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GEOGRAPHIC RELOCATION OF CAF MEMBERS: THE NECESSARY REVIEW

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Exercise Solo Flight

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GEOGRAPHIC RELOCATION OF CAF MEMBERS: THE NECESSARY REVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In the five-year period between 2009 and 2014, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) moved the equivalent of its entire Regular Force (Reg F), an estimated 63,500 members¹. However, the number of moves actually required to enable the CAF to be an effective organization is a question that remains unanswered; the development of the posting program being coined by many as ‘Art, not Science’². With the release of Canada’s new Defence Policy and its focus on a well-supported, diverse and resilient force, the CAF is aggressively developing initiatives focused on recruitment, retention, and leveraging Canada’s diversity. Without conducting a deeper review into the requirement to relocate its members, CAF’s initiatives will fail to be effective. Canadian society has changed. The structure of Canadian families and their employment patterns are complex and no longer reflect the traditional ‘single-earner father’ of the 1970s. The costs of geographical relocations are significant, both financially and socially. The ‘incentivization’ of mobility is the basis of ongoing personnel policy development and determining the requirement for relocation remains elusive at best.

¹ Department of National Defence, Military Cost Moves Working Group, *Military Cost Moves Corporate Account (C107) Review – A DND Review of C107*, (June 2015), 16.

² Department of National Defence, Military Cost Moves Working Group..., 17.

CANADIAN SOCIETY

To remain a relevant and effective Canadian institution, it is critical that the CAF reflect the demographics of the population it represents and adapt to the evolving Canadian societal norms and expectations. Canada's demographics have changed significantly in the past decades, traditional family structures comprised of working fathers and 'stay at home' mothers are giving way to more complex and transitional arrangements. Women's education levels and their rate of participation in the workforce continue to increase. Ageing Canadian population is leaving the workforce at a greater rate than can be filled by the younger millennial and post-millennial cohorts, with positive growth in immigration relied upon to help fill the void.

Statistics Canada's survey examining the employment patterns of families with children between 1976 and 2014³ is seen at Figures 1 and 2 respectively. A notable shift in 'single-earner' families is seen since the integration of women in the Canadian workforce. Most often with a working father and a non-working mother, the 'single-earner' families rate has decreased from 51% to a low 17%. Those families who are 'dual-earner' couples increased from 33% to 55%, the 'female lone parent' rate has doubled and the 'male lone parent' has quadrupled in that same time frame.

³ Statistics Canada, "Employment patterns of families with children", last accessed 5 March 2018. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2015001/article/14202-eng.pdf>.

