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HOMOGENEOUS AT THE TOP: LEADERSHIP AND GENDER IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

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Exercise Solo Flight

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CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

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The concept of leadership is studied and debated heavily in academia while popular literature also tackles the topic and influences public opinion of norms and leadership models. Leadership is viewed differently given the levels of an organization, the type of organization in question, and the style or approach to leadership expected of individuals. Experts vary in assessing the true roots of leadership, from the skills of an individual, to the situation at hand, or to society's expectations. Through application of the theories of leadership and the effects of social science research, significant gains have been made in assessing leadership requirements of today. However, as society and culture evolves slowly over time, so to do the requirements and expectations of senior leaders.

This paper will present the key aspects of the accepted understanding of leadership. Through review of leadership theories specific to gender, this paper will outline gender norms and their influence on how leadership skills are developed and employed. This paper will consider how society and gender biases are evident and captured by the role congruity theory. In addition, barriers to gender integration remain evident in both public and private organizations, and these barriers will be reviewed for relevance in today's society.

Considering gender diversity and integration makes the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) an increasingly interesting organization to dissect. However, applying leadership theories to the CAF requires an understanding of the significant importance of culture, morale, cohesiveness and history embodied by the majority of people in uniform. By introducing doctrine on leadership, and direction on professionalism and the profession of arms, the CAF has actively pursued a deeper understanding of leadership at all levels of the institution. This paper will present the Canadian Forces' accepted and expected definition of leadership and apply this to the institution of today.

Women in the CAF are a minority and gender differences remain evident. From published doctrine that applies a male pronoun to every generic commander to consistently being underrepresented in leadership positions, women in the CAF are facing a male-dominated organization with norms and cultural barriers to equal representation in key roles. Using CAF data, a trend analysis will present what role women play in the CAF, the level of representation at key decision-making ranks, and areas of concern. This paper will illustrate that a focus on gender diversity versus integration has not produced the results demanded by the employment equity act: equal representation in all roles and at all rank levels. Last, this paper will present recommendations to achieve more equal representation for women in uniform.

LEADERSHIP AND GENDER

Leadership definitions are numerous and diverse. Two academic definitions describe leadership as “. . . a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal”,¹ and “. . . the effective capacity to influence others to act in ways they would not have accepted otherwise”.² These leadership definitions are broad enough to accept the full spectrum of leadership approaches and styles. These descriptions ensure readers appreciate that leadership is broader than personality traits, and may consider situational influences or society’s expectations. The overarching understanding of leadership supports in-depth analysis of how leadership is exercised and the manner in which factors such as gender influence leadership outcomes.

¹ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice, sixth edition* (London: Sage Publication, 2013), 5.

² Eric Ouellet, “Rethinking Military Leadership From a Sociological Perspective,” *Canadian Army Journal* 12, no. 1 (Spring 2009): 45.

The leadership style naturally selected by individuals highlights gender norms. Evidence though studies conducted by social psychologist, Eagly, confirm that men are more likely to use a command and control, authoritative style of leadership than women. This difference was heightened when women were afforded the space to adopt the leadership approach of their choosing.³ This fact highlights the question of what space is available in the military environment for women as leaders? Is there truly acceptance of more democratic and collaborative leadership in uniform? The military culture is rigid and not conducive to change in the short term; however, in 2015 the topic of integrating women into the CAF is not a new discussion.

In the Harvard Business review, women in leadership roles are described as defensive and lack confidence even when it is evident they are the expert in the matter.⁴ To alter these perspectives of men, interviews with male executives produced a chart to encourage women to change their speech patterns. By adopting more masculine language, male leaders predict that women will be more authoritative and be respected for their contribution.⁵ This mindset recommends women adopt stereotypical male behaviours in order to get ahead, thus becoming less feminine in the process: a quest to remain homogeneous at the top?

There remains debate in academic literature if a true difference exists between genders when assessing leadership styles, traits and overall success in executive positions. This paper will present two key theories which highlight personal traits as the key to successful leadership and conversely how the situation dictates the appropriate leader

³ Alice H. Eagly, "Women as Leaders: leadership Style versus Leaders' Values and Attitudes," Harvard Business School: Gender & Work Research Symposium (2013): 5.

⁴ Kathryn Heath, Jill Flynn, and Mary Davis Holt, "Women, Find your Voice," *Harvard Business Review* 92, no. 6 (June 2014): 119.

