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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE / COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 34 / PCEMI N°34

EXERCISE NEW HORIZONS / EXERCICE NOUVEAUX HORIZONS

**The Canadian Forces an Employer of Choice:  
Branding is not Enough**

By / par  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The Canadian Forces has embarked on an aggressive advertising campaign to attract new recruits and promote interest in the organization. It is also branding itself as an employer of choice in order to achieve its immediate personnel expansion objectives; and position itself as a competitive and inclusive organization capable of attracting Canada's best and brightest from a projected shrinking labour pool. Competition for this labour pool will increase exponentially as more 'Baby Boomers' retire than 17-24 year olds enter the work force. Immigration demographics have changed significantly from the Canadian Forces traditional European heritage recruiting base. Hence, the Canadian Forces is aggressively trying to establish credibility with previously under-represented Designated Group Members (Aboriginals, Visible Minorities and Women) in order to develop new recruiting pools to attain its personnel demands. Despite a concerted effort, the Canadian Forces has been unable to increase representation of any of the Designated Group Members; hence, has yet to succeed as an employer of choice.

Military culture must further evolve in order for the Canadian Forces to become a true employer of choice that is not just compliant-based or business case based, but rather value-based. Policies, procedures and employment equity, though necessary, provide equal access to job opportunities in a non-discriminatory environment, but it do not promote nor embrace diversity. Leadership, education and institutional culture change will promote inclusiveness and embrace diversity as a core value, which will attract the best and brightest Canadians to a true employer of choice.

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*... that current and future members of our valued CF family are well cared for and that the CF continues to be an employer of choice among Canadians.”*

- General Rick Hillier  
Chief of the Defence Staff<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Decade of Darkness. The 1990s are referred to as the ‘decade of darkness’ for the Canadian Forces<sup>2</sup>. Though it is celebrated as the end of the Cold War, it has also the commencement of Canadian defence expenditure reductions envisioned as part of a peace dividend due to the collapse of any serious global threat to western democracies, NATO and, particularly germane to this paper, Canada. In addition to the 23% (\$2.75billion) Canadian defence budget reduction, military personnel manning levels were reduced by 30% and civilian Department of National Defence employees were reduced by 45%<sup>3</sup>. The paradox was actually an increased operational tempo in support of numerous United Nations and NATO missions<sup>4</sup>, and capability degradation due to ‘rust out’. The resulting stress amongst Canadian Forces’ members was palpable, but more significantly was “a perceived lack of public recognition for their efforts<sup>5</sup>”. The causes were numerable: wage freeze, failed missions (Rwanda), public apathy, scandals (Somalia), and negative media are but a few. The effect was that the Canadian Forces, a predominant institution of Canada, had lost the support of the society it represented, which was a critical failing, and though not the focus of this paper, it describes the stigma and

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<sup>1</sup> Canada, National Defence and Canadian Forces – News Release - *Canada's New Government Announces Canadian Forces Pension Modernization* NR-07.008 - March 1, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Blanchfield, Mike. *Top general calls Liberal rule ‘decade of darkness’*. The Ottawa Citizen 17 February 2007

<sup>3</sup> SCONDVA – Interim Report – 1 December 1999 *Chapter 1 – Forging Ahead*.

<sup>4</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence. *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: DEFENCE*. Ottawa: Department of National Defence, ADM (PA), 2005. p.7

<sup>5</sup> SCONDVA - Interim Report – 1 December 1999 *Chapter 1 – Forging Ahead*.

challenges from which the Canadian Forces must recover in order to become an employer of choice.

Phoenix Rising. The Standing Committee on Defence and Veterans Affairs (SCONDVA), Manitoba Red River floods, and the ice storms of 1998 debatably were the beginning of the turning point for the Canadian Forces. Finally, the tragic events of 9/11, the continuing Canadian Forces mission in Afghanistan, and, arguably, a very popular Chief of the Defence Staff have all contributed to the positive re-emergence of the Canadian Forces in the national psyche. Both the last Liberal government under Paul Martin and the present Conservative government under Stephen Harper have injected new funds into the Defence budget. The resulting cash infusion has witnessed the accelerated acquisition of C-17 strategic lift cargo planes, M-777 artillery guns, Nayala (blast resistant) armoured cars, and the resurrection of the direct fire (tank) capability. It has also witnessed capability planning initiatives to acquire Arctic off-shore patrol vessels; C-130J tactical lift aircraft; medium lift helicopters; Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and establishment of an Arctic Training Centre, to name but a few. Most importantly, there has been renewed commitment and funding to further expand the Canadian Forces by 13,000 Regular force and 10,000 Reserve force personnel<sup>6</sup>. Unfortunately, where increased funding and streamlined procedures have been able to revitalize the Forces core capabilities and systems, it has not been able to reinvigorate its rank and file. This is a Decisive Point that, if not achieved, will lead to mission failure by not maintaining the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces. Lieutenant-General Andrew Leslie, Chief of the Land Staff, averred that “the soldier is the weapon system<sup>7</sup>” and that everything else is

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<sup>6</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence. *Speaking Notes for The Honourable Peter G. MacKay, PC, MP, Minister of National Defence* 10 September 2007. Last accessed 21 April 2008. [DND/CF | Minister's Speech | Diplomatic Forum](#)

<sup>7</sup> CLS presentation to Canadian Forces College JCSP 34 18 April 2008.

strapped on to the soldier to increase his effectiveness. If the Canadian Forces cannot attract new recruits and/or cannot retain their current experienced cadre, then the additional acquisition of new technologically advanced systems will be irrelevant to the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces as there will be no one to operate or maintain the equipment.