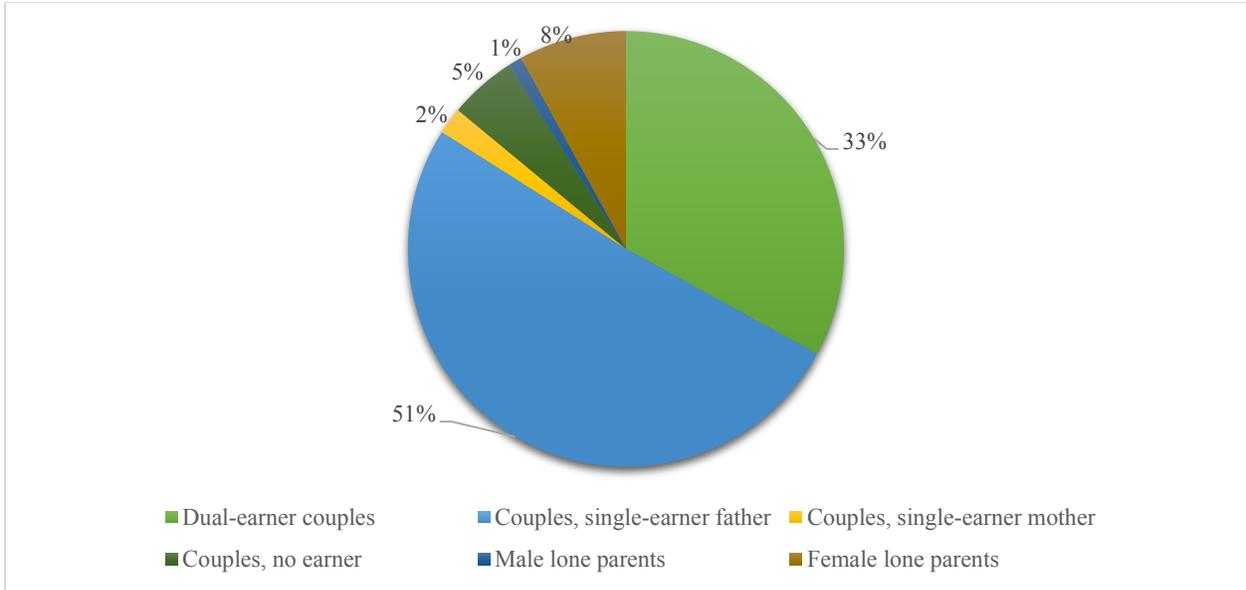


Figure 1- Distribution of families with at least one child under 16, by employment status, 1976

Source: *Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 1976*

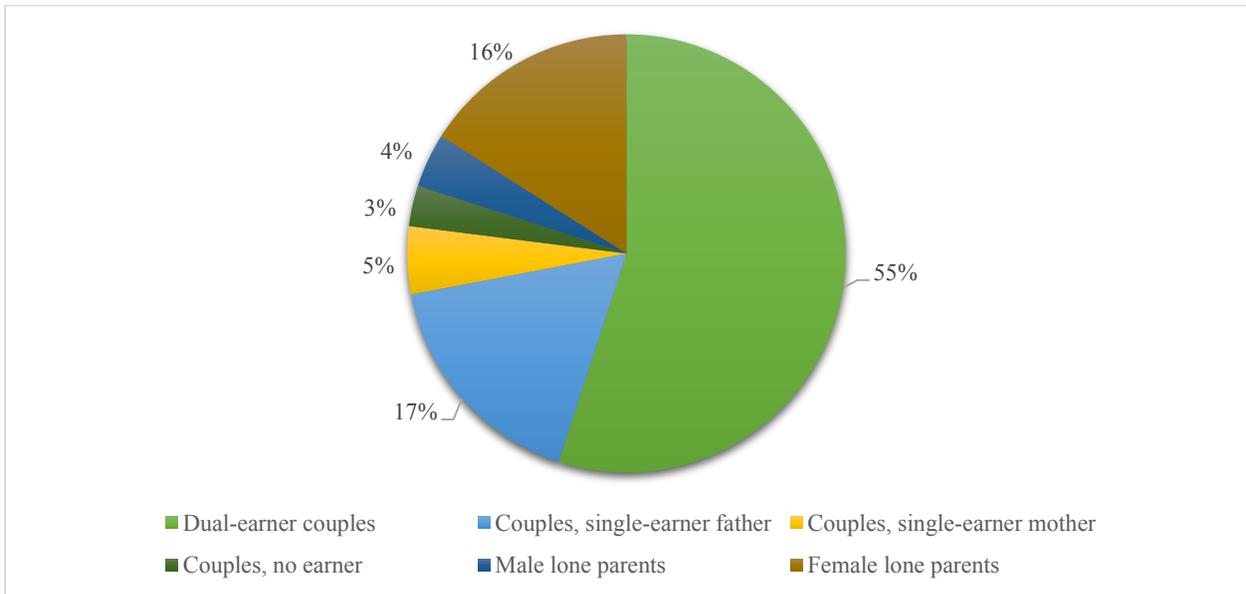


Figure 1 - Distribution of families with at least one child under 16, by employment status, 2014

Source: *Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 2014*

A shift in the overall level of education of Canada's female population also sets the stage for increased desire for meaningful employment, careers. Between 1990 and 2009, the percentage of women having attained a postsecondary certificate or diploma, and those having attained a university degree have increased from 26.6% to 37.2%, and 13.7% to 28.1% respectively⁴. Figure 3 demonstrates women's involvement in the labour force having tripled since the early 1950's, from approximately 24% to 76% between 1953 and 1990. By 2014, it reached 82% and made up almost half of the entire Canadian workforce⁵.

Canada's population is ageing. In the next two decades, Statistics Canada projects that the "proportion of individuals aged 65 and over in Canada could increase from 16% in 2014 to 24% in 2034"⁶. As Canada's population ages, caregiving will become a reality for many. Already in 2012, nearly half of Canadians aged 15 years and older had provided some type of care to a family member or friend with almost half of those caring for an ageing mother or father⁷.

