing a direction. It is not inaction or paralysis. It is about the way we act in critical situations, how we manage pressures, how we respond to challenges, how we see ourselves, how we treat each other, and as such, how we create a high performing culture where people are at their best.

Change is needed to create such a posture and starts with acknowledging our difficult history. For far too long, we have deprived many members of the pride of service and dignity of inclusion and recognition. The role of women in the CAF has been an arduous journey. Although women were serving in the Forces as early as 1885 as nurses, it wasn't until the 1960s that women were allowed to be employed in other occupations. It took until 1989 before nearly all formal policy obstacles to their access to jobs in the military were removed. That said, the sentiment that the CAF remains closed and isolated persists for many serving today.[1] We have removed formal obstacles, but systemic factors still exist for women, Indigenous people, persons with disabilities, members of racialized groups, and the 2SLGBTQI+ community.[2] For many years, Black men were rejected from enlisting due to a culture that fostered systemic racism. Although some Black men enlisted during WWI, they were placed in a segregated, non-combat unit, which was ultimately disbanded in 1920, without acknowledging their heroic and invaluable service.[3]

DND/CAF is committed, more than ever, to support change. Despite earlier attempts over two decades, we had not truly gotten to the heart of the problem. Since the 2015 external report examining sexual misconduct, nearly 20,000 claimants came forward under the CAF-DND Sexual Misconduct Class Action. This was followed by serious allegations against senior CAF leaders in early 2021, emphasizing the need for urgent action. As a result, DND/CAF established CPCC to serve as the centre of expertise and a pioneer of Defence Team culture by implementing policies and practices to ensure professional conduct aligns with our institutional ethos. While CPCC is a key enabler in the evolution of culture, the degree and quality of success hinges on the commitment and acknowledgement of everyone within the Department.

As a result, the Minister of National Defence directed DND/CAF to implement all 48 recommendations outlined in the 2022 external report to contribute to positive change. Following our consultations with DND/CAF and subject matter experts, we're learning what factors affect culture most. This enables us to develop services, initiatives, and policies that will create an environment where dysfunctional conflict and harm is reduced, and an exchange of healthy solutions can be explored to improve operational effectiveness. We also need to enable individuals who have been harmed to heal. This is where leadership needs to intervene, and in some cases already has. We need to continue working with affected persons, advocacy and awareness groups, and external partners, to gather valuable and alternative perspectives on culture change.

Canadian society continues to steadily grow in diversity,[4] and DND/CAF reflects that through initiatives such as the new CAF Retention Strategy[5] that includes efforts towards improving well-being and culture. Drawing from the broadest talent pool and including individuals from all walks of life to defend Canada is a top priority. Thus, we are making strides to create a workplace environment where members have a sense of belonging, feel valued for their uniqueness, and are encouraged to be their authentic selves. Our recent move to extend eligibility to join the Forces to permanent residents supports our efforts to harness the full potential resting amongst Canadians to defend Canada. We also updated the dress instructions to meet CAF members' response to our call for authenticity, be it uniforms that are gender-inclusive, or the removal of restrictions on hair length and facial hair.

We must recognize that change can be uncomfortable, sometimes leads to mistakes, and is ongoing. Change requires dedicated, deliberate, and sustained action across the entire organization. CPCC cannot do this alone.

A first step was to engage over 12,000 members across regions, force elements, occupations, ranks, and equity-seeking groups to learn from their lived experiences. These consultations highlighted four themes: Teamwork, Identity, Leadership, and Service, which inform and define our culture. Within each theme, we found positive and negative aspects. For example, the concept of warrior identity elicits a positive response for some (e.g., courage), but negative connotations for others (e.g., hypermasculinity). Now we must define our culture,

focusing on positive aspects that unite us (e.g., mutual respect, trust, a balance of individual expression) while functioning effectively as a team. The current initiatives support this from different angles and levels (e.g., developing coaching that prioritizes character development alongside competence and improved selection processes for leaders). As we have seen in reports and internal research, the complaints process is complicated and requires an overhaul. CPCC is working diligently to improve the end-to-end experience so it is simple, transparent, and allows access to support from the moment members consider submitting a complaint to resolution, all handled in an empathetic, trauma-informed manner. As a profession of arms, we are comfortable with conflict in a theatre of operations, but not so much when it arises amongst ourselves. Much can be learned from conflict, and we need to get comfortable with having difficult conversations. CPCC is developing tools to help leaders navigate this space. The successful resolution of conflict builds trust and cohesion within teams.