This paper will analyse the strategies and initiatives of the Canadian Forces to “brand” itself an “employer of choice”<sup>8</sup>. Though an employer of choice is successful in recruiting and retention initiatives, the paper will limit its scope to recruiting and attraction issues. It will also primarily focus on Designated Group Members<sup>9</sup> (Aboriginals, Visible Minorities and Women) as these are the groups that are significantly under-represented in the Canadian Forces. The paper will also demonstrate that, although the current and projected manning shortfalls have been recognized for some time, it is only recently that the Canadian Forces have been able to position themselves strategically to succeed, but have still not yet been able to fully operationalize their plan. Finally, it will be demonstrated that branding oneself as an employer of choice and promulgating policies and procedures with a view to becoming more inclusive to an evolving generation and changing society is not sufficient to attracting the best of Canada’s next working cohort. Military culture must further evolve in order to become a true employer of choice that is not just compliant based or business case based, but rather value based and thus truly recognizing and attracting the best and brightest of Canada’s evolving demography.

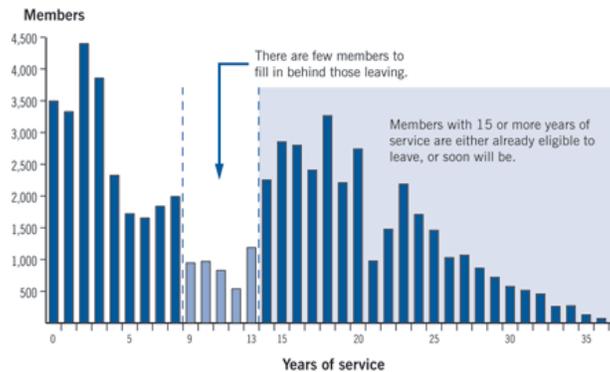
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<sup>8</sup> Canada. Department of National Defence, Chief of Staff ADM (HR-Mil), *Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future*. Ottawa: ADM (HR-Mil), 2002. p22.

<sup>9</sup> Canada, Department of Justice Canada. *Employment Equity Act (1995)*. <http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/showtdm/cs/E-5.401>; p3. Designated Groups include Persons with Disabilities; however, this designated group will not be discussed further in this paper as the Canadian Forces retains an exemption in this area due to recognition of the requirement for Universality of Service. This in no way minimizes the responsibility of the Forces to care for soldiers injured and disabled in the performance of duty that remain in Service.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

Internal Factors. During the introduction, the ambitious plan to expand the Regular force by 13,000 personnel was identified. The reduction of the forces by 30% as part of an anticipated ‘peace dividend’ was also articulated.

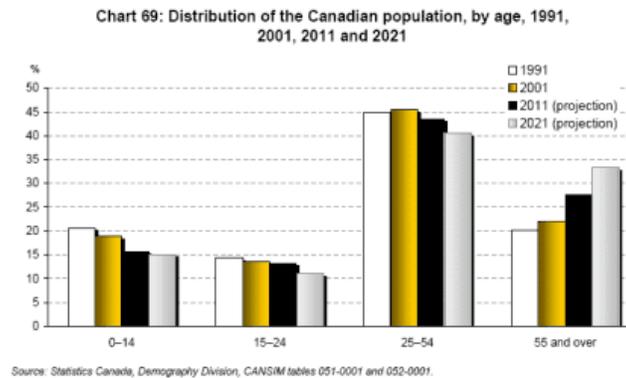


The graph<sup>10</sup> illustrates two additional dynamics that will further pressure the Forces to quickly become a true employer of choice. The low personnel numbers in the 9-13 years of service period represent the effects of the Force Reduction Programme (FRP), which was instituted in the early 90s to accelerate the potential benefits of the ‘peace dividend’. Potentially more troubling is the sizable numbers in the 15-20 years of service period, which constitute 50% of the Regular force population<sup>11</sup>, that are reaching a milestone gate and are eligible for retirement. In summary, the Canadian Forces are attempting to grow at the same time as a significant portion of its workforce and experience are departing or preparing to depart the military. The challenge is that the labour pool is about to significantly shrink and competition for scarce human resources will grow conversely.

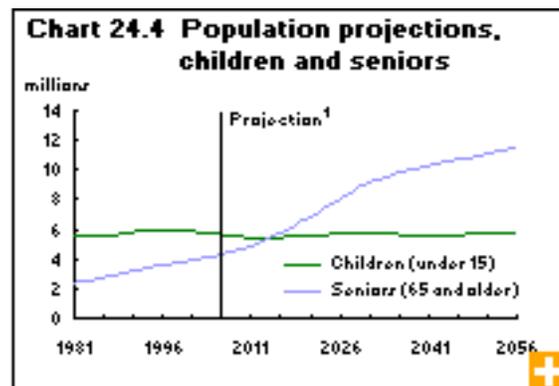
<sup>10</sup> Canada, Office of the Auditor General. Auditor General Report 2006 Status Report, Chapter 2. “National Defence – Military Recruiting and Retention.” <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/20060502ce.html>; Last accessed 21 April 2008

<sup>11</sup> Canada, Office of the Auditor General. Auditor General Report 2006 Status Report, Chapter 2. “National Defence – Military Recruiting and Retention.” <http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/domino/reports.nsf/html/20060502ce.html>; Last accessed 21 April 2008.