⁴ Statistics Canada, "Distribution of women aged 25 to 54, by highest level of education attainment, Canada, 1990 to 2009, last accessed 22 May 2018, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-503-x/2010001/article/11542/c-g/desc/c-g001-desc-eng.htm>.

⁵ Statistics Canada, "The surge of women in the workforce, last updated 17 May 2018, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2015009-eng.htm>.

⁶ Statistics Canada, "Recent changes in demographic trends in Canada", last updated 27 October 2015, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/75-006-x/2015001/article/14240-eng.pdf>

⁷ Statistics Canada, "Portrait of caregivers, 2012", last accessed 25 May 2018, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/89-652-x/89-652-x2013001-eng.htm#a1>.

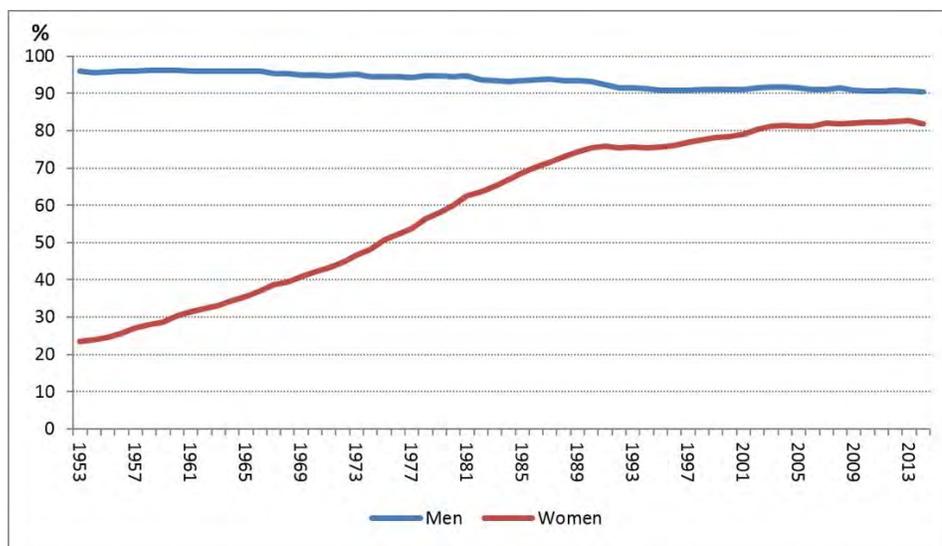


Figure 3 – Labour force participation rates of men and women aged 25 to 54, 1953 to 2014

Source: *Labour Force Survey (LFS), 1976 to 2014, and previous LFS publications.*

The millennial and post millennial cohorts are another demographic that is of growing interest considering they will be highly sought after to fill the increasing vacancies left behind by the ageing population. By 2025 the number of Canadians entering the workforce (age 20) will only be 70% of those leaving (age 66)⁸. Exploration of how this cohort makes career choices and what they find attractive is of great interest to employers. Authors Ng and Gossett present the findings of a 2007 internet survey of just under 20,000 postsecondary students (58.8% female, 41.2% male), focused on providing an “insight into students’ attitudes and their views of employers, career opportunities, and the future of work”⁹. It revealed that the number one career goal is to ‘balance personal life and career’ with a third of those surveyed identifying the Government of Canada as a “top 25 Employer of Choice” yet while the RCMP ranked 5th with

⁸ Alan Okros, “Slide to Unlock: Implications from the Harnessing 21st Century Competencies Project,” Report Submitted to DGMPRA (August 2015): 4.

⁹ Eddy S.W. NG, and Charles W. Gossett, “Career choice in Canadian Public Service: An Exploration of Fit with the Millennial Generation,” *Public Personnel Management* 42, no.3 (September 2013): 338.

this category, the CAF ranked 9th out of fifteen choices¹⁰. Allan Okros further supports these findings through a more recent study of the youth cohorts showing their focus on the importance of ‘work, life and personal goals’ as they enter Canada’s workforce¹¹.

Canadian demographics are also changing as a result of the increasing growth rate of Canada’s immigration, a necessary contribution to Canada’s population to counter the decreasing natural births. Canada’s ethnocultural and linguistic diversity is everchanging; immigration will account for more than 80% of population growth beginning in 2031¹², with over one-third of the working-age population in 2036 belonging to a visible minority group¹³.

IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHIC RELOCATION

In light of the significant changes to Canadian demographics and family structure, the CAF continues to struggle with the development and application of personnel policies to address Employment Equity (EE) objectives, retention and attrition of CAF members. The 2016 OAG Report highlights these challenges and the CAF’s inability to achieve its own identified objectives. Recruiting targets were set below the CAF’s needs, the recruiting system’s lengthy process failed to meet the needs of the applicants, no strategy was developed to meet the 25% target for women in the CAF despite the previous 2011 Audit Report. Although the CAF knew

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 345-347.

¹¹ Alan Okros, “Slide to Unlock...”, 18.

¹² Statistics Canada, “Population growth: Migratory increase overtakes natural increase”, last updated 17 May 2018, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2014001-eng.htm>.

¹³ Statistics Canada, “Study: A look at immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada up to 2036, 2011 to 2036”, last updated 1 Feb 2017. <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170125/dq170125b-eng.htm>.

the causes of attrition within the Regular Force, it did not implement its retention strategy and did not develop specific strategies to respond to the challenges of each occupation¹⁴.

Despite its long history of women participating in various roles, from nursing for the first time as civilians during the Northwest Rebellion of 1885, as military members in the Army Nursing Service in 1901, to the 50,000 Canadian women who enlisted in the three services of the Women's Division starting in 1941¹⁵, the CAF struggles to reach its current EE targets. The rate of women in the CAF was 11.4% in 2001 and only slowly increased to 15.3% as of January 2018, almost 17 years later. For the CAF to reach its target of 25.1% by 2026, a third of all CAF intake will need to be female between now and 2026, doubling the current rate¹⁶. Focused on its 'targeted recruiting' initiatives, the CAF continues to ignore the data obtained through surveys and projects indicating that 'having to move away from home and family' remains a significant barrier to women's enrolment into the CAF¹⁷.

Apart from being an EE target for enrolment, by comprising just over 50% of Canadian population, women are also the spouses of the male military members, a part of the family structure affected by geographical relocations. Without access to specific CAF data, Canadian demographics show that almost half (48%) of the adult population is 'married' or 'common law'¹⁸. If similar representation exists in the CAF, and as women (the spouse) are increasingly more educated and career oriented than in past decades, the geographical relocation of married

¹⁴ Office of the Auditor General of Canada, "2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, Report 5 – Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention – National Defence", last accessed 6 March 2018, http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201611_05_e_41834.html.

¹⁵ National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces, "Historical Milestones of Women in the Canadian Armed Forces", last updated 8 March 2018, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/news/article.page?doc=historical-milestones-of-women-in-the-canadian-armed-forces/izkjr17h>.

¹⁶ Department of National Defence, Defence Research and Development Canada, *Employment Equity Strategic Planning Model: Overview and Results*. Contract Report DRDC-RDDC-2017-B029_EN, June 2017.

¹⁷ Earncliffe Strategy Group, *The Recruitment and Employment of Women in the Canadian Armed Forces Research Report*, prepared for Department of National Defence, 16 September 2016, 6.

¹⁸ Statistics Canada, "Population by marital status and sex", last updated 8 November 17, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/famil01a-eng.htm>.

male CAF members will be increasingly problematic. With the lack of professional opportunities in smaller communities where CAF members are posted, “the spousal employment challenge has repeatedly been identified as a major consideration leading serving members to release from the CF”¹⁹.

Members of Visible Minorities also form a group of interest within the CAF, targeted to grow to 11.8% by 2026, a low proportion of the CAF considering one person out of three in the Canadian labour force will belong to a visible minority group by 2036²⁰. With the majority concentrated in our three biggest cities, Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver²¹, research shows that many are “less likely to join the military, due in part to the high likelihood of being posted away from their communities”²².

With limited influence over *where, when and for how long* members are posted, the geographic relocation has been identified as “the single most unsettling feature of the CF lifestyle”²³. Career managers (CM) under Director General Military Careers (DGMC) have also been identifying constant pressures in balancing service requirements and individual CAF member ‘preferences’ as a result of the changing Canadian demographics. Figure 4 identifies spousal employment, education, home ownership, ageing parents, marital status and stability as

¹⁹ Ombudsman National Defence and Canadian Forces, Special Report to the Minister of National Defence, *On the Homefront – Assessing the Well-being of Canada’s Military Families in the New Millennium*, November 2013, 6.

²⁰ Statistics Canada, “Study: A look at immigration, ethnocultural diversity and languages in Canada up to 2036, 2011 to 2036”, last updated 1 February 2017, <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/170125/dq170125b-eng.htm>.

