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## A CONFLUENCE OF CONCEPTS TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL AIRPOWER MASTERY: CONTEXTUALIZING TALENT MANAGEMENT AND THE CAF LEADER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

LCol J.L.K. Armstrong

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LCol J.L.K. Armstrong

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## ABSTRACT

Mindful of the increasingly pervasive use of the terms ‘talent’ and ‘talent management’ in the theory and practice of human resource management (HRM) across many organizations, this study was undertaken as an exercise in academic and strategic thought to contribute to the sense-making of these nebulous terms. Necessarily broad in scope and exploratory in nature, this study examined conceptual boundaries and demonstrated overlaps amongst these nebulous terms, aspects of the *Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Personnel System*, and Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) aspirations to ‘harness intellectual capital’ towards *Professional Airpower Mastery (PAM)*. Based on the literature reviewed, several themes and tensions within talent management approaches are presented, along with implications on the CAF/RCAF, with a view to stimulate further thought and debate.

A summary of the key themes and implications is provided in Chapter 5 (Conclusion), and an overarching commentary is to consider *whether there could be more to talent management in the CAF/RCAF than the status quo* workforce planning, recruiting, selection, competency analysis, PD, appraisal, career and succession management, retention and terms of service, remuneration and rewards functions that talent management implicates. It is not a simple task to grasp the complicated interactions amongst the various CAF HRM sub-systems that implicate the management of ‘talent’ towards organizational objectives like PAM. Accordingly, this paper aims to contribute to an understanding of where extant CAF/RCAF practices fit within the conceptually vast talent management approach space, and to extend this understanding towards *how there could be more to it*. While this paper intended to provide a balanced synthesis of some theoretical themes, concepts and practices in contemporary talent management, extant CAF/RCAF practices, and impending changes to CAF practices, the ideas

and implications are not necessarily absolutes but rather a point of departure for more informed discourse.

On balance, this paper provides a case and recommendation that, to amplify upon the RCAF's stated objective to 'harness intellectual capital' towards *PAM*, the RCAF in collaboration with central authorities engage in formulating a widely accessible and understandable talent management strategy that provides: an inclusive definition of talent, an inclusive scope to talent management, principles and refers to practices that maximizes levels of engagement and empowerment in career-/professional-/self- development matters, and enables personnel to grasp and apply the forthcoming CAF Competency framework and CAF Personnel Appraisal and Talent Management System.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### Context for Research Effort

Within the context of the recent and emerging security environment, the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) continually faces a breadth of complex challenges associated with the demand to deliver air power across a wide spectrum of operations, to conduct the business of defence within a large governmental framework, and to provide the airpower expertise needed to inform critical decisions. Some broad factors that contribute to the depth of these challenges include evolutions to security threats, increasing pressure to seek economies, and the dynamics of managing requisite human resource capacity within a complex social organization. Accordingly the RCAF, like many other organizations, aspires to fully harness its ‘human capital’ to tackle this range of linear to non-linear wicked problems that vary in prevalence from the tactical to operational to strategic levels of the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) and Department of National Defence (DND), and thereby ensure operational and institutional excellence.

The current RCAF Campaign Plan articulates the following amongst its key priorities: “harness intellectual capital and improve professional airpower mastery.”<sup>1</sup> The harnessing of ‘intellectual capital’ or ‘human capital’ is inextricably linked to the requirement for the RCAF and its sub-populations (e.g. its occupations or operational communities) to conduct a range of activities within the CF Military Personnel Management System<sup>2</sup> (hereon referred to as the CAF

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<sup>1</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Royal Canadian Air Force Campaign Plan, Version 2.0* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Royal Canadian Air Force, November 2015), 10.

<sup>2</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-005-100/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 1.0 Military Personnel Management Doctrine* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2008), 1-2. This is publication also provides clarification on the origins of personnel management within the CAF context, as well as the distinction between terms personnel, HR management, and military personnel management.

Personnel System<sup>3</sup>). This system is intended to be “an all-encompassing system of systems, which supports military commanders, personnel and their families”<sup>4</sup> by enabling a life-cycle of personnel and human resource management activities that include: attraction of individuals, enrolment, initial military socialization, individual training and education, employment and rank change (e.g. promotion), administration of compensation and benefits, maintaining standards of conduct, personnel appraisal, recognition, retention, and transition back to civilian life after service, just to name a few. The linkages between these activities and organizational goals such as harnessing intellectual capital are complex and have merited much attention in terms of military personnel management research efforts and renewal initiatives throughout many organizations.