External Factors. The Statistics Canada figure<sup>12</sup> below graphically depicts the demographics by age band. The illustration reflects the movement of the ‘Baby Boomers’



through the latter half of the band. The considerable difference between the 15-24 age band and the 25-54 age band can be explained by the increased longevity of the population and the declining fertility rate, which hit a record low of 1.49 children per women in 2000 and remains a significant gap from the recognized 2.1 children per mother replacement value<sup>13</sup>. More ominous is a detailed analysis of the 2007 Statistics Canada population tables, which finds that there are approximately 8.8 million people in the 45-64 years age band vice 4.3 million in the 15-24 years age band. In other words there is only potentially one individual to replace every two retirees. As the graph<sup>14</sup> illustrates, this relationship will continue to be exacerbated over time as the



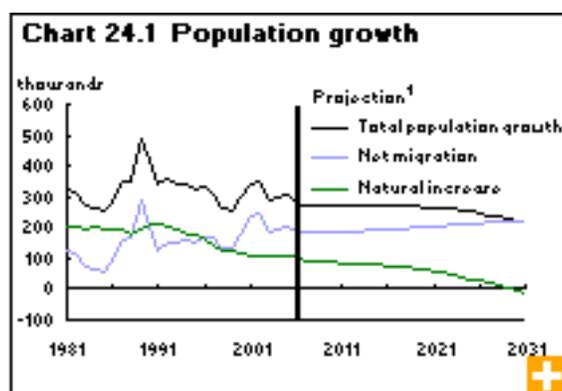
<sup>12</sup> Canada, Statistics Canada – 2007 Overview - [Canadian population, by age](#) Last accessed 21 April 2008

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Canada, Statistics Canada – 2007 Overview - [Canada's population future, Children and Seniors](#) Last accessed 21 April 2008

population ages further. The implications are clear, not just for the Canadian Forces but for any prospective employers, competition for a smaller pool of available employees has already commenced. In business parlance, it is a buyers (employee) market where prospective companies need to sell themselves as an employer of choice in order to renew its workforce. Simultaneously, whether as a stop gap measure or long-term strategy, companies, including the Canadian Forces need to demonstrate the value it places on its employees through innovative and interactive initiatives to retain the experience of their current establishment.

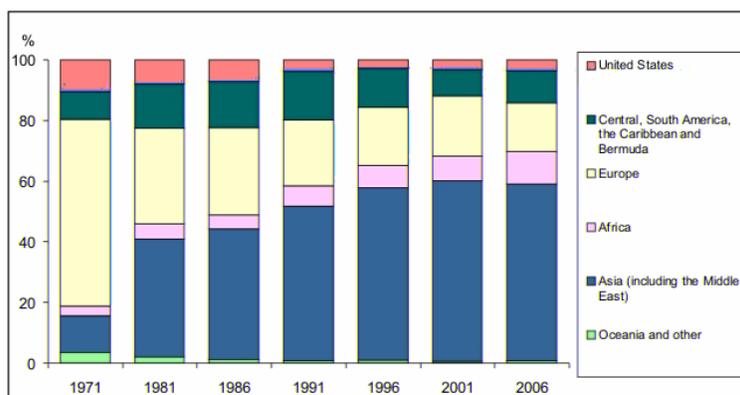
Visible Minorities. Counter intuitively, the population is not shrinking. In fact the Canadian population is projected to grow to 36-42 million by 2031 from the current 2006 census estimate of 32.6 million. This Population growth<sup>15</sup>; however, will be fuelled primarily by



immigration as deaths begin to outnumber births in Canada around 2020. In real terms, between the 2001 and 2006 census, the Canadian population grew by 1.6 million of which 1.1 million, almost 70%, were immigrants. Further, the 2006 census determined that there are currently ~6.2 million foreign born Canadians or Permanent Residents in Canada, almost 20% of the

<sup>15</sup> Canada, Statistics Canada – 2007 Overview - [Population](#) Last accessed 21 April 2008

population. The demographic of this recent immigrant population has also changed over the decades as illustrated by the graph<sup>16</sup>. The previous European immigration patterns have been



supplanted by those of Asian heritage. In fact, in 2006 the total proportion of the population born in Asia and Middle East (40.8%) exceeded that of those who were of European descent (36.8%)<sup>17</sup>. This trend progression will considerably change the face of Canada and by extension the target population of the Canadian Forces. In fact, presuming that the current population growth and immigration trend is maintained, it is projected that circa 2040 the combined population of visible minorities will surpass that of the currently designated white majority<sup>18</sup>.

Aboriginals. The Statistics Canada 2006 census indicated that 1.17 million identified themselves as aboriginal<sup>19</sup>. Of note is that, proportionally, the aboriginal population is naturally growing faster than the Canadian population with over 50% of its age band below 25 years of age<sup>20</sup>. It is projected that by 2026, the median age of the Aboriginal population will be 31 years,

<sup>16</sup> Canada, Statistics Canada – Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census. [2006 Census: Immigration in Canada: A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population, 2006 Census: Immigrants came from many countries: Most recent immigrants still came from Asia, but their share remained stable](#). Last accessed 21 April 2008

<sup>17</sup> Ibid p.9

<sup>18</sup> Wait, T. "Youth in Canada, Population, Population Projection to 2026." Ottawa: DSHRC Research Note 2/01, Department of National Defence, 2001. p2.

<sup>19</sup> StatsCan [Aboriginal Identity - 2006 Census](#) Last Accessed 21 April 2008

<sup>20</sup> Steffler, Jeanette. Aboriginal Peoples: "A Young Population for Years to Come" in *Horizons Vol 10 no. 1* Ottawa: Public Works and Government Services of Canada, March 2008. P 12. Available at [http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/Horizons\\_Vol10Num1\\_final\\_e.pdf](http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca/doclib/Horizons_Vol10Num1_final_e.pdf) Last Accessed 21 April 2008

compared to 43 years for the Canadian population<sup>21</sup>. The overall employment rate for aboriginals was last assessed at 49.7% with variations identified for Metis (59.4%), Inuit (48.6%) and North American Indians (44.6%); however, the unemployment rate remains at over 19% or three times the non-aboriginal average<sup>22</sup>. In essence, a potentially large untapped labour source.

