



DIVERSITY BEST PRACTICES IN MILITARY ORGANIZATIONS IN CANADA, AUSTRALIA, THE UNITED KINGDOM, AND THE UNITED STATES

by Grazia Scoppio

Introduction

This article provides an overview of a research project dealing with diversity strategies involving military organizations and select police forces in Canada, Australia, Britain, and the United States of America (ABC countries). It will focus upon the military perspective, given the nature of the *Canadian Military Journal*. The research was conducted during a sabbatical hosted by Professor Will Kymlicka at Queen's University. The project was sponsored by the Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity (DHRD), and the ensuing research report was endorsed by the Commander of the Canadian Defence Academy (CDA).

The Research Project

The overarching objective of the research was twofold:

- To provide a diversity framework for the Canadian Forces (CF); and,
- To identify best practices through benchmarking between Departments of Defence in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and select police forces.

A comparative and international approach was adopted to conduct this study, using qualitative methodologies, including:

- A review of multidisciplinary literature on diversity, unclassified policy documents, and reports; and
- Visits to the departments of defence in Australia, the UK, and the US, as well as the headquarters of the New South Wales (NSW) Police, which included interviews with senior uniformed officers and equivalent civilian personnel.

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Diversity and Equity

The term *diversity* is adopted as the new business approach to address both internal and external diversity, and can include: culture, ethnicity, language, religion, ability and disability, education, socio-economic background, and sexual orientation. The diversity discourse reaches a broad spectrum of stakeholders, in that everyone feels part of it.

Former concepts of equity and equality were linked to treating everyone the same, as in ‘equal pay for equal work.’ The new approach recognizes that by ignoring differences we also ignore individuals’ legitimate needs. Equity and equality are about fairness, not about the equal treatment of people.¹

Equity legislation still encounters resistance among those who see it as lowering the standards. Others feel they might be disadvantaged. Finally, those belonging to certain groups might feel labelled. However, the approach of this legislation is not to impose quotas or hire people who are not qualified to do the job, although sometimes it may be necessary to treat certain groups differently in order to be equitable.

While legislation is key to making progress toward achieving greater equality in the workplace, it should not form the sole basis of diversity policies, programs and practices. It should be considered a stepping-stone toward addressing inequalities in the workplace experienced by historically disadvantaged groups.

Multiculturalism

Multiculturalism is, at the same time, an approach toward immigrant integration, a policy promoting pluralism, and an integral part of Canadian core values. Multiculturalism is based upon the idea that immigrants are granted equal rights and opportunities, and are expected to conform to certain norms, while they are encouraged to maintain their distinctive cultural traits. This approach is the most successful in achieving the integration of immigrants into the host society, where integration is understood not as assimilation but as a two-way process of mutual accommodation between immigrants and the receiving population.

According to the Canadian philosopher Will Kymlicka, integration in the socio-cultural

sense means “...the extent to which immigrants and their descendants integrate into an existing societal culture and come to view their life chances as tied up with participation in the range of social institutions, based on a common language, which define that societal culture.”²

In 1971, Canada became the first country in the world to adopt an official multiculturalism policy, which was subsequently enshrined in an act of Parliament, thereby recognizing the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour, and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society. The policy is designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians, while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada.³ Multiculturalism therefore can provide organizations with a framework for diversity whereby individuals do not have to give up their cultural or ethnic identity to ‘belong’ and participate in an organization.

Immigration

Integrating diverse members into an organization is similar to immigrant integration. Immigration is a great source of human resources in Canada, as well as in many western countries where birth rates are declining. The new source countries are mainly in Asia and Africa, and, so, immigrants bring with them a great deal of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity.

In Canada, and also in other immigrant-receiving countries such as Australia, attitudes toward newcomers have changed somewhat, and the expectation is that, in order to integrate into Canadian mainstream society, newcomers must adopt common Canadian values and behaviours.



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As we strive to live and work effectively in a diverse environment, it is important to find a balance between being exclusive through inflexible rules and regulations, and being open through flexible policies, negotiation, and accommodation. However, it is equally important to convey acceptable and unacceptable behaviours in line with our democratic values and processes, based upon the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *Human Rights Act*.

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In Canada, immigrants are viewed as part of society and future Canadian citizens; they often maintain their culture, religion, and first language. At the same time, in order to become citizens, they need to know one of Canada's official languages, to learn about the rights and responsibilities of being Canadian, the Canadian political system, geography and history, and Aboriginal people, and they need to embrace Canadian values of equality, multiculturalism, freedom, peace, and law and order.

Similar to integration of newcomers in a host country, integration of new recruits in an organization is a two-way process. On the one hand, the host country/organization needs to create policies and programs to ensure that systemic barriers are removed, and that newcomers' needs are met through targeted policies and programs. On the other hand, newcomers must adjust to the host country/organization, adopt its standards/policies, and embrace its core values.