Within academic and practitioner realm of human resources management (HRM), the term ‘talent management’ has recently emerged that has increasingly captured the interest of many organizations in private, public, and military sectors. Whereas one could consider HRM to be the overarching field of *managing employment relations*, one could consider talent management as an emerging field and phenomenon that involves a range of long-standing HRM practices aimed at achieving the effect of ‘a right person in the right job at the right time’. The literature reviewed in this study affirmed that there is a significant mass of organizations that concern themselves with achieving this effect (or some variations on that mantra), and that the scope of their defined talent management programmes include a focus on HRM activities such as workforce planning, attraction and hiring (i.e. accessing talent), career management, developing its personnel, and succession planning. Like many aspects within HRM, there exists significant

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<sup>3</sup>“About Chief of Military Personnel,” last modified 2016-02-11, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-org-structure/chief-military-personnel.page>. This more recent publication uses the title *CAF Personnel System*.

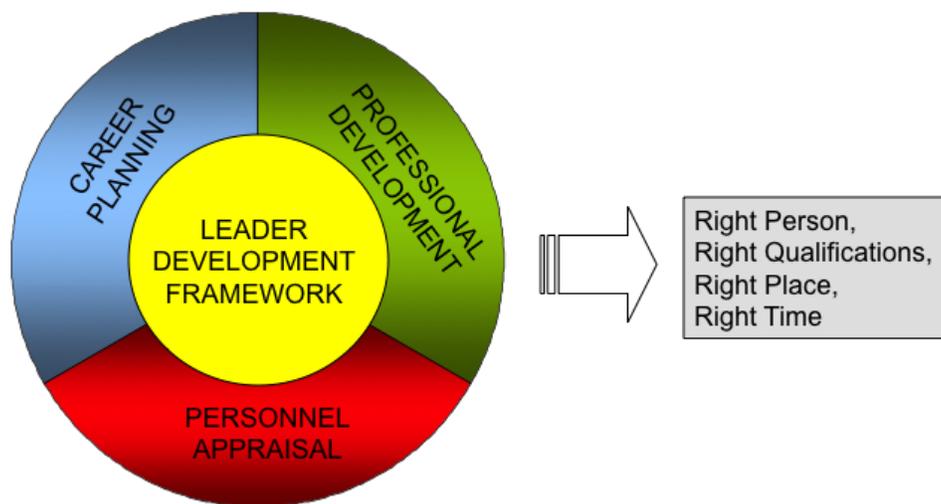
<sup>4</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-005-100/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 1.0 Military Personnel Management Doctrine*, 1-2.

discourse on talent management in terms of definitions, conceptual approaches, and practical implementation. There are conceptual overlaps with HRM functions that organizations already conduct, which raises questions of the validity of talent management, its potential value proposition, and how to optimally contextualize some emerging models and practices. This research effort presumes that organizations like the CAF and RCAF can benefit by extending their understanding of contemporary themes that have emerged from the study of talent management and how similar organizations have contextualized talent management to meet their desired ends. This in turn can inform further questions on the matter, agendas for further study, strategy development, and considerations to invest in appropriate ways and means.

At the institutional level of the CAF, the Leader Development Model (LDM) is one of the more significant aggregations of investments in ways and means aimed at improving professional development (PD), career planning, and personnel appraisal. The interrelation between these components of the CAF Personnel System and a competency dictionary based on the Leader Development Framework (LDF), as well as some aspects of their theoretical underpinnings, will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters. Work on each of these components of the CAF Personnel System was conducted under separate initiatives over the span of several years. Having assessed that the interrelation between these components were of critical importance, the LDM was proposed as a project to synchronize and coalesce the capability development efforts of these components.

As a concept, the LDM represents a system that is intended to fully integrate PD, career planning, and personnel appraisal such that personnel are assessed, identified, developed and

employed in a coherent manner.<sup>5</sup> From an organizational perspective of career management, the combined ways and means of the LDM is intended to achieve the effect of employing the right person, with the right qualifications, in the right place, at the right time. Figure 1 illustrates the interconnections of LDM, emphasizing the LDF competencies as the central hub that underpins three core career management processes of career planning, PD, and personnel appraisal with each core process informing the others.



**Figure 1.1 – CAF Leadership Development Model (LDM)**

Source: Canada. Department of National Defence, *Leadership Development Model (LDM) – Conceptual Framework*, Presentation to Armed Forces Council (AFC) meeting held 2 December 2014.