Women. Women currently fully represent 50.4% of the Canadian population with little change projected out to 2051<sup>23</sup>. As with the aging ‘Baby Boomer’ demographic described earlier, women are following the same trend. In 2004, 56% of the female population was 35 years or older while 27% were between the ages of 15 - 34 and 17% were under the age of 15<sup>24</sup>. The demographic is anticipated to age rapidly and further contribute to a shrinking workforce. Of further interest is that 80% of women lived in Urban areas with a population of 100,000 or greater<sup>25</sup>, the significance of which will be discussed later in relation to the Canadian Forces historical recruiting base. When considering the women’s demographic, the interlocking and overlapping relationship with visible minorities and aboriginals must also be noted. Of note, there were over 500,000 Chinese women in Canada who made up over 25% of the total female visible minority population. As well, there were around 450,000 South Asian women, 350,000 Black women, and 175,000 Filipinos<sup>26</sup>. Comparatively speaking, aboriginal women represented over 500,000 of their respective society<sup>27</sup>.

Canadian Forces Historic Demographics. Traditionally, the Canadian Forces has attracted “fit, young (17-24 year old) rural (non-metropolitan, less than 100,000) white males

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 14.

<sup>22</sup> StatsCan - Employment rates, by sex and Aboriginal identity <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/71-222-XIE/2004000/chart-o79.htm> Last Accessed 21 April 2008.

<sup>23</sup> Statscan - Women in Canada: a gender-based statistical report 2005. p22 <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-503-XIE/0010589-503-XIE.pdf> Last accessed 24 April 2008

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p23

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. p24

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. p27

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. p27

who have had previous exposure through serving relative or friend, with a high school education or less and with little future educational aspirations<sup>28</sup>”. The continued viability of this long-established recruit pool is dubious in the short-term and untenable in the long-term. The shrinking labour force due to the reduced fertility rate of the ‘Baby Boomer’ generation has already been articulated above. Additional pressures on the historic target pool can be attributed to the 80% urbanization<sup>29</sup> of the Canadian population and the requirement for “an officer and NCM corps more capable of ever of thinking critically and managing change.”<sup>30</sup>

Summary. The Canadian Forces are experiencing a period of unprecedented growth and revitalization, debatably, not experienced since World War II. The success of this revival, and thus the operational effectiveness of the Canadian Forces, is challenged by competition to be the employer of choice for a shrinking labour pool that is growing more ethnically diverse than ever before in Canadian history. The situation is aggravated by the potential demand to replace up to 50% of the experienced officers and enlisted soldiers that are eligible for retirement and/or may be seeking a second career, with an identifiable dearth of experienced personnel to fill in behind those departing. Maintaining credibility with its serving members and historic recruiting base is essential; however, establishing new in-roads and increased credibility from visible minority communities, Aboriginals and women is crucial to the Canadian Forces’ long-term recruitment viability and operational effectiveness. Oversimplifying the situation...the Canadian Forces has both a recruiting and retention challenge.

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<sup>28</sup> Wait, T. "Youth in Canada, Population Projection to 2026."...p1

<sup>29</sup> StatsCan – Population: urban and rural - <http://www40.statcan.ca/101/cst01/demo62a.htm?sdi=urban>

<sup>30</sup> Military HR Strategy 2020...p23

## EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

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To solve your recruitment and retention problems you must strive to become an Employer of Choice. To accomplish that objective you must have a Human Resources strategy that is integrated into your corporate strategic plan that acknowledges and recognizes the employees as the company's most precious asset. R2 = EOC

- Dr Eric Rick Johnson<sup>31</sup>

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“**Military HR Strategy 2020: Facing the People Challenges of the Future**” is the Canadian Forces capstone strategic document designed to “develop and implement HR plans, policies and programs to recruit, develop and retain people to effectively support the CF in all operations it is asked to perform.”<sup>32</sup> Its expressed Vital Ground is to “look after our people, invest in them and give them confidence in the future.”<sup>33</sup> Lofty words; however, analysis of the document reveals realistic timelines spread over three horizons (0-4 years; 5-15 years and 10-30 years) and linked to the ‘corporate’ Defence Strategy; and a ‘cradle to grave’ HR system that not only recruits and retains personnel, but incorporates and promotes Professional Development & education, health and well-being (Quality of Life) of the member and family; and finally transition back to civilian life while facilitating continued support with other agencies, as required. Clearly, the recommendations in the 1999 SCNDVA report have been strategically incorporated. Though the Forces never abandoned its members, this document represents a new commitment to supporting its soldiers, sailors and airmen/women. It was noteworthy in its timing as it paralleled the Canadian Forces transition out of the ‘decade of darkness’ and continued to reconnect and regain the confidence of both the public, as a valued Canadian

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<sup>31</sup> Johnson, Eric Rick. “R = EOC (Recruitment and Retention = Employer of Choice)”. WebProNews. 25 August 2005. <http://www.webpronews.com/topnews/2005/08/29/r-eoc-recruitment-and-retention-employer-of-choice>. Last Accessed: 21 April 2008

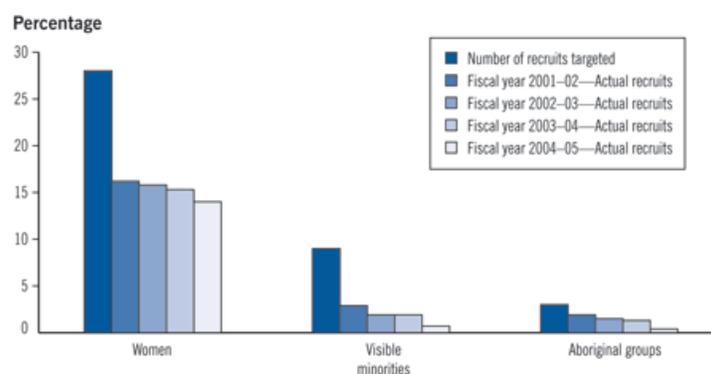
<sup>32</sup> Military HR Strategy 2020...p3

<sup>33</sup> Ibid p1

institution, and its soldiers. The significance of this document and subsequent evolution and integration of strategic management and planning was echoed by the Auditor General<sup>34</sup>.