Change in Military Organizations

Implementing cultural change within armed forces is no easy undertaking. According to the Australian military sociologists Nicholas Jans and David Schmidtchen, two experts in Organizational Behaviour, Human Resource Management, and Leadership, "...traditional military employment structures find it difficult to accommodate non-traditional needs."⁴

Another challenge in undergoing change in military organizations is rooted in their difficulty to "...cope with differences of any kind," as stated by British military sociologists Christopher Dandeker and David Mason.⁵ They argue that the challenge for ethnic minorities is to fit into the British military occupational culture, since they lack the homogeneity and common origins based upon British colonial history. Women, on the other hand, have been somewhat more successful in their integration into the military, based upon the notion that "...they can be made like – or represented as being like – men."⁶ However,

they continue to be excluded somewhat from those roles where their differences from men are believed to be so significant as to undermine combat effectiveness.

Social Capital

Despite these barriers to change, military institutions are workplaces and, as such, Harvard political scientist Robert D. Putnam considers them "...an essential venue to build social capital, defined as networks, norms and trust... that enable participants to act together more efficiently to pursue shared objectives."⁷

The workplace is, according to Professor Cynthia Estlund of New York University's School of Law, "...[the] most promising arena of racial integration."⁸ This demographic integration yields more social integration than any other domain of society. Individuals who possibly would not associate with others of different 'racial' groups may end up in constructive workplace relations with each other. Thus, the very constraints of the workplace bring people together.

Estlund cites the military as an instructive example of racial integration, although admitting it is not an oasis of interracial harmony. It shares many features with other workplaces: "People are compelled by their organizations and by the governing rules and authority structures, to trust and cooperate with others...in the intensive and concerted pursuit of shared objectives."⁹

Critical Mass Theory

According to some scholars, a critical mass is necessary for a group to transform the institutional culture, norms, and values. Some feminist authors have applied critical mass theory to women in politics.¹⁰ However, this theory can also be applied to minorities. Consequently, it could be argued that critical masses have been achieved in the armed forces by the following groups: African Americans in the US, Maoris in New Zealand (NZ), and women in certain military occupations, such as the medical and legal branches.

Clearly, armed forces have increased the diversity of their membership, and opportunities are being created. However, it takes time to increase diversity at the top levels and to achieve cultural change. It is imperative to make the Canadian Forces an employer of choice for these diverse groups, so that more women and members of diverse ethnic groups will join and rise to position of influence within the organization, thus reaching a 'critical mass.'

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Shifting Diversity Paradigm: A Diversity Framework for the Military

Changing the approach toward diversity requires a paradigm shift. The CF needs to shift its diversity paradigm from what Harvard Business School cultural experts David Thomas and Robert Ely¹¹ define as the ‘discrimination-fairness’ (compliance model) and the ‘access-legitimacy’ (business model), to what they call the third diversity paradigm of ‘learning – effectiveness’

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(values-based model) whereby valuing the diversity of each team member, and ‘tapping into’ the unique skills of each member, will make the team more effective and better capable of accomplishing its mission.

Canadian Diversity and Leadership Functions

Many models exist that conceptualize diversity. The model developed by the Canadian political scientists Jane Jenson and Martin Papillon¹² has been selected to help understand diversity within the Canadian context. According to Jenson and Papillon, respect for cultural diversity in Canada rests upon three key pillars:

- Linguistic duality;
- Recognition of Aboriginal rights; and,
- Multiculturalism.

They argue that, in our pluralistic society, different cultures and values exist within individuals, minority, and majority groups. While this diversity can be a source of strength, responding to these diverse and, at times, competing needs is a challenge in liberal democracies. Jenson and Papillon identify the following four dimensions of difference in Canada.

The Canadian Diversity Model

Uniformity	Heterogeneity
Individual rights.....	Group rights
Symmetry.....	Asymmetry
Economic Freedom	Economic Security

Figure 1 – The Canadian Diversity Model

These four dimensions that characterize Canadian diversity involve tensions between the values to the left of the spectrum and those to the right. The values on the left express the traditional concepts of individual equality, where everyone must be treated the same so as to achieve cohesion. On the right are the views supporting the argument that we need to account for historical differences among groups. The challenge is to reach a balance, or compromise – one that is broadly accepted by most people.

Although some adaptation was required, Jenson and Papillon’s model was used as a starting point to map the key responsibilities of CF leaders¹³ within the dimensions of Canadian diversity.

The new model illustrates how some of the more traditional leadership responsibilities might appear in conflict with the less traditional ones. The challenge is to strike a balance between the conventional leadership functions on the left, which reflect the principle of treating everybody the same to achieve cohesion and homogeneity, and the responsibilities on the right, which reflect the reality of working in a diverse environment. The functions on the left and those on the right are not mutually exclusive. For example, the leadership function of building cohesion (uniformity) can be achieved while accommodating personal needs (heterogeneity). Likewise, the CF professional identity, culture, and heritage (symmetry) can be maintained within a climate of respect for diversity (asymmetry).

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A practical example of this can be found in dress and dietary accommodation for members of certain religious/cultural backgrounds, where the challenge is identifying what is truly an occupational/operational requirement, and what is based upon cultural bias or false assumptions.