²¹ Statistics Canada, “Table 2 Visible minority population and top three visible minority groups, selected census metropolitan areas, Canada, 2011, last updated 13 April 2016, <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/2011001/tbl/tbl2-eng.cfm>.

²² Chantale Fraser, “Diversity Recruiting: It’s Time to Tip the Balance”, *Canadian Military Journal*, last updated 14 Jul 2008, <http://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/vol13/no4/page25-eng.asp>.

²³ Ombudsman National Defence and Canadian Forces, Special Report to the Minister of National Defence, *On the Homefront ...*, 4.

‘Individual Preferences’ taken into consideration and balanced against ‘Service Requirements’ in the environment that is ‘career management’.



Figure 4 – Career Management Environment

Source: DWAN Intranet - 2006 DGMC Presentation, last accessed April 2018.

The 2013 Ombudsman Special Report *Assessing the Well-being of Canada's Military Families in the New Millennium* highlights many of the same challenges identified by the CM. The geographic relocation of members is a constant factor influencing personnel's individual preferences, and at a rate of 32% it represents the second most commonly reported reason for leaving the CAF according to the 2013-2017 data of CAF Exit Survey²⁴. This is only slightly below the first reported reason at 35%, 'job satisfaction'. For those members who remain in the

²⁴ Department of National Defence, Defence Research and Development Canada, *CAF Exit Survey – Descriptive Analyses of 2013-2017 Data*, Contract Report DRDC-RDDC-2017-C249, October 2017, 4.

CAF, the 2016 CAF Retention Survey highlights only 49.4% are satisfied with the ‘effect of postings on spouse’s/partner’s employment’ and 57.9% satisfied with the ‘effect of posting on children’s well-being’²⁵, with concerns over accessing health care and having to constantly adapt to new school programs and curricula²⁶ as key issues. Yet, the move of a CAF member as a result of ‘member’s request’ falls as the last priority in the establishment of a CM’s posting plot²⁷.

The cost of geographical relocation is both social and financial. With fiscal responsibility at the forefront of department accountability, in the fall of 2014 the Vice Chief of Defence Staff (VCDS) directed a review of the military’s Cost Move Program, Corporate Account (C107)²⁸. The study focused on reducing the variance between financial demand, annual allocation and spending, and to increase the ability for senior management to adjust “resource levers” based on known risks. It produced a table prioritizing the reasons for moving Military Personnel, identified the historical average number of moves annually at 12,700, and identified the average cost of moves at just over \$30,000 each. According to this data, the financial cost of moving the equivalent of the entire CAF every five years is seen at approximately \$1.9B²⁹.

An additional financial cost is incurred through the disbursement of Separation Expense (SE), payable as a result of a CAF member’s approved Imposed Restriction (IR) status, a policy developed to recognize the following:

²⁵ Department of National Defence, Defence Research and Development Canada, *The 2016 CAF Retention Survey: Descriptive Analysis*, Contract Report DRDC-RDDC-2017-C224, September 2017, 42.

²⁶ Ombudsman National Defence and Canadian Forces, Special Report to the Minister of National Defence, *On the Homefront ...*, 9.

²⁷ Department of National Defence. Military Cost Moves Working Group. *Military Cost Moves Corporate Account (C107) Review...*, 23.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 33.

The posting of members to new geographical locations has an impact on the members' and their dependants' needs. At times, it may be in the interest of the member or the CAF that the member's dependants do not immediately move to the new geographical location.³⁰

A conversation with staff from Director General Compensation and Benefits identified the cost of members approved for IR status and the SE entitlements increased every year between 2002 and 2010, amounting to slightly less than \$37 million in 2010 alone. Members can remain on IR for up to 5 years; the CAF can therefore expect to spend \$185 million on SE to address the challenges of geographic relocation.

Complaints filed with the Office of the Ombudsman regarding relocations and equity losses on sales of houses has led to the publication of "The ABCs of Military Postings"³¹ in an attempt to address the communication shortfalls of the CAF and inform decisions to be made as a result of relocation. The financial burden of moves on the CAF member can outweigh the compensation provided in accordance with policy. Buying and selling homes in fluctuating housing markets across the country has led to significant financial losses for many. The Home Equity Assistance benefit in particular, compensation for selling at a loss, was limited to \$15,000 until only recently when the limit was increased to \$30,000 effective April 19, 2018³², as part of the new Defence Policy initiatives. Between July 2008 and January 2013 there were 118

³⁰ Department of National Defence, CF Military Personnel Instruction 01/17, *Imposed Restriction (IR)*, (Ottawa: National Defence, 2017), 4.