Embedded throughout the HR 2020 document, both implicitly and explicitly, is recognition of the requirement to promote diversity. Not surprisingly, the document illustrates a demographic timeline that recognizes the changing face of Canada from an age, ethnicity, education and technology (Internet) savvy viewpoint.<sup>35</sup> Most impressive is the Investment Annex that identifies yearly milestones to accomplish its articulated goals. Despite the improvement in strategic human resource planning the Auditor General noted that:

The Department has not been able to improve its recruiting of Aboriginal people, visible minorities, or women since our 2002 audit. ...the number of these recruits joining the Regular Force is declining. Even though the Department has carried out studies on the demographics of the Canadian labour force, is promoting diversity, and is spending \$1.5 million on diversity recruiting, these efforts are not achieving results<sup>36</sup>.



Subsequent to the Auditor General's report, the Department released its updated **“Canadian Forces Employment Equity Plan: Advancing on a Wide Front.”** Besides articulating policy, goals, objectives, governance, and direction, the document is significant in illustrating the evolution, though possibly coincidental, in Canadian Forces' attitudes towards

<sup>34</sup> OAG Chapter 2 – recruiting and retention – Chapter 2 [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud\\_ch\\_oag\\_200605\\_2\\_e\\_14959.html#ch2hd3d](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200605_2_e_14959.html#ch2hd3d)

<sup>35</sup> Military HR Strategy 2020...p11.

<sup>36</sup> OAG Chapter 2 – recruiting and retention – Chapter 2 p.14

Employment Equity, as a tool, and Diversity, as a social construct. Expectedly, justification for the necessity of the Act and Canadian Forces compliance is expressed in the Plan, but is properly conveyed later in the document in order to lend context to the direction<sup>37</sup>. Conversely, the introductory tone of the document emphasizes a business case concept:

“The CF...is positioning itself as an employer of choice ...in order to compete for talent in the future ...will face a shrinking labour pool from which to seek the best and most qualified recruits ...face increased costs through high turn over...cannot continue to be effective by ignoring a growing segment of our population. Consequently, EE is about maintaining and enhancing operational effectiveness”<sup>38</sup>

**“Chief of Defence Staff Intent**

...Unless the CF creates an environment that embraces employment equity and is seen as attractive to women, visible minorities and Aboriginal people, ensuring adequate manning levels in the future will become increasingly difficult.”<sup>39</sup>

All the statements are valid and the overall document sets the conditions for removing systemic barriers, but it does nothing to promote diversity as a force multiplier. Rather it identifies a negative consequence of not achieving a diverse environment. A potential breakthrough is almost achieved in identifying diversity as a ‘core value’; however, this criterion for success was minimized with the statement “If the CF embraces diversity as a core value, remaining compliant will become a monitoring activity as opposed to a major effort.”<sup>40</sup> Buried in the Plan, specifically in the Forward by the Chief of the Defence Staff, is a value-based statement that declares that “Diversity remains a source of strength and creativity, and continues to play a pivotal role in making the Canadian Forces a modern, forward looking organization.”<sup>41</sup> This assertion implies that diversity is as an enabler, capacity builder and strengthening agent for the

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<sup>37</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence. *CF Employment Equity Plan “Advancing on a Wide Front,”* Ottawa: 2006. p6.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid p3

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p3

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. p8

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p2

Canadian Forces, which should be a positive reinforcement for motivating a cultural change to more readily accept a heterogeneous group in a historically traditional homogeneous organization. It must be emphasized that nothing is categorically wrong with the Employment Equity Plan; it both meets the spirit and is in full compliance with the Federal Act. However, the current Military HR 2020 strategy and Employment Equity plan, which recognizes the operational imperative for an inclusive environment that values its people and has established policies and programmes to embrace diversity, has not yet succeeded in branding the Canadian Forces an employer of choice, especially with Designated Group Member (DGMs). What will be proposed and is alluded to above is a change in mindset towards diversity, articulating that mindset in the Canadian Forces Employment Equity Plan and formally embedding changes into the “heart and fabric of the mission, values, and culture of the organization.”<sup>42</sup>

Today’s Situation. Concerted efforts to attract DGMs, improve recruiting efficiencies, as well as retain military personnel have been on-going since the 2002 Auditor General’s report.<sup>43</sup> The 2006 report acknowledged some improvement in recruiting efficiencies and numbers, but regression in attracting DGMs.<sup>44</sup> Recruiting numbers for 06/07 and 07/08 are encouraging at 101% and 98% of the Strategic Intake Plan respectively, though full attraction into all distressed trades have not yet been achieved and some re-allocation to other trades have occurred.<sup>45</sup> An emerging trend of concern is the growing attrition of the year 0 population, which reflects recruit training at the Basic or initial trade Qualification Level.<sup>46</sup> Analysis of these early releases or any potential demographic breakdown is not yet available; however, it does initially raise concerns as

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<sup>42</sup> Scoppio, Grazia. “Leadership in a Diverse Environment: Diversity Strategies in Military and Police Forces in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States” Canadian Defence Academy. March 2007. p 4.

<sup>43</sup> Canada, Auditor General of Canada. “Chapter 5—National Defence—Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel in 2002 April Report of the Auditor General of Canada; [http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud\\_ch\\_oag\\_200204\\_5\\_e\\_12378.html](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/aud_ch_oag_200204_5_e_12378.html);

<sup>44</sup> OAG Chapter 2 – recruiting and retention – Chapter 2 p.14

<sup>45</sup> E-Mail and Telecon with LCdr R. Read, DPGR 2-3, 29 April 2008

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

to the quality of the applicants selected at the Recruiting centres or cultural shock experienced by the current generational cohort (DGM or otherwise) commencing training. Assuming the latter scenario, which is plausible for either DGMs or an evolving generation Y populace; then a modified recruit training programme may be timely in order to better integrate and retain candidates.