Diversity Values

In order to reflect Canadian values, diversity values need to be included as a component of the framework of CF leadership. Canadian diversity values include:

- Recognition and respect for Canada’s foundations of multiculturalism, bilingualism and Aboriginal history;
- Respect for human rights and equality;
- Respect for the diversity of all individuals regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, linguistic background, or other types of diversity; and
- The fostering of a climate of inclusion, non-discrimination, tolerance, and accommodation of difference.

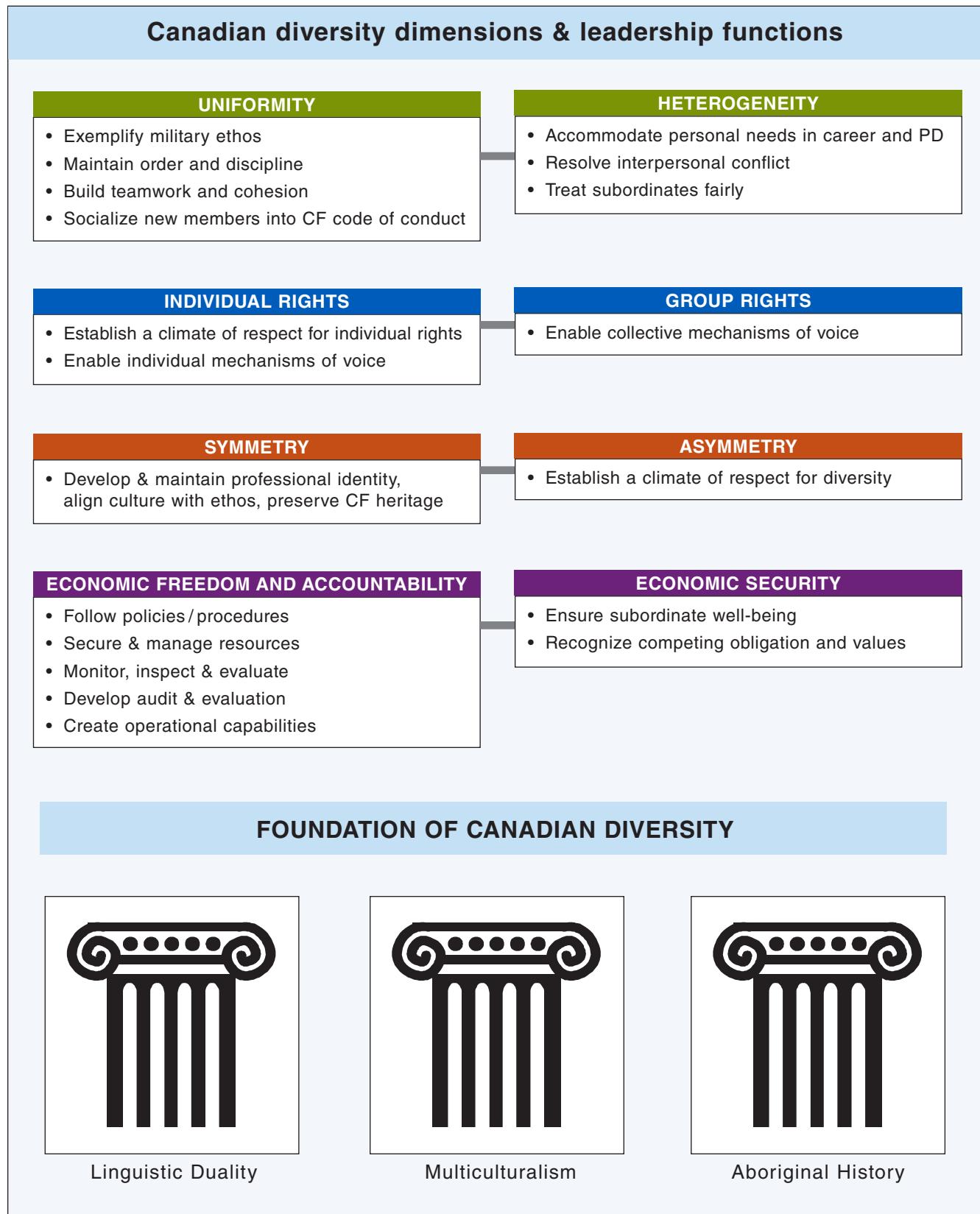


Figure 2 – Canadian diversity dimensions & leadership functions

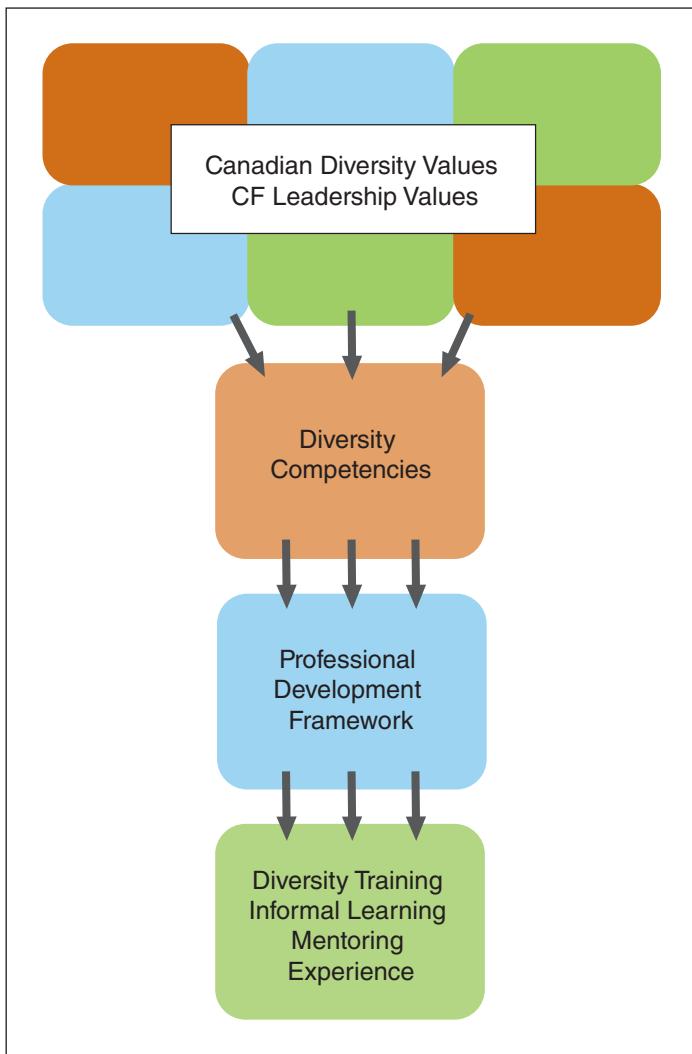


Figure 3 – Values-based Diversity Competencies

Diversity Competencies

Canadian diversity values should also be reflected in diversity competencies.

These competencies should be acquired progressively, starting from general awareness, moving to more specific knowledge/understanding, and finally, to more advanced skills, as listed below:

- Cultural awareness and cultural sensitivity, including awareness of different customs, and religions;
- Awareness of gender differences, including different communication styles;
- Awareness of different personalities within the team;
- Awareness of different decision-making styles;
- Awareness of stereotyping, bias, and discrimination;
- Knowledge of human rights;

- Knowledge of multiculturalism principles;
- Understanding of basic dignity and democratic values;