⁵ Kathryn Heath, Jill Flynn, and Mary Davis Holt, "Women, Find your Voice . . . , 120.

behaviour. Subsequently, the role congruity theory will demonstrate how women in military leadership positions face deep-seeded barriers to success at the highest level.

Trait Theory vs Situational Theory

The question of whether leaders are born or made has challenged researchers as leadership roles and positions evolved. Although the original concept that a leader is born with specific traits was heavily criticized, given the increased focus on transformational leadership, the trait theory has gained additional attention. The theory attests that specific traits are evident in successful leaders and these traits can be assessed on a scale for each attribute.⁶ This theory lists the following attributes, in order of greatest correlation with successful leaders, as: extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, low neuroticism and agreeableness.⁷ Given that personality traits are to the individual level, gender is not a measured variable in the data. Support for this approach to understanding leadership suggests that these categories help assess potential for high-performing leaders⁸, conversely, this theory does not consider the situation which undoubtedly influences the outcome.

When the situation and the group of followers is considered, the individual traits of the leader are less significant. There are four leadership styles which vary in level of directive vs. supportive behaviour and help differentiate how a situation dictates the appropriate leadership style to be employed. The four leadership categories presented by the situation approach to leadership include delegating, supporting, coaching and

⁶ Stephen J. Zaccaro, "Trait-Based Perspectives of Leadership," *American Psychological Association* 62, no. 1 (2007): 8.

⁷ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice* . . . , 27.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 30.

directing.⁹ This theory suggests that a leader must be capable of choosing the best leadership style to affect positive change, using varying levels of communication and support. It highlights the benefits of leaders being flexible and adaptive to the situation at hand,¹⁰ conversely, a study by Vecchio and Boatwright in 2002 found that the demographics of the followers affected the success of this theory. One aspect this study considered was the gender of followers. It was evident that men and women respond to different leadership styles, with women preferring supportive leaders and men desiring authoritative leaders.¹¹ Given that men and women respond differently to leadership styles, this trajectory supports that men and women will revert to diverging leadership styles if accepted and encouraged by an organization. The following section presents the role congruity theory which speaks directly to the accepted and expected leadership of each gender.

Role Congruity Theory

The results of Eagly, Karau and Makhijani's study of leadership effectiveness in the military environment determined that females are seen as less effective; however, this study was taken a step further and proved that even when women achieved the same operational level of success, men were viewed as having performed better.¹² This clash supports the role congruity theory which explains that when women exhibit traditionally masculine characteristics (assertiveness, independence and self-confidence), they are judged harshly. These attributes are associated with men and therefore are not inline with

⁹ *Ibid.*, 100.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 108.

¹² Karen D. Davis, "Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Perspectives and Experiences" Minister of National Defence, (Winnipeg: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 94.

the perception of appropriate gender behaviours.¹³ The characteristics generally applied to females (kindness, emotional expression, gentle) are not regarded as positive leadership qualities. Cultural conditioning over time results in gender alone influencing how traits expressed by men and women are judged.¹⁴ Female leaders are perceived as either too assertive or too emotional. As a result, where does this leave female leaders? The best solution is for women to assume a leadership identity that is aligned with personal values and style, while applying various leadership skills as dictated by the situation. The hard question for military seniors is whether stereotypical feminine qualities are welcome in leaders of the CAF today?

The social constructionist perspective also supports the role congruity theory. This theory implies that one develops an understanding of gender and leadership based on social interactions and relationships.¹⁵ It speaks directly to socialization of gender roles overtime. Accepting that “stereotypes are cognitive shortcuts that influence the way people process information regarding groups and group members”,¹⁶ supports that gender biases begin formation in childhood. Socialized over time at school and at home, stereotypes are further compounded by introduction into rigid organizations. Luckily, these stereotypes are altered through interactions and as society changes. The theory supports the argument that gender integration to the full extent will positively influence the acceptance of females in leadership positions, exercising various leadership styles.

Reviewing the leadership theories outlined above, it is clear that the spectrum of leadership styles is as varied as personalities. Beginning with the individual traits, a

¹³ *Ibid.*, 95.

¹⁴ Yulia Barnakova, Franklin Shen, and Steven Krupp, “Women as Strategic Leaders: The Need and the Critical Skills,” *Mworld* 13, no. 4 (2014/2015): 22.

¹⁵ Karen D. Davis, “Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces . . . , 146.