"Let's not kid ourselves, the army culture is a little bit different from that which you find just about anywhere else in Canada. We've got to be more accommodating in not trying to cram our army culture down the throat of great young Canadians who may not understand it when they first walk through the door."<sup>47</sup>

What is known and acknowledged is the continued low representation of DGMs. LCdr R. Gulati, Directorate Human Rights and Diversity (DHRD), stated on record "We've got all those pegs in place, but we're still not getting the numbers. In fact, it's hard to get people in and the recruiting groups are having a bit of a tough time."<sup>48</sup> The 'pegs' referred to are accommodation policies that allow for varying dress, dietary needs, religious practices and cultural tradition. Yet total representation of DGMs in both the CF Regular Force and Primary Reserve remain similar to 2006 levels of:<sup>49</sup>

Women: 15.1%	-	Five-year goal: 19.5%
Visible Minorities 2.7%	-	Five-year goal: 9.1%
Aboriginal people 1.5%	-	Five-year goal: 2.8%

A review of DHRD Employment Equity schedules<sup>50</sup> from 03/04 – 06/07 consistently shows a higher proportional representation of DGMs in the Primary Reserve than the Regular Force.

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<sup>47</sup> Harris, Kathleen. "Non-white military might needs boost." Ottawa Sun. 27 April 2008.

[http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/War\\_Terror/2008/04/27/5401911-sun.html](http://cnews.canoe.ca/CNEWS/War_Terror/2008/04/27/5401911-sun.html). Quote attributed to LGen Leslie, CLS and CF Employment Equity Aboriginal Champion. Comment offered as equally applicable to all candidates.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

<sup>50</sup> CF Employment Equity schedules received from Stephen James Gilhuly, DHRD 3-9-2, 21 April 2008. Conversations with DHRD personnel indicate that tracking DGMs, less women as gender is identified within HRMS, is difficult as statistics are solely based on self-identification surveys. For 2008, there is currently only a 50% response rate for Reserves and 68% for Regular force. Therefore extrapolation of data is sometimes necessary.

This is consistent with a recent propensity and interest survey that indicated a 72% interest in the Reserves vice 24% in the Regular force.<sup>51</sup> Underlying arguments on this tendency continue to contend that ties to family and culture remain very strong. The survey also indicated that men identified more with trades in the Air Force, Army and Navy respectively; whereas women indicated a preference for the support trades; Aboriginals identified more with the Army, Navy and Air Force than the other DGMs; and visible minorities had a slighter greater interest in support occupations than the survey participants.<sup>52</sup>

Extrapolating this data in conjunction with the diverse cultural backgrounds and influencers of both DGMs and the historic recruiting base, a “one size fits all” recruiting approach is flawed. In fact, it must be remembered that Visible Minorities ‘group’ can constitute up to 200 ethnic backgrounds.<sup>53</sup> Hence, the “Fight with the Canadian Forces” advertising campaign, though appealing to many, based on the successful 06/07-07/08 recruiting drives, may disillusion a segment of the target population due to unfavourable experiences.<sup>54</sup> The risk to be balanced is whether the short term gain is worth further delaying the long-term goal of establishing a larger diverse recruiting base. A mitigation strategy is to develop DGM or audience specific advertising. A specific example is the Canadian Forces Recruiting website,

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<sup>51</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, Irina Goldenberg, Brenda Sharpe, Keith Newman. “The Interest and Propensity of Designated Groups to Join the Canadian Forces.” Ottawa: DRDC CORA TR 2007-04, February 2007. p10.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid p24-25

<sup>53</sup> Canada. Statistics Canada. “Immigration in Canada: *A Portrait of the Foreign-born Population*”, 2006 Census: *Immigrants came from many countries*. <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/immcit/asia.cfm>;

<sup>54</sup> Harris, Kathleen. “Non-white military might needs boost”... Anthony Salloum, program director for the Ottawa-based Rideau Institute...He believes many aren't signing up because they don't support the war in Afghanistan or are turned off by the "Fight" campaign ads. "That might be appealing to some sectors of our society, but you're not speaking the language of many of our ethnic minorities, including those who come from war-torn regions," he said. "Many of them are coming to Canada for peace, so the idea of joining up to 'Fight' may not be an appealing message. It's a very aggressive word and that might be really muting the enthusiasm of our visible minority communities to join the armed forces."

which continues to become very modern and should appeal to the generation ‘Y’ populace who have a propensity for communicating through technology and the internet<sup>55</sup>. Within the site are specific advertisements towards Aboriginals, visible minorities and women, with the Aboriginal site being by far the most sophisticated at this time with cultural symbols and cues to guide the applicant through the various Aboriginal specific programmes.<sup>56</sup>

The programmes offer experiential, educational and career opportunities without the necessity of commitment in an environment that will be sensitive to their cultural needs. Regardless of what the recruiting success may be, in-roads into the community will be established and a potential construct can be analyzed for similar pilot programmes targeting other audiences. Though a communications plan was likely established with community elders and school guidance councillors, it is not necessarily the most effective way to guide a target audience to a specific web page. Similar programmes should use mass media, specifically ethnic newspapers; television; and radio outlets, to catch the attention of a larger targeted audience utilizing messages that resonate within their community.