At the time of commencing this research project, the concept of an integrated set of core career management functions within the CAF Personnel System articulated through the LDM was considered an emerging capability within the CAF. The concept had recently received Armed Forces Council (AFC) – the senior military body of the CAF authorized to endorse

<sup>5</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Officer Developmental Period 4/5: Project Strategic Leader - Report of the Officer DP 4/5 Review Working Group* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Military Personnel Command, 2015b), 11.

significant changes to broad military matters – endorsement for implementation in December 2014.<sup>6</sup> As the lead organization for implementation, Military Personnel Generation (MILPERSGEN)<sup>7</sup> recently communicated in the *Canadian Military Journal* that they are working on updating strategic guidance on military professional development (titled *Institutional Leader 2030*) to fully describe and explain the LDM and the LDF, as well as the “synergies to be gained by aligning professional development, performance assessment, and career planning, using a [competency-based] approach.”<sup>8</sup> Another significant capability development initiative within the nexus of the LDM and CAF Personnel System is the update to its HRM software, under the Military Personnel Management Capability Transformation (MPMCT) project. The HRM software, which the CAF named GUARDIAN, will include a module that will replace the Canadian Forces Personnel Appraisal System (CFPAS) software, which is intended to provide the information management means to improve the integration of appraisal, career management, and other HRM functions.<sup>9</sup> One key deduction of the integrated approach to developing the LDM suite of personnel capabilities is its potential to improve the ability of the CAF and its sub-populations to conduct ‘talent management’. Mindful that the RCAF would need to engage with these and other LDM-related projects, this research effort aimed to explore areas of the LDM where the RCAF could consider further contextualization to facilitate its intersection of talent management and professional airpower mastery aspirations.

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<sup>6</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Meeting Record and Decision Sheet - Armed Forces Council #141202 - 2 December 2014* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: file 1150-19 (D NDHQ Sec), n.d.).

<sup>7</sup>"Military Personnel Generation (MILPERSGEN)," last modified 2016-02-25, <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/training-prof-dev/military-personnel-generation.page>. Established in June 2015 as a formation within Military Personnel Command, MILPERSGEN has the strategic aim to oversee pan-CAF tools, systems and programs to deliver, within the required time, the right number of professionally trained and educated military personnel to succeed in the evolving contemporary operating environment.

<sup>8</sup>Éric Tremblay and Bill Bentley, "Institutional Excellence: An Initial Roadmap," *Canadian Military Journal* 16, no. 1 (Winter 2015, 2015), 22.

<sup>9</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Concept Design for New Personnel Appraisal System* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: file 3350-1 (DGMP), 16 April 2015).

## **Research Methodology, Limitations, and Practical Applications**

This research project utilized literature review of, and consultations with, a broad range of sources. It considered academic journals, published research on personnel management in military and private sectors, research papers produced by CAF and allied militaries, CAF doctrinal publications, CAF strategic guidance and policy documents, deliberations from relevant working groups and committees within the CAF, and discussions with relevant stakeholders.

This study does not seek to evaluate the effectiveness of HRM functions implicated in talent management, in part due to the insufficient availability of performance measures and data. Furthermore, it does not delve deeply into the practitioner literature on talent management, as much of it is specific to the private sector organizations and their strategic context. Accordingly, it presumes to take a broader conceptual approach, by leveraging emerging theoretical themes, to better abstract principles and ‘filter out some of the noise’ amidst the hype of talent management.

The practical aim of this examination is to offer a basis from which a military organization can make sense of where these theoretical themes overlap with the underpinning concepts of their own HRM system. Thus, many of the key points in this paper have been crafted to provide starting points for more discussions, as talent management as a concept is not an end in itself. Extending an understanding of contemporary talent management themes may stimulate further study and research efforts, or help inform a basis of requirements in strategy formulation or policy development, to thereby sharpen the ways and means required to optimally harness human/intellectual capital in today’s labour environment.

## **Report Outline**

Chapter 2 presents key concepts relevant to extending an understanding of contemporary talent management and its component practices, as well as to situate the RCAF amongst the

various approaches to talent management. Chapter 3 undertakes an exercise to conceptualize and articulate in more detail how talent management issues intersect with the RCAF's aspirational goal of professional airpower mastery. Chapter 4 provide some examples of practices and developments within the CAF that can integrate some of the ways and means implicated in talent management. Chapter 5 provides a conclusion to this study.