¹⁶ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice* . . . , 358.

person can assess their leadership potential but consider this as limited to a generalization without considering outside variables. When adding the situation theory, an individual can place their preferred leadership style within the four categories and assess the situations and organizations where the selected style is most effective. Last, in line with the role congruity theory, women are offered an explanation as to why females may be perceived as less effective leaders or too aggressive depending on the leadership style employed. Understanding the theories presented by social psychology in relation to leadership and gender roles is a key step in overcoming gender biases and stereotypes.

BARRIERS TO GENDER INTEGRATION

The lack of women in leadership roles is not specific to militaries, as solidified by the EU's pressure to actively recruit qualified women through a voluntary measure of 'women at the board pledges' to increase gender diversity at top management boards.¹⁷ Feminist social theorists have reviewed frameworks created using male norms and social theory. Three approaches considered to address gender integration include: "fix the women", "value the feminine", or "create equal opportunities" however, all of these options maintain disadvantages to women through varying lenses.¹⁸ The intent is positive, but the results are lacking. Women's leadership abilities are not less than men, but the style and approach often applied is interpreted as a leadership weakness.¹⁹ These gender

¹⁷ Claudia Filsinger, and Sally Worth, "Women and Leadership: Closing the Gender Gap," *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching & Mentoring* 10, no. 2 (August 2012): 112.

¹⁸ F. Pinch, et al., *Challenge and Change in the Military: Gender and Diversity Issues*. (Winnipeg: Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 189.

¹⁹ Gita Patel, and Sophie Buiting, "Gender Differences in Leadership Styles and the Impact within Corporate Boards," Commonwealth Secretariat, Social Transformation Programmes Division Report, (June 2013): 19.

differences in communicating and influence tactics are contributing to a lack of women integrated as senior leaders.

Feedback and experiences help shape a person's leadership identity and authentic style. Gender biases interfere with women internalizing the overly-masculine leader persona and result in women either adopting masculine characteristics or appearing too emotional or lacking confidence by the men assessing performance.²⁰ Organizations, especially those with a strong institutional culture, seek future employees who mirror current senior leaders. When conducting performance appraisals, managers are influenced by personal understanding of leadership and often endorsing clones of current leaders is the end-state.²¹ The majority of leadership research was completed using male norms, as a result there remain underlying barriers to women progressing to senior levels within an organization. Organizations, just as culture and norms, can morph over time but this process is not linear. Progress is often made through small victories and set backs occur when women fail or mishaps are wrongly attributed to gender issues.

Although diversity at the top of most organizations is still lacking, progress has clearly been made. A record year, 2014 has seen 25 Fortune 500 companies with a female Chief Executive Officer.²² Although still debated in literature, a July 2012 study by the Credit Suisse Research Institute found that "companies with female board representation outperform boards without female board representation".²³ Social psychology expert, Eagly disagrees and attests that findings are mixed as previous research did not appropriately consider unreliable measures and variables; however, there is agreement

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

²¹ Claudia Filsinger, and Sally Worth, "Women and Leadership . . .", 116.

²² Yulia Barnakova, Franklin Shen, and Steven Krupp, "Women as Strategic Leaders . . .", 17.

²³ *Ibid.*

that diversity in skills and knowledge at the highest levels is positive for any organization.²⁴ Further research is required as diversity becomes more common and accepted within management teams.

The United Nations, an organization that advocates inclusiveness, human rights and equality for all is one that has struggled with gender diversity at the highest levels. Significant progress is evident from the necessity of the Commission on the Status of Women proclamation of the ‘Women’s Year’ back in 1975;²⁵ however, even within the hierarchy of the UN, significant gaps exist where women are under-represented in high profile divisions. Although women have broken through to the highest positions, the filtering of females into specific areas is evident through international politics lecturer, Kirsten Haack’s, review of key positions held by women in the UN structure. Few anomalies exist, but overall women are affiliated with compassion issues including health care and education, whereas men are linked to hard political portfolios such as military spending and foreign trade.²⁶ The increased representation of women in leadership roles in the UN is undoubtedly a positive development but caution is needed when the gendering of departments becomes evident. The UN runs the risk of inadvertently supporting the role congruity theory of feminine and masculine divisions at the organizational level.

As the role congruity theory supports feminine and masculine behaviours and norms, Eagly has proven that female norms equate to a higher probability to employ

²⁴ Alice H. Eagly, “Women as Leaders: leadership Style versus Leaders’ Values . . .”, 6.