The Canadian Forces are slowly achieving the necessary numbers to grow the Forces; however, the reality remains that the anticipated future lifeblood of the Canadian Forces remains under-represented. The systemic barriers to employment of DGMs have been dismantled federally through the Canadian Human Rights Act and Employment Equity Act, and institutionally supported within Military Human Resource 2020, the Canadian Forces

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<sup>55</sup> Canadian Forces Recruiting website <http://www.forces.ca/#en> Last Accessed 29 April 2008. The visible minority site is the least refined, though still commendable, and focuses on Blacks, Japanese and Chinese peoples. It also includes the history of their struggle to

Employment Equity Act and numerous other directives in order to ensure compliance with the law. It is attracting attention and interest through a broad, modern advertising campaign and re-establishing contact with Canadians through OP CONNECTION and outreach programmes. It is reinforcing these initiatives by promoting itself as both an employer of choice<sup>57</sup> and equal opportunity employer<sup>58</sup> through the preferred communication medium of the current generation, the internet. The overall website and recruiting literature promotes an environment of diversity within the Canadian Forces. Though not visible to the public, National Defence publications have also evolved to better reflect diversity in the Canadian Forces environment.<sup>59</sup> Despite the attestations of a more inclusive organization and research surveys that indicate that DGMs are interested in the Canadian Forces, the corresponding representational increase is not occurring. Part of the problem may reside within the current military culture. Review of two recent surveys: The Diversity and Employment Equity in the CF survey (2005); and Diversity Climate survey (2006), which assessed the attitudes of serving members, both indicated positive improvements, but emphasized the need for continued advancement, particularly in the area of education regarding the purpose of Employment Equity.<sup>60</sup> Overall the diversity climate was rated positively by all serving members;<sup>61</sup> <sup>62</sup> however there are indications of an underlying minority dissatisfaction with Employment Equity and diversity. The 2005 survey indicated that

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<sup>57</sup> Canadian Forces webpage promoting itself as an employer of choice  
[http://www.forces.ca/v3/engraph/aboutus/employer\\_en.aspx?bhcp=1](http://www.forces.ca/v3/engraph/aboutus/employer_en.aspx?bhcp=1)

<sup>58</sup> Canadian Forces webpage promoting itself as an equal opportunity employer  
[http://www.forces.ca/v3/engraph/aboutus/equalopportunity\\_en.aspx?bhcp=1](http://www.forces.ca/v3/engraph/aboutus/equalopportunity_en.aspx?bhcp=1)

<sup>59</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence. "Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading People" CDA-CFLI 2007. This publication is offered as but one example of the evolving visual "look and feel" cues.

<sup>60</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, Irina Goldenberg. "Diversity Climate Survey." Ottawa: DRDC CORA TR 2007-04, February 2007. P iv – Executive Summary.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. p. 52

<sup>62</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, Irina Goldenberg. "Diversity and Employment Equity in the CF: Results of the 2005 Your-Say Focus Section for Visible Minorities and Aboriginal People." Ottawa: DRDC CORA TR 2006-22, November 2006. p. 60-61

~50% of the Canadian Force population believed that too much effort was being expended to attract minorities; 28% believed that diversity interfered with operational effectiveness; and there was ‘mild agreement’ that too much accommodation was being provided to facilitate the practice of religious beliefs.<sup>63</sup> The 2006 survey noted continued improvement in gender integration, but only ‘somewhat’ positive attitudes towards DGMs and strong negative undertones towards Employment Equity.<sup>64</sup> Of note, is the higher level of support for Employment Equity and diversity among senior members compared to junior members and from officers compared to NCMs.<sup>65</sup> Notwithstanding the noted survey results, encouragingly, Canadian Forces members are not assessed to have racist attitudes.<sup>66</sup> In essence, the Canadian Forces are “Talking the Talk” but not yet “Walking the Walk” with regards to embracing of diversity. What is being witnessed is a socialization challenge between a homogeneous social-traditional set of professional military values with that of a combined post-modern society intermixed with diverse heterogeneous cultural-values.<sup>67</sup>

A New Approach. The Canadian Forces continue to progress in their march to achieve true diversity within the organization. What is required to achieve final success is a cultural shift within the military. Organizations may transition through three phases towards achieving diversity. These phases have been described as the ‘discrimination and fairness’ paradigm (compliance model); the ‘access-legitimacy paradigm’ (business model); and the ‘learning effectiveness’ (values-based model).<sup>68</sup> The Canadian Forces has traditionally been compliant

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p. 56-57

<sup>64</sup> Canada, Department of National Defence, Irina Goldenberg. “Diversity Climate Survey.” P. 44-46, 50 & 53.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. p. 53.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. p. 50.

<sup>67</sup> Wenck, Karol W.J. “Looking Ahead: Contexts of Canadian forces Leadership Today and Tomorrow” CDA-CFLI <http://www.cda-acd.forces.gc.ca/CFLI/engraph/research/pdf/72.pdf> . p. 4-6.

<sup>68</sup> Scoppio, Grazia. “Leadership in a Diverse Environment: Diversity Strategies in Military and Police Forces in Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States” Canadian Defence Academy. March 2007. Phases attributed to Thomas, D.A. and Ely, R.J. (2002). Making Differences Matter: A new Paradigm for

based, focusing on laws, employment equity, non-discrimination, and recruitment and retention goals. The disadvantage was that diversity was not promoted; rather people were still expected to fully conform to the resident military culture<sup>69</sup>. The business example acknowledges and accommodates differences in order to better reflect its client base (Canadian society) and improve its competitiveness in the market place, but does not fully utilize or understand the diversity of its employees,<sup>70</sup> which is the current methodology of the Canadian Forces. The organization now needs to transition to the value-based concept, where diversity is viewed as an integral component capability of the team where the unique contribution of each member is a force multiplier<sup>71</sup>, and thus differing cultural requirements are not viewed as accommodation, but as commonplace. To achieve this transition to a value-based paradigm will require incorporating diversity into three key elements of the organization: Mission, Values and Professional Development<sup>72</sup>. Policies and programs will not be enough. The leadership needs to be fully supportive to effect institutional change in the organizational culture to accept a diverse membership. This is not to imply that the onus remains solely with the Canadian Forces to accommodate and integrate DGMs. Potential new members must also be prepared to adopt the organizations standards and embrace its core values<sup>73</sup>, which in the place of the Canadian Forces reflect Canadian values. The challenge remains balance. Balance between the conventional leadership functions, which reflect the principle of treating everybody the same to achieve cohesion and homogeneity, and the responsibilities of promoting and working in a diverse