## **CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTS AND CONTEMPORARY THEMES IN TALENT MANAGEMENT**

*Everyone in a complex system has a slightly different interpretation. The more interpretations we gather, the easier it becomes to gain a sense of the whole.*

– Margaret J. Wheatley, *It's An Interconnected World*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this chapter is to present some concepts relevant to extending an understanding of contemporary talent management and its component practices, as well as to situate the RCAF amongst the various approaches to talent management. The intent is that the themes uncovered will provide a foundation for subsequent chapters to explore potential implications of contemporary themes in talent management on professional airpower mastery, how other military organizations contextualize the concept of talent, and the application of ways and means such as the component functions of the CAF LDM.

### **The Study of Human Resource Management (HRM)**

The term HRM is fraught with complex debate articulated through scholarship and published practices, and talent management is nested within this discourse. John Bratton, an academic in the sociology of work, and Jeff Gold, an academic in leadership and talent development, surveyed extensive literature and offer a contemporary definition of HRM:

Human resource management (HRM) is a strategic approach to managing employment relations which emphasizes that leveraging people's capabilities and commitment is critical to achieving sustainable competitive advantage or superior public services. This is accomplished through a distinctive set of integrated employment policies, programmes and practices, embedded in an organizational and societal context.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>John Bratton and Jeff Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 5th edition ed. (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 7.

Alan Okros, a distinguished academic in military leadership and industrial psychology, identifies five core functions required to achieve the primary purpose of a HR system to “put the right person in the right job at the right time” within the context of the public sector and CAF:

(a) Jobs: defining and structuring work requirements; (b) People: selecting and preparing individuals to do the work; (c) Careers: managing changes in work requirements and/or personnel; (d) Sustainment: supporting work motivation and career retention; and (e) Conduct: enabling appropriate standards of conduct in the workplace.<sup>11</sup>

While this study found a vast majority of HRM literature was focused on private sector applications, there were many debated themes and concepts within the complex facets of HRM that evidently translate into the military domain such as talent management, succession planning, career management, retention, and the role of mentorship. As a generalized starting point, this paper leverages a simplified view that HRM essentially describes the approach to *managing employment relations*. In the CAF context and broad terms, HRM in theory is a critical capability or enabler to the CAF’s operational and institutional effectiveness, and its practical implementation is the all-encompassing CAF Personnel System.

At a general and macro-analytical level, changes to society in terms of the economy and social movements gave rise to differing ideologies and ostensibly different paradigms through which issues with employment relations were viewed. Different concepts and theories from sociology, psychology, or other core social science disciplines applied through societal, organizational, or individual views contribute to extensive discourse, which in turn drive evolutions to HRM theory and practices. Bratton and Gold examined the discourse around the nature and significance of contemporary HRM. They did so through a historical lens of how the employment relations and HRM functions have evolved, through theoretical perspectives and

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<sup>11</sup>Alan Okros, "Becoming an Employer of Choice: Human Resource Challenges within DND and the CF," in *The Public Management of Defence in Canada*, ed. Craig Stone (Toronto: Breakout Education Network, 2009), 141-193.

models of HRM, through the impact of the various paradigms through which social science scholars have studied HRM, and through some notable criticisms and paradoxes in HRM. They highlight and offer the following guidance in the study of contemporary HRM issues:

HRM is not a discipline in its own right, but a field of study drawing upon concepts and theories from core social science disciplines including anthropology, psychology, sociology, law and political science. This provides relatively elastic boundaries within which to analyse how the employment relationship is structured and managed. In addition, these elastic boundaries generate multiple ways of making sense of the same organizational phenomenon or the differing standpoints found in the HRM canon. How we understand work and HRM is very much influenced by key social discourses . . . that together form a powerful body of thought that influences how people think and act.<sup>12</sup>

This lends some context for a general implication that those within the CAF responsible for the application and/or stewardship of requisite HRM capability and strategy formulation require will inputs from multiple disciplines and perspectives in order to take a critical and multi-causal approach to inherently complex issues with individual, institutional, and societal implications. Providing context to the CAF / DND's strategic management and public policy administration environment, the DND's *Report on Plans and Priorities* issued in 2016 emphasizes the requirement for *evidence-based approaches* in multiple areas of strategic management.<sup>13</sup> Thus, beyond financial and materiel requirements, the development of requisite HRM capabilities in the CAF will likely involve significant military personnel research efforts (and potentially legal research and advice), in order to holistically inform personnel policy analysis, development, decisions, and implementation. In the practical formulation of talent management strategy and development of the requisite means (e.g. HR policies, information systems, procedures, training), this paper suggests that CAF and RCAF will have to consider how to harness academia, defence research organizations, and industry expertise to close gaps in the basis of evidence that

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<sup>12</sup>Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 27.