²⁵ Kirsten Haack, “Breaking Barriers? Women’s Representation and Leadership at the United Nations,” *Global Governance* 20, no. 1 (January 2014): 41.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 47.

transformational leadership styles.²⁷ As well, women are more willing to enhance the self-esteem of others and will succeed using an authentic leadership style.²⁸ A benefit to employing more collaborative and a democratic leadership style inline with developing subordinates provides a difference perspective to strategic decision-making through an inclusive process.²⁹ However, given the low proportion of women in top leadership positions, the increased scrutiny of the successful individuals may create more risk aversion due to visibility and overanalyzing actions. To further complicate the leadership and visibility of women in management roles, studies show that men may not accept a transformational leadership style from women.³⁰ Given cultural and gender biases, women will continue to struggle in fulfilling the role of the prototypical leader from male subordinates.

Given that women are just as capable as men in terms of leadership, it is proposed that the requirements of senior management in the traditional sense are contrary to the needs and career path of most women.³¹ “The need for communication and emotional expression, a strong sense of community and the sharing of common experiences”³² are heightened for women compared to men, and climbing to the top of an organizational hierarchy may not provide this desired support. Combating these challenges, many women can act the part and deliver what is expected by the organization. Forging ahead to be the best soldier, sailor or airwomen she can be; however, as reflected by a senior

²⁷ Alice H. Eagly, “Women as Leaders: leadership Style versus Leaders’ Values . . . , 5.

²⁸ Gita Patel, and Sophie Buiting, “Gender Differences in Leadership . . . , 18.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Alice H. Eagly, “Women as Leaders: leadership Style versus Leaders’ Values . . . , 5.

³¹ Gita Patel, and Sophie Buiting, “Gender Differences in Leadership Styles . . . , 20.

³² Karen D. Davis, “Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces . . . , 54.

non-commissioned member, maybe something is lost in not celebrating or acknowledging gender diversity.³³

This section has presented glaring situations where barriers persist to true gender integration in leadership positions. Organizations of international status including the UN still struggle to achieve a gender balance in all roles and at all levels. The next section will narrow the focus to leadership in the CAF and how the institutional history and culture influence gender diversity.

LEADERSHIP IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

Leadership doctrine for the CAF defines leadership as “directly or indirectly influencing others, by means of formal authority or personal attributes, to act in accordance with one’s intent or a shared purpose”.³⁴ Interestingly, this definition specifically attributes the use of formal authority as leadership whereas sociologists present that leadership begins as “... the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with routine directive of the organization”.³⁵ Given the strict hierarchy and formal authority resident in the military rank structure, the understanding of military leadership is understandably expanded to include use of this formal authority. More specifically though, *effective* military leadership is defined as “directing, motivating, and enabling others to accomplish the mission professionally and ethically,

³³ *Ibid.*, 63.

³⁴ Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-003, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine*, (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 3.

³⁵ Nicole Woolsey Biggart, and Gary Hamilton, “An Institutional Theory of Leadership,” *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 23, no. 4: 432.

while developing or improving capabilities that contribute to mission success”.³⁶ These clearly defined expectations of leaders are a result of a renewed focus on leadership at all levels of the CAF. The release of five key publications including *Duty with Honour*, *Conceptual Foundations*, *Leadership Doctrine*, *Leading People*, and *Leading the Institution* was a positive step in articulating how the institution and profession of arms remain committed to producing a credible and legitimate military.

The CAF model of leadership highlights five leader characteristics to assist in achieving effective leadership, including:

- a. knowledge and skills which should be mastered for technical trade skills, but must adapt as strategic and institutional requirements surface in senior positions;
- b. cognitive ability including critical thinking skills and professional judgment is expected of senior leaders;
- c. social capacity to create a positive work environment through communication and conflict management skills;
- d. personality traits that emphasize integrity and adaptability; and
- e. professional motivation and values that are inline with military ethos.³⁷

All CAF leadership manuals present concepts which appear gender neutral. These characteristics of effective leaders are not intended to eliminate any social group or minority. The requirements remain general enough to apply to all potential leaders. In this

³⁶ Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-003, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine . . .*, 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

manner, military professionals understand the need to remain inline with cultural and social shifts in society.³⁸

As Canadian society becomes increasingly diverse, so too should our military organization. Gender is but one minority to consider at the national level; however, given that women makeup almost 50% of the workforce, the CAF must embrace the presence and persistence of women in uniform. In *Leading People*, it is clearly expressed that diversity in the military is encouraged and must be recognized as a force multiplier by exploiting different experiences, abilities and analytical skills.³⁹ Significant effort and the introduction of new policies were a result of the human rights tribunal which ordered the CAF to afford women equal rights to serve in uniform. The focus to ensure gender integration is successful has remained on the overall number of women employed in the CAF. This statistic is only part of the required action. Gender integration must consider equal representation at all ranks and in all roles.