- Understanding of harassment in the workplace;
- Understanding of employment equity and issues related to women, Aboriginal people, visible minorities, and people with disabilities;
- Understanding of Aboriginal history and Aboriginal Treaty Rights;
- Understanding group dynamics;
- Conflict resolution skills;
- Problem-solving skills/strategies in diverse groups;
- Interpersonal and emotional competencies;
- Cross-cultural/intercultural communication skills;
- Cultural literacy;
- Language ability in Canada's two official languages; and
- Knowledge of a language other than English or French.

The Diversity Continuum

The CF must go beyond legal compliance and shift to an approach that sees diversity as a positive strength, and a 'value added' for the organization, as illustrated in the diversity continuum presented below.

This shift is necessary because the CF needs to:

- Be supported by the Canadian people;
- Increase internal diversity to attain a critical mass of diverse members and achieve cultural change; and
- Operate within a diverse global context in overseas operations.

This shift from 'compliance' to 'valuing diversity' can be achieved through a comprehensive diversity strategy that includes CF and DND members and by incorporating diversity into three key elements of the organization:

- Mission;
- Values; and
- Professional Development (PD).

Core Canadian diversity values should be a fundamental component of the framework of CF leadership values. Diversity competencies, which reflect these core diversity values, should be included in the CF PD framework.