<sup>13</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces 2016-17 Report on Plans and Priorities* (Ottawa: Minister of National Defence, 2016), 130.

decision-makers will inevitably expect. Mindful of the limited amount of empirical evidence on talent management programmes, this study begins with presenting some literature review and themes within talent management with the intent that it can help stimulate further research and provide implementers with a more nuanced understanding of the elastic conceptual boundaries and the types of practical dilemmas that exist therein.

## CONTEMPORARY THEMES IN TALENT MANAGEMENT

As introduced earlier, talent management is situated within the broader HRM scope of practices that enable getting the right person in the right job at the right time, which implicates it in discourse driven by social, political, economic, and cultural factors. This study found that a significant portion of academic and practitioner literature on talent management attribute the origins of the discourse on ‘the war for talent’ to a report produced by a group of consultants at McKinsey<sup>14</sup> around 1998. The McKinsey report showed an apparent shortfall in supply of executive talent based on a survey of a variety of industries, forewarned that organizations would engage in a “war for senior executive talent that will remain a defining characteristic of their competitive landscape for decades to come”, and argued that improvements to certain HRM practices would enable an organization to “win the war for talent”.<sup>15</sup> The concern that job vacancies or variations in executive employee performance can correlate with variations in organizational performance is but one overarching theme in talent management literature that also applies to public sector and military organizations. However, there are several other conceptual themes within the growing body of literature that can inform how organizations may make sense of the conceptual boundaries and variables within this ‘hot topic’ of debate and hype. The aim of this section is to provide a cursory survey of select literature pertaining to the study

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<sup>14</sup>Elizabeth G. Chambers et al., "The War for Talent," *The McKinsey Quarterly*, 1998, Issue 3.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

of talent management, in order to some provide an appreciation of the state of the art and discourse within the broader academic and practitioner domains external to the military.

Peter Cappelli, a distinguished professor in human resources, and JR Keller, an academic in human capital issues, produced a review journal article in 2014 that involved over 500 pieces of literature across the fields of management, human resources, industrial and organizational psychology, sociology, and economics to address subtopics within talent management.<sup>16</sup> Their literature review discerned several contemporary talent management themes that include: challenges in defining talent management and its conceptual boundaries, the impact of uncertainty to anticipating talent needs and accessing talent pools, inclusive versus exclusive approaches to talent management, individual- versus job- based approaches to workforce differentiation, and issues with ways and means of managing internal talent and accessing external talent. These themes have varying degrees of significance to military organizations and are presented in the following sub-sections.

### **Challenges in Defining Talent Management**

One of the most apparent issues within the discourse on talent management is the amount of variation in the definition of talent management and its scope and goals. While it is not within the scope of this paper to detail the different academic and practitioner paradigms on this issue, Cappelli and Keller's review cites several examples to demonstrate this, as well as the tension in developing academic theories and empirical evidence to better define the concept.<sup>17</sup> Amidst this discourse, Cappelli and Keller offer a definition of talent management that they consider consistent with traditional HRM approaches and accounts for the efforts of talent management

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<sup>16</sup>Peter Cappelli and JR Keller, "Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges," *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior* 1 (January 2, 2014, 2014), 305-331.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

scholars: “the process through which organizations *anticipate* and *meet* their *needs for talent in strategic jobs* [emphasis added].”<sup>18</sup> Issues challenging an organization’s ability to *anticipate and meet needs for talent* and the concept of *strategic jobs* will be discussed in later sections.

Cappelli and Keller define talent as “those individuals who currently or have the potential to differentially contribute to firm performance by occupying strategic jobs” and a talent pool as “the high-performing incumbents in strategic jobs and those individuals identified as having the potential to occupy strategic jobs in the future.”<sup>19</sup>

One of the more pervasive criticisms in the literature is that talent management is merely a rebranding or repackaging of a range of HRM activities that organizations already conduct. Robert E. Lewis and Robert J. Heckman, both academics in industrial / organizational psychology and practitioners in human resource consulting, assessed that popular books written by practitioners propose broad concepts for managing talent, but the extent to which academic or research literature is cited in these books indicate that their “prescriptions tend to simply repeat or repackage HR practices rooted solidly in academic literature.”<sup>20</sup> However, research has ensued to distinguish talent management from the study of specific HRM practices and fields like *strategic human resource management*, which Cappelli and Keller suggest can include theoretical perspectives on what constitutes talent.<sup>21</sup> Nicky Dries, a prominent academic within the growing group of talent management scholars, argues that theoretical perspectives on talent within the field of psychology can serve as a basis for advancing empirical research<sup>22</sup> – which one could argue contributes to the legitimacy of the field of talent management.