Leadership at the highest levels influences institutional policy and military culture.⁴⁰ The military is known to have a very strong culture and often the institution prides itself on the cohesiveness and teamwork that is developed through the organizational socialization process. The norms and values developed and entrenched in military members are central to belonging in the organization. In line with Richard Scott's framework on institutional analysis, the normative pillar encompasses the accepted actions of individuals and the standards to which actions will be assessed. In the CAF,

³⁸ Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-006, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2007), 10.

³⁹ Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-005, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading People*, (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2007), 61.

⁴⁰ Karen D. Davis, "Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces . . .", 82.

history has shown that norms and values hold more importance than definitive regulations.⁴¹

The CAF's ability to socialize norms and values is incredible, beginning on day one of basic training. Sociologist, Okros, offers that the cultural considerations are deeper than even those developing the professional development program for military officers are cognizant of. Through programs such as the Joint Command and Staff Program, the underlying message in what topics are delivered, the academic weight for assignments and the continued student focus on obtaining the optimum results equates to lack of attention in influencing the learning environment outside of the professional curriculum.⁴² Through such forums of military professional development, there remain powerful cultural influences which do not consider a gender perspective.

Sociology professor, and specialist in women in the military, Mady Segal, asserts that the military is still conducting business in a very male way, while employing a strong majority of men.⁴³ Military education and training establishments maintain the importance of tradition and culture in the service and most women do not join the organization with the desire to change these aspects of the institution. This rich history does not mean the military has not evolved and changed over time, however the changes are only slow positive adaptations to society and expected cultural awareness.

The CAF is not the only military working through gender diversity considerations as the institution trains future leaders. The Australian Army recognizes the hyper-masculinity of the military culture and the institution has learned that a gender-neutral

⁴¹ Devin Conley, Eric Ouellet, "The Canadian Forces and Military Transformation an Elusive Quest for Efficiency," *Canadian Army Journal* 14, no 1, (2012),: 72.

⁴² Alan Okros, "Leadership in the Canadian Military Context," *Canadian Forces Leadership Institute*, Nov 2010, 40.

⁴³Holly Yeager, "Soldiering Ahead," *Wilson Quarterly* 31, no. 3 (Summer 2007): 60.

philosophy has merely resulted in women working in an historical and accepted masculine culture.⁴⁴ What leadership looks like and how the environment expects leaders to behave in the military is driven by leadership styles typical of the majority and reinforced by institutional leaders, of which the significant majority are men.

In a study conducted to determine what subordinates expect of leaders in the Canadian military environment produced results which support gender differences in leadership. Participants held divergent ideas of leaders and females, in that gender stereotypes prevailed and males were directly correlated to what was expected of a leader. More disturbing is the fact that even after exposure to successful female leaders did not alter the participants' views.⁴⁵ The perception remained that males possessed the attributes of officers and the optimal leaders, "[t]his suggests that both tenure and exposure to female officers actually increases rather than decreases stereotyping."⁴⁶ It is possible that gender stereotypes are so engrained in cultural norms and socialization to the military environment that the institution is not conscious of the lasting effects.

Appreciation for varying leadership styles does seem to be infiltrating even the most masculine institutions, as the US military supports a more collaborative approach to leadership today than in the past. Although often seen as a feminine leadership trait, the participative leadership style is embraced and encouraged from US senior females in uniform.⁴⁷ The approach of listening, and validating feelings before tackling the issue

⁴⁴ Charles Knight, "Sexuality, Cohesion, Masculinity and Combat Motivation: Designing Personnel Policy to Sustain Capability," *Australian Army Journal* X, no 3 (2013): 65.

⁴⁵ Kristyn Scott, "Universal or gender-specific? Exploring military leadership from a subordinate perspective," *Defence R&D Canada*, Toronto (August, 2003), 12.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Holly Yeager, "Soldiering Ahead," . . . , 56.

proved very useful and contributed to good morale and unit cohesion while deployed.⁴⁸ In contrast, with few women in the most senior ranks, the increased scrutiny of individuals intensifies pressure and publicity for each new promotion. As the first women to command a naval vessel in the US Navy, Darlene Iskra felt the pressure of command and breaking a barrier for women in uniform. Unfortunately, over the following years, the respect and publicity were perceived more like token-status and disrespect, ultimately resulting in her release from the military.⁴⁹ As military institutions slowly adapt to various leadership styles and more women reach senior ranks, the pressure and scrutiny may lessen but the leadership labyrinth remains a challenge for women.