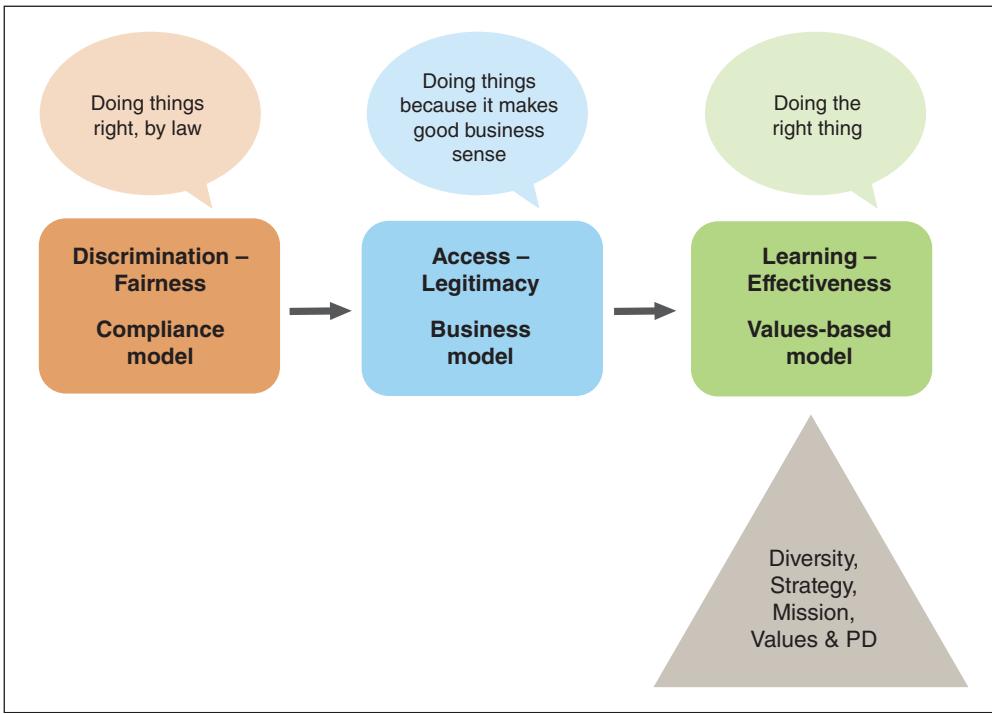


Figure 4 – Diversity Continuum

Accordingly, learning events should be developed for all levels of leadership. Finally, indicators and metrics should be identified to measure whether programs have accomplished the stated objectives, and that progress has been made.

These values and competencies should apply to everyone in the organization – not only to existing ‘majority’ groups but also to new ‘minority’ groups. In other words, individuals whose values and attitudes are in conflict with those of the organization will be expected to adapt to the organizational context.

Benchmarking

This next section on benchmarking will provide an overview of the policy/institutional framework, and the demographics, in the armed forces of Australia, Britain, the United States, and Canada. Although the context is somewhat different in each country, the challenges are quite similar. The following section dealing with best practices will then illustrate some valuable lessons learned, and will provide examples of best practices that help to make the link between theory and reality.

Australia

In Australia, the Director of Rights and Responsibilities has the portfolio for the entire Defence Department regarding a wide spectrum of legislation. This directorate provides guidelines and frameworks, while each of the services is responsible for implementation. Recently, there has been a change in the name of the directorate from

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Defence Equity to Rights and Responsibilities. This nomenclature change reflects a shift in approach from equity toward a broader framework of ‘rights and responsibilities,’ which includes everyone in the organization. The director commented that they had been “using equity as a beat stick, not as a carrot...Equity [had] become synonymous with unacceptable behaviour.”¹⁴

Women make up 48 percent of the total work force in Australia. The percentage of Department of Defence (DoD) female employees is about 38 percent, while in the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the overall percentage of female service members

is approximately 13 percent. Clearly, women are under-represented, particularly in the senior ranks. The challenge is the requirement to ‘tick all the boxes’ and to meet all the criteria. This is particularly difficult for some women, given that, in some occupations, the opportunities for command are virtually non-existent, and, that most combat occupations are not open to women. Currently, there is a focus upon the recruitment and retention of women, who are viewed as an untapped pool of human resources. In 2006, the Chief of the ADF made statements with respect to increasing the number of female service members by creating a ‘women friendly’ environment in the three services. Policies are being adapted to make the forces more appealing to women, such as those governing child-care for new parents. The driving force is not necessarily to be ‘reflecting society,’ but to have a defence force that is fully manned.

The ADF currently does not reflect the ethnic diversity of the Australian multicultural population. Minority groups of Non-English Speaking Background (NESB) represent only 4.1 percent of the ADF, which is made up predominantly of members with an Anglo-Celtic background. The reasons identified to explain the under-representation of NESB groups are several-fold. First, the ADF currently does not recruit non-citizens. Secondly, some groups of immigrant descent are unlikely to join because they fled countries with oppressive military regimes. Finally, there are issues with respect to security clearances. The ADF is looking at strategies to increase

ethnic diversity in the forces by advertising in ethnic newspapers, and by focusing upon "...ethnic elders [because they] are very strong influences on youth and so [the ADF] has been looking at doing some work [with elders],"¹⁵

Indigenous people constitute Aboriginal people from the mainland, as well as Torres Strait Islanders, and they make up 2.6 to 2.7 percent of the total work force in Australia. They are under-represented in the ADF, where they constitute less than 0.5 percent of Regular Force. However, the proportion of indigenous members is higher in the Army Reserve. The interviewees speculated this to be the case because the Reserves tend to have more of a presence in indigenous communities. The Deputy Director of Strategic Recruiting commented that the ADF continues to look at new strategies to increase indigenous representation within the forces. They are looking at promoting "...Indigenous achievement and culture within the wider ADF."¹⁶

The ADF military members and their DoD civilian counterparts are closely linked, as illustrated by the following examples:

- The establishment of a values statement for the entire Defence community, jointly supported by the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF);
- The Directorate for Rights and Responsibilities has the portfolio for the entire Defence establishment, including the uniformed services and civilians;

- The Workplace Equity and Diversity Annual Report addresses the entire Defence establishment, including the uniformed services and civilians.

United Kingdom

In the Ministry of Defence (MoD) of Britain (UK), there are two separate directorates dealing with diversity-related legislation; one for service personnel, and the other for public servants. The Director of Service Personnel Policy has the portfolio for the armed services. However, there is a Unified Diversity Strategy (UDS) for the entire MoD. The strategy is developed by the Diversity Panel, co-chaired by the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the Permanent Secretary.