Change must come from within, but also be informed by diverse perspectives. We are gathering a broad range of insights to incorporate varied expertise, lived experiences, and advice to develop effective policies and initiatives, including turning to external partners, such as equity-seeking groups, veterans, Defence Advisory Groups, and DND MINDS-funded Collaborative Networks.

The world will remain complex and in constant change. With an increased rate and intensity of changes within this great Defence Team, it will be crucial to seize the opportunities brought by these changes to flourish as an organization. The ability to learn and create from these particularly challenging times is the key to success. Every single member of DND/CAF is the owner of parts of the solution going forward. I believe we can evolve and change for the better, I believe in all of us, I believe we can change the world.

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Notes

1 The Honourable Marie Deschamps, C.C., Ad.E., *External Review Authority, External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces*, 2015; The Honourable Louise Arbour, C.C., G.O.Q., *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces*, 2022.

2 Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination, *Final Report: With a focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black Racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy*, 2022.

3 The Maple Leaf, *Honouring the Black Battalion – The No. 2 Construction Battalion National Apology Event on July 9 in Truro*, 2022.

4 Statistics Canada, *Canada in 2041: A Larger, More Diverse Population with Greater Differences Between Regions*, 2022.

5 National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Retention Strategy*, 2022.

Youth Perspectives on Military Culture Change

AYSHIA BAILIE, OSKAR MANSFIELD, HANNAH MEAGHER, KATHRYN REEVES & ELLEN SMITH

The Transforming Military Cultures Network includes a Youth Advisory Board (YAB) that consists of diverse youth who are interested in providing insight and ideas to improve and transform Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) culture. This piece introduces the YAB members and discusses their perspectives on what culture change in the CAF might look like. YAB members share their hopes for how the CAF environment can be improved. Their priorities for CAF culture change include increasing attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion; improving education and training; giving non-commissioned and lower ranking members a voice; continuing to improve health and wellness services for CAF members and their families, including military children; demonstrating a positive work environment; and, including the diverse voices of youth.

Cooks from Joint Task Force Atlantic's Immediate Response Unit prepare dinner for members on Operation LENTUS 23-02 in Shelburne, Nova Scotia on June 14, 2023.

Image by: Warrant Officer James Roberge, 5th Canadian Division Public Affairs, Canadian Armed Forces photo

Ayshia Bailie is a Master's student at Carleton University in the Health: Science, Technology and Policy program. She has a passion for military research, motivated by her sister. She describes her sister as a strong role role model because of how she has overcome gender-based barriers and achieved success in her career in the CAF. Ayshia would like to become a CAF medical officer and hopes that she can have a positive impact on military culture in this role. However, identifying as a BIPOC woman with Canadian Indigenous heritage, Ayshia believes that without having her sister as a role model, she would not have considered a career in the CAF due to the lack of diversity represented in such a male-dominated and masculine institution. As such, she thinks diversity, equity, and inclusion are key to improving military culture and to improving recruitment, retention, and the mental health and wellbeing of serving members. As a federal workplace, Ayshia thinks it is important for the CAF to effectively celebrate and represent all the cultures, values, and diverse populations within Canada.

Oskar Mansfield is a second-year undergraduate student at Mount Saint Vincent University, studying sociology and anthropology. He served briefly in the CAF as a vehicle technician in the Royal Canadian Electrical and Mechanical Engineering (RCEME) Corps. Throughout his training at both the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School and at RCEME School, Oskar observed and experienced how new soldiers are negatively treated by the institution. He believes that the values and standards non-commissioned members learn start in Basic Military Qualification and are reinforced throughout training. However, he also believes that power relations inherent in the military are not problematized, and that lower-ranking members should have a greater voice and open lines of communication with leadership to share their experiences without negative reprecussions. Considering how toxic the military working and learning environment can be, Oskar is interested in the wellbeing of military members, specifically,

how the CAF education system standards and practices can be improved. He hopes to further this goal by becoming a Training Development Officer in the CAF.