This section outlined the clear expectations of military leaders as presented in doctrine, and recently published professional manuals. The CAF has made significant improvement in attempting to influence culture and norms to appreciate a spectrum of leadership styles and highlighting the merit of collaborative leadership approaches. The military environment of CAF and allies remains very masculine but slowly women are climbing the ladder. The focus for the CAF is on recruitment numbers and retention of females, but as the next section will demonstrate, diversity does not equal integration.

CAF STATISTICS OF GENDER DIVERSITY

Given the increased acceptance levels of diversity, the military has made progress from generations past however, equality is not yet achieved. A key concern remains the lack of representation of women in the most senior levels of the military. With promotions and succession planning “as a function of the internal selection and

⁴⁸ Karen D. Davis, “Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces . . .”, 53.

⁴⁹ Holly Yeager, “Soldiering Ahead,” . . ., 61.

development systems that have a substantially masculine, mainstream social and cultural weighting”⁵⁰ it is not surprising that women are not overly successful in the military organization.

The general perception is that gender integration has been achieved in the CAF as the number of women in uniform has undoubtedly increased over time; however, “gender biases generally are no longer overt but more often take the form of subtle and implicit preconceptions and discrimination, making them potent and pernicious.”⁵¹ These gender biases are supported by the socialization process in the institution. The distinct and tight military culture is one that aims to bring members together as a cohesive team and to achieve success in operations; however, stringent cultural norms produce negative unintended consequence of sub-groups where differences are highlighted.⁵² These challenges contribute to the lack of women at the true decision making level in the CAF.

Through analysis of information provided from the military human resource management system, a review of key statistics from 2001 to 2014 present key gender issues remain a concern for the CAF. The review of data is limited to regular force personnel due to the various components of reserve service, from full time contracts, part time employment, cadet instructor cadre and rangers.

Gender diversity within the regular force presents a positive trend given that the percentage of women in the military increased from 12.2% in 2001 (6,928) to 14.4% in 2014 (9,464),⁵³ as shown in figure 1. These numbers account for gender diversity but they do not support gender integration within the CAF. When dissecting the data, it is clear

⁵⁰ F. Pinch, *et al.*, *Challenge and Change in the Military . . .*, 191.

⁵¹ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice . . .*, 364.

⁵² F. Pinch, *et al.*, *Challenge and Change in the Military . . .*, 3.

⁵³ Department of National Defence, Directorate Human Resource Information Management, Human Resource Reporting System, Custom Reports (Received 27 March 2015).

that overall representation is limited as rank increases. For women to have a true impact in the CAF, to mentor junior females, and to present a gender-balanced organization, additional women in higher ranks is critical.