The first overarching Equality and Diversity Scheme for the MoD was introduced in April 2006, encompassing the armed forces, the civil service, and the Ministry of Defence Police. The scheme incorporates nearly every element of diversity: race, disability, gender, age, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The scheme provides the statutory framework for equity and diversity for the entire Defence establishment, focusing upon regular force and departmental civilians. The scheme focuses upon targets, and it goes beyond legislative requirements of Employment Opportunity (EO), whereby it shifts from EO to diversity using a quad-service approach: Royal Air Force (RAF), Royal Navy, the army, and the public service.



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While top-level strategic documents constitute a step in the right direction, achieving cultural change on the ground has proven to be far more difficult. The Staff Officer for Employment at the Directorate of Manning – Army commented "... [that] they need to overcome [this problem] through changing behaviours and attitudes of [their] chain of command at all levels."¹⁷ The lack of diversity reflected in the upper ranks contributes to the difficulty of attitude and behavioural change.

The female employment in Britain, as of 2002, was 45 percent, one of the highest in the European Union (EU). MoD statistics as of 2006 indicate that the proportion of MoD female civilian staff was 36 percent, and that for serving female armed forces personnel was 9.1 percent. Women are clearly under-represented in the armed forces, particularly in the highest ranks. They are *largely* excluded from direct combat roles, that is to say, areas where the primary duty is "...to close with and kill the enemy face-to-face," due to "...[the] potential impact of gender mixing in the small teams essential to success in the close combat environment."¹⁸

The ethnical diversity in Britain's armed forces is due mainly to their recruiting policy, which permits members of the Commonwealth to serve. However, the integration of ethnic minorities is not without problems. Having said that, this diversity might be more a consequence of Britain's colonial history than it is a conscious effort to reflect Britain's multicultural society.

In Britain, visible minorities are referred to as Visible Ethnic Minorities (VEM), and they are non-white British citizens. They constitute about nine percent of the UK work force. As of 2006, the overall proportion of serving armed forces personnel from ethnic minorities was 5.5 percent. One of the reasons for this under-representation is that for many communities, the military is not the employer of choice. Recruiting teams are currently in place presently to do some bridging with ethnic minority communities.

United States

The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) held its first Diversity Summit in February 2007. Representatives from each service were present, as well as subject matter experts (SMEs). The next step is to develop the OSD strategic plan for diversity. The initial direction is to increase diversity at the highest ranks, the general/flag officers.

Clearly, at the strategic level, diversity has the highest support, and it is viewed as an operational requirement:

"The way we're fighting wars today requires our airmen to be capable of working in these environments that require you to know something about diversity whether [you are] deployed to Iraq or even working with somebody in your

unit from a different part of the country, you have to know how to work in diverse teams with diverse partners."¹⁹

The legislative framework for diversity is provided as follows:

- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) law for civilians; or
- Equal Opportunity (EO) regulations for military members.

Women make up 46 percent of the total US labour force. In the DoD, the overall percentage of female employees is 35 percent. It should be noted that civilians who work for the services fall directly under the chain of command of the individual services. One of the civilian staff of the Army Diversity Office commented: "I am Army first, DoD second, because I work for the Army. If I worked for the Air Force, I would be Air Force first, then DoD."²⁰

There are 205,054 active duty women in the US armed forces, representing on average 14.5 percent of the total establishment. However, the rates differ significantly, depending upon service and rank. The highest proportion of women is in the air force (19.6 percent), and the lowest is in the Marine Corps (6.1 percent). The US Congress still forbids women from engaging in offensive warfare with the enemy. Consequently, combat occupations are not open to women, although supporting combat roles are permitted. The percentage of jobs not open to women varies by service. In the air force, for example, very few occupations are closed to women. This explains, at least partly, the higher proportion of women in the air force, including those serving at the general/flag officer rank. In reality, some military women in non-combat roles find themselves in combat situations and in such circumstances they are allowed to shoot back. However, this bureaucratic limitation in terms of career opportunities for women negatively impacts promotion opportunities to the highest officer ranks, where women are under-represented. The link between career progression and combat experience has been illustrated by Colonel Anthony D. Reyes of the US Army²¹ with respect to African-American male officers, but the same parallels can be made with female officers – regardless of ethnicity.

The US military is the most diverse of all the nations placed 'under the microscope' here. Their African-American members, including females, are reasonably well represented in the officer ranks, and they are over-represented in the enlisted ranks. The over-representation of black personnel in the enlisted ranks is seen by some as a result of recruiters targeting certain groups. At the same time, statistical data show this is also partly linked to educational attainment. In addition, the US Armed Forces recruiting policy allows immigrants to serve, and it enables them to become citizens through an expedited process. Due to security requirements, certain occupations, such as the intelligence billets, are

open only to American citizens. Historically, issues of 'race' in the United States have been 'black and white,' but more recently, Hispanic groups have also been at the forefront of such issues.

Based upon the feedback gathered, the focus in the American military at this time appears concentrated more upon African-Americans and Hispanics than upon Aboriginal populations. There are 4.3 million American Indians (AI) and Alaskan Natives (AN) in the US, 1.5 percent of the total population. The US armed forces publish combined data on these two native groups, which constitute 1.8 percent of the total service membership overall (0.8 percent officer and 1.9 percent enlisted ranks).