³¹ Ombudsman National Defence and Canadian Forces, "The ABCs of Military Postings", last accessed 6 March 2018, <http://www.ombudsman.forces.gc.ca/en/ombudsman-questions-complaints-helpful-information/abc-military-posting.page>.

³² National Defence and the Canadian Armed Force, "Changes to Canadian Armed Forces Relocation Policies", last updated 26 April 18, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/caf-community-benefits/know-your-benefits-articles/relocation-policy-update.page>.

applications to the Home Equity Assistance program for losses greater than \$15,000³³, some in the order of \$88,000³⁴. Although the new maximum should address 95% of the applications³⁵ and relieve the member of the financial burden, the cost remains relevant as it will require additional funding from DND to effect cost moves.

DETERMINING CAF RELOCATION REQUIREMENTS

“How many moves does the CAF need to be an effective organization?”³⁶ The lack of a defined requirement for the geographic relocation of CAF members was highlighted by the Working Group evaluating the C107 Military Cost Moves corporate account in 2015. It goes on to state how the importance of answering this fundamental question is recognized within DND and the CAF, but reports produced over the decades “offer little in the way of solutions...proof of the complex nature of such an undertaking”³⁷. The SSE promotes “unprecedented support” to CAF members and their families, to “engage in more targeted recruiting, including capitalizing on the unique talents and skill-sets of Canada’s diverse population” and is “committed to providing more flexible, tailored benefits and support that are personalized to the unique circumstances and needs of each member throughout this journey”. The SSE specifically identifies the requirement to implement initiatives to help “minimize the disruptions associated

³³ CBC, “Soldier Neil Dodsworth launches class action over home sale losses”, last updated 30 September 2014, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/soldier-neil-dodsworth-launches-class-action-over-home-sale-losses-1.2781617>.

³⁴ CBC, “Canadian Forces Maj. Marcus Brauer loses legal battle over home sale loss”, last updated 11 February 2016, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/marcus-brauer-legal-fight-compensation-canadian-forces-ruling-court-1.3443550>.

³⁵ CBC, “DND doubles financial compensation for military who lose money on moving”, last updated 26 May 18, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/dnd-doubles-protection-members-moving-1.4675798>.

³⁶ Department of National Defence. Military Cost Moves Working Group. *Military Cost Moves Corporate Account (C107) Review...*, 29.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

with frequent relocation”³⁸ of CAF members and their families. Nonetheless, initiatives to determine *how many moves* the CAF needs to be an effective organization remains elusive.

Within the Military Personnel Command, the concept of the ‘Cube’ has been presented to illustrate the proposed employment flexibility desired within the CAF to enable it to attract, enrol and retain CAF members, including those required to meet EE objectives (Figure 5).