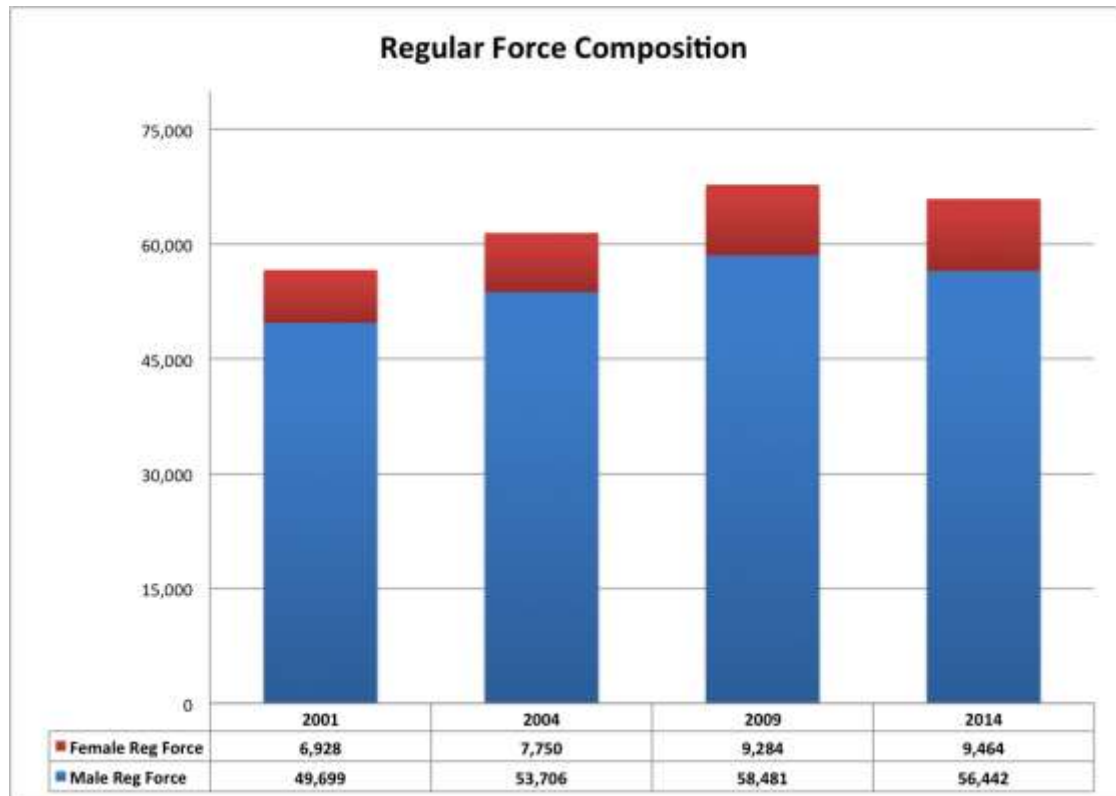


Figure 1: Composition of Regular Force, HRMS Data provided 27 Mar 2014.

Figure 2 summarizes the gender divide at the rank of Colonel and above for officers and Master Warrant Officer (MWO) and above for non-commissioned members. The positive trend outlined above, with a maximum of 14.4% female composition of the CAF is grossly overstating the true numbers in decision-making ranks and positions. In 2001, there were only 14 female officers holding the rank of Colonel/Commodore or higher. Thirteen years later, there are 21 females in these influential ranks, this is a modest

increase from 3.8% to 4.9% of active regular force members.⁵⁴ The trend is still positive, however, the overall representation is not as progressive as gender diversity numbers portray. Within the NCM corps, the representation is slightly more optimistic with an increase of female personnel at the rank of MWO/CPO2 and CWO/CPO1 from 4.8% in 2001 to 7.3% in 2014.⁵⁵ The most significant increase is evident within the Air Force, where percentage of female CWOs is double that of the Army or Navy.

Given the positive trend of gender diversity, the CAF has celebrated a victory of accomplishing the mission of the Employment Equity Act, but only at the detriment of realizing true gender integration. Now is not the time to lose focus or decrease gender integration targets; quite the opposite is required. Women are under represented at the level where concrete changes are possible for future females in uniform. The final section of this paper will recommend a way forward to address the homogeneity that remains at the top of the CAF chain of command.

<u>2001</u>			<u>2004</u>		
	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Regular Force	6,928	56,627	Regular Force	7,750	61,456
Air Force	3,110	18,837	Air Force	3,184	19,035
Army	2,616	28,865	Army	3,204	31,093
Navy	1,202	8,924	Navy	1,362	11,328
Officers: Col and higher	14	368	Officers: Col and higher	15	389
NCMs: MWO & CWO	112	2,337	NCMs: MWO & CWO	133	2,457
<u>2009</u>			<u>2014</u>		
	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Regular Force	9,284	67,765	Regular Force	9,464	65,906
Air Force	3,636	20,218	Air Force	3,506	19,697
Army	4,004	36,102	Army	4,255	34,961
Navy	1,646	11,445	Navy	1,703	11,248
Officers: Col and higher	14	393	Officers: Col and higher	21	425
NCMs: MWO & CWO	175	2,662	NCMs: MWO & CWO	193	2,641

Figure 2: Female Representation by Environment and Rank Level, HRMS Data provided 27 Mar 2014.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

WAY AHEAD

Workplace diversity and integration of designated groups remains a challenge for many Western militaries, however the topic deserves continued pressure and attention to support social justice goals. In an effort to truly reflect society and to support the Employment Equity Act, additional work is necessary within the CAF. The issue is not one easily solved, hence why CAF gender diversity targets have not been reached. This section will outline recommendations and highlight actions of ally nations that may assist the CAF in the future.