Canada

Since 2002, the CF has fallen under the *Employment Equity Act* (EEA) of 1986, revised in 1995, although there are specific regulations to account for the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces. The Canadian EEA has the purpose of achieving "...equality in the workplace so that no person shall be denied employment opportunities or benefits for reasons unrelated to ability

and, in the fulfillment of that goal, to correct the conditions of disadvantage in employment experienced by women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities."²²

There are two separate directorates in the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND) dealing with diversity and employment equity. The Directorate of Human Rights and Diversity (DHRD) is responsible for the CF, while the responsibility for DND civilian personnel falls under the Director of Diversity and Well Being (DDWB).

Canada has a very multicultural population, made up of Anglophones, Francophones, Aboriginals, and immigrants. The foreign-born total of its citizens is 5.4 million or 18.4 percent, one of the highest rates in the world, and second only to Australia. At the same time, almost four million individuals have identified themselves as visible minorities (VM), 13.4 percent of the total population. In the work force, 3.2 million people were born outside of the country.²³ In terms of Aboriginal people, the estimated availability of Aboriginals in the Canadian labour force is 2.6 percent, as observed in the 2001 census. Additionally, women make up 49.2 percent of the total work force in Canada, and this trend is increasing.

The composition of the CF does not yet reflect the gender and ethnic diversity of the Canadian labour force. Representational rates for women, visible minorities, and Aboriginal people in the CF are lower than Federal Government rates overall, and they fall below labour force representation rates. The Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) made several references in his speeches to the fact that the CF must reflect the ethnic diversity of the Canadian population, both when operating abroad or domestically:

"Our recruiting process is now working. It's not perfect, perhaps not even very good, got a lot of changes to do with it but [...] the combination of that team effort has allowed us to meet the goals that we have set and get the right kind of young men and women into the Canadian Forces from our entire mosaic across the country – not enough from the ethnic communities, the smaller communities but better than we have been doing before."²⁴

Based upon 2006 data, the Canadian Total Force rates are as follows: women, 17.1 percent; visible minorities, 2.4 percent; and Aboriginals, two percent. The Regular Force rates are as follows: women, 13.1 percent, visible minorities, 2.2 percent, and Aboriginals, 1.7 percent. Within DND at large, the percentage of female employees is about 40 percent.

Despite the fact that all CF military occupations, including combat, are open to women, their representation in the Regular Forces is only higher than in Britain, while it is the same as Australia and lower than the United States, although in these last two countries women



DND photo IVD 2002-5271

are generally excluded from combat trades and special forces. These findings suggest other possible barriers to women that go beyond legal barriers, such as: the requirement for mobility in the military profession; the fact that many occupations are non-traditional for women; and an organizational culture that is not open enough toward women.

With respect to visible minorities, the reasons identified to explain this under-representation are similar to those identified by the ADF. First, the CF does not recruit non-citizens. Secondly, some groups of immigrant descent are unlikely to join because they fled countries with oppressive military regimes. Thirdly, there are issues with respect to security clearances. Fourthly, it appears that some ethnic minority groups do not view the CF as an employer of choice.

In terms of Aboriginals, several initiatives are in place to increase the representation of Aboriginal members in the Canadian Forces, as outlined in the following section.

Best practices

Several examples of best practices can be drawn from the foregoing benchmarking research conducted in the other ABCA countries, including:

- Joint military and civilian portfolio for Employment Equity (EE) and diversity under the umbrella of the Director of Rights and Responsibilities in the Australian DoD;
- The Leadership Competencies Framework for military members and civilians working for the Defence, developed by the Australian DoD;
- The UK MoD Senior Officer and Civil Servants Diversity and Equity Awareness program for general/flag officers and senior executives combined;
- Outreach recruiting strategies carried out by the different services of the US armed forces, including: ethnic community leaders, affinity groups, parents of new recruits, and media (for example, the movie, *The Guardian*);
- Formal mentoring programs established by the US Navy;
- The Defence Employment Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI), US DoD;
- The NSW Police New Forward Plan: *NSW Police Priorities for Working in a Culturally, Linguistically and Religiously Diverse Society*; and,
- The community forum organized by the Ottawa Police Force.

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At the same time, the CF exemplifies some best practices, which can provide learning opportunities for countries that do not yet have such practices in place, including:

- Opening all occupations to women, including combat-related occupations, to increase opportunities for career progression to higher levels of leadership, which is often linked to combat roles and operational experience;
- Establishing policies for dress and dietary accommodation to allow members of diverse backgrounds such as Aboriginal, Muslim, and Jewish, to preserve their cultural, spiritual and religious identity;
- Allowing homosexual members to be open about their sexual preferences, thus enabling them to maintain their individual identity;
- Creating Aboriginal recruiting and training programs such as the *Bold Eagle* and the new Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year at the Royal Military College, and holding the Aboriginal Forum, which are all methods for connecting Aboriginal youth and communities with the military; and,
- Establishing a structure of EE Advisory Groups (AGs), one for each Designated Group, championed by a senior General/Flag Officer, to provide strategic advice on issues regarding women, Aboriginal peoples, persons with disabilities and members of visible minorities.