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. p. 21

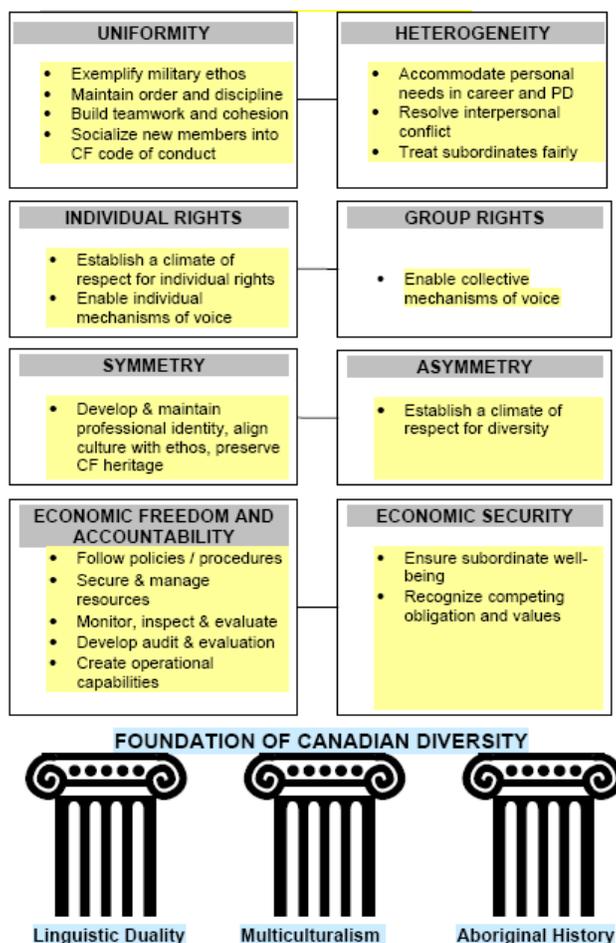
<sup>70</sup> Ibid. p. 22

<sup>71</sup> Ibid. p. 23

<sup>72</sup> Ibid. p. 23

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. p. 16

environment, based on the three pillars of Canadian diversity. This construct<sup>74</sup> is illustrated below.



The transition to a value-based model is not as daunting or as revolutionary as it appears. The primary drivers are education and leader support. As discussed, the CF Employment Equity plan provides a good initial framework; its major failing was encasing the plan in a business case philosophy vice a value-based vision. The plan already identifies the need for education, but the focus must move away from a one-time, one-size fits all training blitz (SHARP) towards career-

<sup>74</sup> Ibid. p. 29. Model based on Jenson and Papillon. (2001). The Canadian Diversity Model: A Repertoire in Search of a Framework.

long diversity education integrated throughout the Professional Development system.<sup>75</sup> The Diversity Climate Survey has indicated that Employment Equity and diversity is better understood by senior personnel; who, with additional education and a clear vision statement, are well positioned to influence the rank and file. With a change in organizational culture towards a value-based diversity paradigm, the ability to truly integrate all new recruits in an inclusive environment and exploit their cultural expertise, will greatly improve operational effectiveness. Finally, this enlightened culture will permit the Canadian Forces to “become a true ‘national institution’ and be better connected with Canadian communities by reflecting the diversity and values of Canada’s multicultural society<sup>76</sup>,” and hence position itself as a true employer of choice.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Canadian Forces has embarked on an aggressive advertising campaign to attract new recruits and promote interest in the organization. It is also branding itself as an employer of choice in order to achieve its immediate personnel expansion objectives; and position itself as a competitive and inclusive organization capable of attracting Canada’s best and brightest from a projected shrinking labour pool. Competition for this labour pool will increase exponentially as more ‘Baby Boomers’ retire than 17-24 year olds enter the work force. Immigration demographics have changed significantly away from the Canadian Forces traditional European heritage recruiting base. The face of Canada is becoming very diverse with visible minorities anticipated to represent over 50% of the population by ~2040. Hence, the Canadian Forces is aggressively trying to establish credibility with previously under-represented Designated Group Members (Aboriginals, Visible Minorities and Women) in order to develop new recruiting pools

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. p. 104

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. p. 23

to sustain its personnel demands. Though the Canadian Forces is obliged by federal legislation to support Employment Equity, it has been proactive in promoting its diversity in order to appeal to a wider audience. Despite a concerted effort, it has been unable to increase representation of any of the Designated Group Members; hence, has yet to succeed as an employer of choice.

The new approach proffered by this paper in order to be recognized as an employer of choice is to promote a cultural change within the Canadian Forces. Policies and programmes are not sufficient. A philosophical change in mindset from compliance and business case oriented diversity paradigms towards a value based philosophy is essential. When the new recruits feel that their uniqueness is value-added and increases the team's capability, then they will believe that they are an equal among peers and not just a diversity leadership issue or accommodation challenge. This success will resonate across communities verifying a true culture of inclusiveness that values the contribution of all Canadians. Policies, procedures and employment equity, though necessary, provide equal access to job opportunities in a non-discriminatory environment, but they do not promote nor embrace diversity. Leadership, education and institutional cultural change will promote inclusiveness and embrace diversity as a core value, which will attract the best and brightest Canadians to a true employer of choice.



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