As a way forward, it is recommended that the Champion for Women facilitate a space to encourage the tough discussion of what will substantially attract women to continue to choose the military as a career. This champion position is often visible around International Women's Day but remains a secondary duty for the remainder of the year. One area that needs attention is the use and acceptance of leadership styles across the spectrum of leadership including more democratic or collaborative styles. From what should be a role model for aspiring women, the Chief Operation Officer of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg released a book titled *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* in which she encourages women to be more assertive in leadership styles and be bold. This book is highly controversial as it sets what many perceive as unrealistic expectations for working mothers, unless one has a stay-at-home partner or full-time hired help; however, the position Sandberg takes on leadership speaks loudly to extrovert women. In contrast, writer Susan Cain speaks to all women in recommending an appreciation for all leadership styles and to apply the best fit for one's personality while considering the

situation and the organizational culture.⁵⁶ As the military culture remains a closed group and one with strictly held and obeyed norms, it will take time to become more inclusive to diversity, however now is the time to encourage discussions and question cultural norms for their appropriateness in 2015.

Non-linear career paths are an option for the military to consider in making the military more conducive to the realities in society. The Australian Army is making significant strides to support women choosing a career break to raise a family, and then returning to the military without career repercussions. A further analysis of the Australian approach may result in tangible changes to improve gender integration in the CAF.

To assist women as they navigate the military organization, a mentoring program would facilitate discussion and support from other women.⁵⁷ Many women today in leadership positions have few or zero female role models in the upper echelon. A role model and mentor that is male does not see the organization from the same perspective or may not have faced similar challenges of aspiring women. A female mentoring program will assist young military members in seeing themselves as capable to reach the senior ranks of those women before them.

Given the strong military culture and the respect for rank, making gender integration a leadership issue is a genuine strategy to ensure members of designated groups are integrated into the institution.⁵⁸ Formal and informal leaders within the CAF can support gender integration efforts. In addition, the performance evaluation tools used

⁵⁶ Yulia Barnakova, Franklin Shen, and Steven Krupp, "Women as Strategic Leaders . . .", 18.

⁵⁷ Claudia Filsinger, and Sally Worth, "Women and Leadership . . .", 117.

⁵⁸ Karen D. Davis, "Women and Leadership in the Canadian Forces . . .", 7.

may be bias to gender expectations and roles.⁵⁹ A position reported from the US military also includes that a risk of sexual harassment claims creates a divide between men in leadership positions and women who should be mentored or guided through their careers.⁶⁰ If this dichotomy exists in the CAF, the issue further marginalizes women and their ability to develop cohesion and receive feedback throughout their careers. Further information on the CAF environment will come to the forefront with the release of Mme Deschamps' report on sexual harassment and professional misconduct in the CAF and the follow-on implementation team lead by Major-General Whitecross.

This section has recommended tangible changes for gender diversity in the CAF and additional areas where further research is required. Overall, cultural norms and gender roles are difficult to change and slow to accept change. As Northouse recommends, role redefinition for women must be addressed both at home and in the workplace,⁶¹ as a society Canadians are embracing women in the workplace but progress to the top levels and integration in male-dominated organizations remains a failure.

CONCLUSION

The CAF is a male-dominated institution that requires additional attention to the topic of gender integration. Although not alone in the slow progress on this issue, as other Western militaries and the private sector are challenged in reaching appropriate targets, the CAF owes women in uniform a continued focus on gender diversity and integration within the decision-making ranks. Women have a place in leading the institution and

⁵⁹ F. Pinch, *et al.*, *Challenge and Change in the Military* . . . , 191.

⁶⁰ Holly Yeager, "Soldiering Ahead," . . . , 61.

⁶¹ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership Theory and Practice* . . . , 361.

shaping the CAF. As demonstrated by thorough analysis of human resource data of active regular force personnel, the CAF has not embraced women in the senior positions of the military. Barriers to gender integration are present in the military and are underlying commonly held assumptions of gender-neutral practices. Consideration must be given to the succession planning, performance evaluation and socialization processes of the institution to ensure gender-neutral does not equate to masculine norms. This paper has recommended a number of actions to assist in moving forward with gender integration; however, further analysis of retention concerns for women will assist in providing a review of the macro-level issue.

Academic literature on leadership supports the Role Congruency theory, therefore, it will take time and celebrating female leaders in society at large to evolve the role of women and the accepted and expected gender norms. Much progress has been made but wrongly assuming gender integration has been achieved risks a social injustice for half of the population. Although men and women exhibit different leadership styles, the spectrum of effective leadership encompasses those naturally selected by each gender. Further analysis of the military's socialization process may highlight training and norms that favour the authoritative leadership approaches generalized as masculine behaviour. As women permeate the glass ceiling with the CAF, it is critical that senior leaders embrace the change and remain open to tough discussion about long held norms, culture and gender biases. It is time to diversify the homogeneous senior leadership of the Canadian Armed Forces.

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