Changing Approach toward Diversity: Some Recommendations

There have been efforts in the CF, similar to those employed by other organizations at study here, to enhance the diversity within the organization through recruiting strategies, accommodation policies, and training programs. Although progress has been made, there are still some gaps and challenges that need to be addressed.

The CF does not fairly reflect the ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of Canadian society at all levels of leadership. This 'lack of diversity' is partly due to recruiting, promotion, retention, and training challenges. At the same time, it is also due to a 'closed' organizational culture and the widespread perception that diversity is not conducive to team-cohesion, and thus, it may negatively impact upon the mission of the armed forces, namely, the application of force on behalf of the government. However, these arguments have little empirical foundation, and, in fact, research supporting opposing views can be found at will.



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While keeping its mission in mind, the CF, similar to other armed forces, must be able to adapt to change, such as in demographic trends, and it must also reflect societal values. This is necessary in order for the CF to maintain support from the government and its citizens at large. If such support is lacking, the very existence of the military in a democratic state can be questioned.

At the same time, the missions of the armed forces in Western democracies have evolved and are no longer limited to traditional warfighting. These missions require a different set of cognitive, technical and social skills, as well as a broader understanding of the context and cultures involved. These skills and understanding are necessary to engage with and influence local communities, coalition partners and allies, and other stakeholders involved. In addition, the modern soldier must also espouse Canadian values as an open democracy and a multicultural nation. If he or she lacks these skills and cultural understanding, or fails to uphold these values, a given mission may be at risk of failure.

Based upon the research conducted, the following recommendations are made with a view to assist the CF in making this paradigm shift:

1. Develop a unified diversity strategy, which is proactive, inclusive of the entire Defence team, and which adopts a broad perspective on diversity, beyond legal/EE requirements and the demographic rationale. This integrated approach supports greater civilian-military cooperation, essential in the new security environment;
2. Harmonize the EE cycles of military and civilian personnel to optimize resources and efforts;
3. Amalgamate Diversity/EE directorates for CF and DND civilians, to support greater integration, avoid duplication of efforts, optimize resources, and address ‘common’ needs of civilian and military members holistically, while recognizing the ‘specific’ needs of military members;
4. Build capacity within DND/CF for an institute or section responsible for providing direction, coordination, and oversight of diversity research and PD, in line with some of the models in other Defence departments, such as DEOMI in the United States;
5. Include core Canadian diversity values as a component of CF leadership values;
6. Include diversity competencies within the CF PD framework by incorporating them as context-specific competencies, under the element of ‘social capacities’;
7. Continue to develop and integrate into ‘all’ levels of PD system, specific diversity/EE awareness material, currently included only in basic training for officers and non-commissioned members (NCMs), and in one senior NCM leadership program;
8. Integrate diversity-related topics in different aspects of CF leadership training, not just as stand-alone modules;
9. Develop senior officers/executives diversity/EE awareness material for recently appointed general officers, flag officers, executives, and senior chief warrant officers, which could be delivered as a component of the Executive Leader Program;
10. Implement outreach recruiting strategies that include: ethnic community leaders, affinity groups, parents of new recruits, and media;
11. Develop formal mentoring programs focusing upon women, ethnic minorities, and Aboriginals;
12. Organize a community forum with leaders from diverse Canadian communities to identify ways for the CF to become more representative of the multicultural make-up of the Canadian population;

13. Formalize EE/Diversity Officers as a bona fide occupational classification, requiring specific competencies, knowledge, and training; and,
14. Require all Level 1 and Level 2 organizations, at a minimum, to have EE/Diversity Officer positions, responsible for advising, unit training/coordination/delivery, EE tasks, and related activities.

Summary and Conclusion

The research conducted herein provided evidence that there is a need for the CF to change its approach toward diversity from *reactive* to *proactive*. That is to say, the CF needs to shift its diversity paradigm from compliance (doing things right, by law) and reflecting demographic concerns (doing things because it makes good business sense), to valuing diversity (doing the right thing, period).

To achieve this philosophical and cultural change within the organization, the CF must take a holistic, system

approach to diversity, and develop a unified diversity strategy for the entire Defence team that encompasses recruiting, promotion, retention, and professional development, including: a more open and flexible recruiting system; an accountability system that values and rewards members who support and promote diversity initiatives; and a career-long learning approach to diversity education/training. Diversity should be incorporated into the three key elements of the organization: mission, values, and professional development.

As a national institution, and as an organization with forces deployed around the world representing Canada and Canadian values, the CF needs to demonstrate leadership in diversity strategies and approaches. In turn, increasing diversity and ‘tapping into’ the unique skills of each team member will make the team more effective and better capable of accomplishing its mission.



“The CF does not fairly reflect the ethnic, cultural, and gender diversity of Canadian society at all levels of leadership.”



DND photo SU2007-0092-14

Rabbi Chaim Mendelsohn, the first Orthodox Rabbi to serve in the Canadian Forces since the end of the Second World War, is sworn in on 13 March 2007.

NOTES

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