Hannah Meagher is a second-year undergraduate student at Dalhousie University in both the law, justice and society program and health studies. In high school, she was a member of the Royal Canadian Air Cadets. Throughout her time there, she was able to immerse herself in interactions with the military by participating in summer camps on base. As she got to more advanced courses, she felt like she had to prove her worth to the other cadets simply because she was one of the few women accepted into the Glider Pilot program. Her time as a cadet has inspired her to learn more about gender in the military and how she can help make the CAF culture a more welcoming environment for all those involved. Hannah thinks that the CAF has a duty to promote healthy lifestyles for all its members through health and wellness initiatives that prioritize mental health needs. She believes that there are key steps the CAF can take to do this work, including by developing policies that amplify the voices of marginalized groups, making initiatives more accessible, working to destigmatize access to supports, and overcoming the "push through the pain" mantra. Hannah thinks that knowing that those in the military have the support they require is an important step in recruiting and retaining members and improving public perception of the military.

Kathryn Reeves is a fourth-year honours undergraduate student at Mount Saint Vincent University in the Psychology program. She has an intergenerational connection to military culture, having grown up in a family with longstanding roots in military service. Kathryn was previously involved in the Canadian cadet movement, where she achieved the rank of Chief Petty Officer First Class, performed the duties of the regimental Sergeant Major, and was a recipient of the Lord Strathcona Medal. Kathryn believes that military culture has intergenerational effects that are largely unaddressed in current understandings of military life and culture which have social, psychological, and environmental impacts for military children. Unique stressors of military life, such as frequent relocations, separation from family members, and heightened awareness of the risk of military duties are frequently felt by children but inadequately addressed. As such, she believes that persistent stigma around supports must be eliminated so that military children can have better access to them, especially as their parents act as gatekeepers and may be hesitant to allow their children to access supports.

Ellen Smith is an undergraduate student at Mount Saint Vincent University taking a double major in Political Studies and Women's Studies. She was born and raised in Nova Scotia and joined the Air Cadets at the age of 12 to earn her pilot's license. During her time as an Air Cadet, she learned a lot about the CAF, from being on bases, having instructors from the military, wearing a uniform, and using military language and acronyms. These experiences have shaped how she sees the CAF. After aging out of the Cadet program, many of her fellow cadets who thrived in this orderly environment didn't join the CAF for various reasons. Some of these reasons revolved around CAF culture and the tendency to be treated poorly. As such, she believes that the CAF needs to incorporate youth perspectives to improve military culture, as youth are potential future CAF members. Further, when cadets and those in basic training have a more positive first impression of the CAF, it will make them feel more welcome in the institution and may help improve recruitment and retention.

The Youth Advisory Board members believe CAF needs to prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion; education; accountability and leadership; and, health and wellness for culture change. CAF culture should be one where all members feel valued and respected. Everyone should feel welcome to join the CAF and serve their country without being worried about whether they will be treated negatively because of who they are. In order for the culture to improve, anti-oppression training needs to begin early—in cadets and basic training. Further, as the Arbour Report[1] and the Minister's Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination report[2] have demonstrated, the CAF has systemic issues that disadvantage junior members and sometimes protect abusive or toxic senior members. This needs to change, and leadership accountability is essential. Culture change should also include the voices, perspectives, and experiences of marginalized groups. Likewise, leaders must be supportive and proactive, including with regard to health and wellness policies and initiatives, in order to make them accessible to their subordinates. Finally, the CAF needs to move beyond individualizing mental health exemplified through the mentality of "push through the pain," and de-stigmatize access to mental health supports so that all members get the help they need.

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Notes

1 Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces*, Borden Ladner Gervais, 2022.

2 Minister of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination with a Focus on Anti-Indigenous and Anti-Black racism, LGBTQ2+ Prejudice, Gender Bias, and White Supremacy*, 2022.