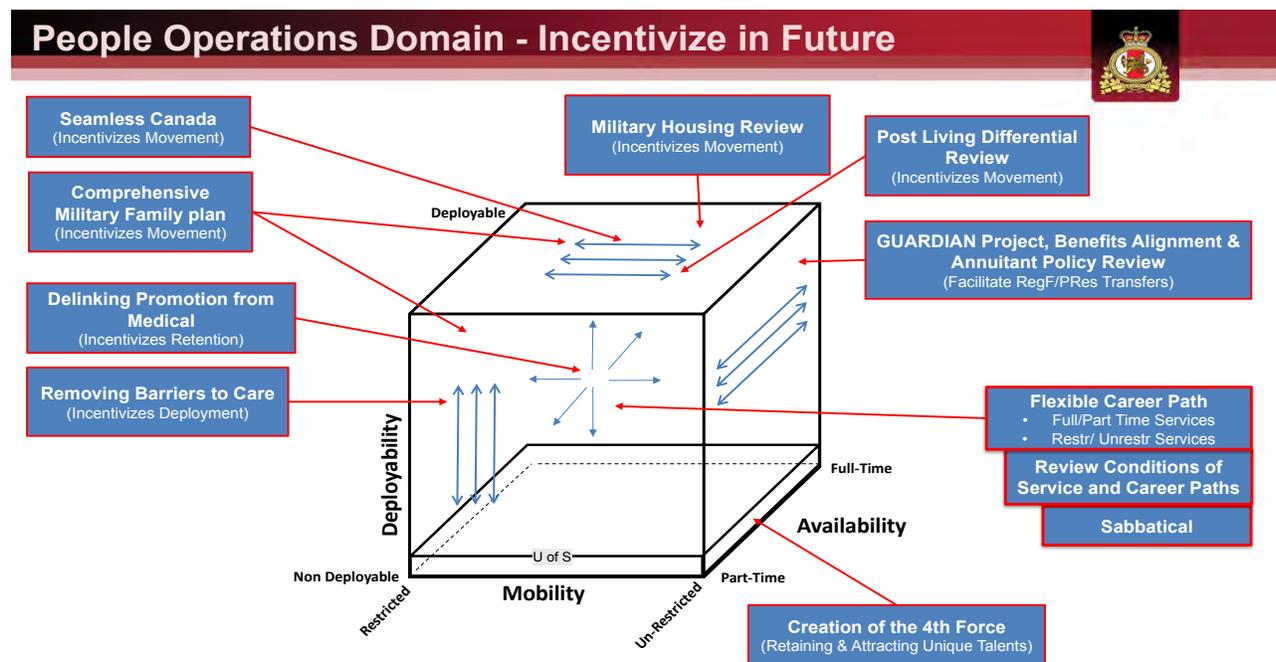


Figure 5– The ‘Cube’

Source: *Presentation to Chief Reserves Council by Military Personnel Command, 10 May 2018*

The concept focuses on the ‘incentivization’ of mobility (moves), deployability (operations), and availability (Part-time, full-time service). It identifies policies related to the geographical relocation of members such as a Post-Living Differential Review, a Military

³⁸ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged, Canada’s Defence Policy* (Ottawa: National Defence, 2017), 12.

Housing Review, and a Comprehensive Military Family plan. However, the actual requirement for geographical relocations and the current locations of the CAF's training, operational and institutional establishments are not identified for review.

In order to determine the level of CAF members required to serve within the boundaries of the 'cube' while maintaining CAF operational effectiveness, the Vice Chief of Defence Staff's (VCDS) has undertaken the 'Force Mix and Structure Design' (FMSD) initiative. Informed by the Force Posture and Readiness work, it will attempt to realign the CAF structure to deliver the operational concurrency required by the SSE and maximise the output potential of CAF structure. This is the initiative that most closely approaches the task of reviewing the necessity to move members but falls short of reviewing the actual locations of CAF establishments.

Sohail Inayatullah, a professor of Futures Studies and author of *Six pillars: futures thinking for transforming*, proposes causal layered analysis (CLA) to "unpack, to deepen the future"³⁹ in order to determine the policy solutions that require the deepest of interventions. The importance of responding to tomorrow's security environment by ensuring the CAF has the right Force Generation and Force Employment models is highlighted throughout the SSE. Futures Analyses is known and applied in the CAF; the VCDS is responsible for the development of the Future Security Environment (FSE) publication that forms the foundation to its Capability Based Planning, a tool relied upon to determine the future requirements of the CAF. But if the CAF does not apply the same rigorous and detailed analysis to determine the true requirement for relocation of its members into the future and continues to accept this model as 'the way things

³⁹ Sohail Inayatullah, "Six Pillars: Futures Thinking for Transformation", *Foresight* 10, no.1 (2008), 12.

are or should be⁴⁰, the solutions identified will be short-term at best, and detrimental to CAF's operational effectiveness at worse.

CONCLUSION

Demographics are changing, and Canada is becoming increasingly heterogeneous. Diversity, education, employment patterns and career goals are influencing Canadians' choice of career and the CAF member's choice to continue serving. For decades and to this day the geographic relocation of CAF members has been identified as the second most listed reason for a member's voluntary release. The disruption is a detractor affecting the enrolment of women and visible minority groups into the CAF and creates significant personnel policy challenges. It is impacting CAF's ability to enrol and retain the military personnel on whom the nation relies upon to keep Canada "strong at home, secure in North America, and engaged in the world"⁴¹. The costs to the members and the organization have been both social and financial. With the *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, the institution is well positioned to conduct a deepened analysis of the CAF's use of geographical relocations to meet service needs. It cannot afford to maintain the steady-state of short-term wins and Band-Aid solutions.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged...*, 6.

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