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Robert E. Lewis and Robert J. Heckman, "Talent Management: A Critical Review," *Human Resource Management Review* 16, no. 2 (6, 2006), 142.

<sup>21</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 306.

<sup>22</sup>Nicky Dries, "The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda," *Human Resource Management Review* 23, no. 4 (12, 2013), 272-285.

Associated with the above criticism, a variety of theoretical frameworks established in other HRM-related disciplines have been applied to explain the talent management phenomenon. Eva Gallardo-Gallardo, another established talent management scholar, led a team that conducted a “bibliometric and content analysis” of all peer-reviewed articles on talent management through to 2014.<sup>23</sup> Based on whether the framework was used as a primary or secondary means of analysis in each article, they identified the four dominant (i.e. most used) and four alternate (i.e. less used) theoretical frameworks. Dominant theoretical frameworks included: Resource-based view (RBV) (30.2% of the articles), International Human Resource Management (18.7%), employee assessment (11.5%), and institutionalism (10.1%).<sup>24</sup> Alternate theoretical frameworks included: Knowledge management (7.2%), career management (5.8%), social exchange theory (5.6%), and strength-based approach (3.5%).<sup>25</sup> While it is not within the scope of this paper to present these frameworks in detail, they are listed to provide further context for the sense-making of where the emerging field of talent management conceptually and proportionally overlaps with other fields of study within HRM. Each theoretical framework offers fundamentally different assumptions about how the management of talent could be approached to address the interests of individuals, organizations, and in some cases the broader society. For example, RBV sees organizations adopting “the distinct vantage point of equating talent to ‘human capital’,”<sup>26</sup> differentiation of the human capital supply (e.g. high-potential versus low-potential), and differentiation of the jobs (e.g. positions of high strategic importance versus those less critical). Career management theory may inform assumptions about attitudes

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<sup>23</sup>Eva Gallardo-Gallardo et al., "Towards an Understanding of Talent Management as a Phenomenon-Driven Field using Bibliometric and Content Analysis," *Human Resource Management Review* 25, no. 3 (9, 2015), 264-279.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

towards careers and dynamics between employer and employee through perspectives such as organizational career management and career self-management.

### **Uncertainty: Anticipating Needs for Talent and Approaches to Accessing Talent**

Most of the literature surveyed in this study situates the case for talent management based on dramatic changes to an organization's strategic environment that in turn introduce uncertainty into an organization's supply and demand for human capital and talent. This sub-section presents the impact of this uncertainty on an organization's talent management model and potential mitigations in the literature.

#### A Historical Account of a Traditional Talent Management Model

Cappelli and Keller's review provide some historical context behind the rise of practices developed to support talent management within closed employment systems.<sup>27</sup> Interestingly, they assert that military personnel development and succession planning practices provided a basis that many companies used to develop their own talent development programs, which resulted in the emergence of a relatively common model of internal talent management: careful recruitment; substantial investments in identifying individuals with potential to become executives; and career planning with internal advancement supported by early investments in training and regular position changes within the firm to provide experiential development.<sup>28</sup> It is also significant to highlight some of the general attitudes of employees towards careers and that retention of talent was not a significant concern during that period of relative certainty:

Expectations of lifetime employment and steady advancement opportunities provided a sense of stability to workers, who granted firms substantial control

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<sup>27</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 311. For elaboration on the term closed employment systems, they provide the following reference: Althausen RP, Kalleberg AL. 1981. Firms, occupations and the structure of labor markets: a conceptual analysis. In *Sociological Perspectives on Labor Markets*, ed. I Berg, pp. 119–49. New York: Academic

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

over their careers within the organization. Because jobs above entry level were not freely available to outsiders, there were limited opportunities for external advancement, and retention was rarely a concern. Decisions related to investments in employee development and advancement were largely handled by centralized personnel offices. Advancement occurred along narrowly defined jobs located along clearly defined job ladders . . .<sup>29</sup>

By the 1950s, the tools and practices commonly associated with internal talent management were in place, and external hiring at the executive level was virtually non-existent.<sup>30</sup> However, Cappelli noted that this model was “predicated on the stability necessary to generate long-term forecasts of human capital demand through workforce planning.”<sup>31</sup>

Eventually the competitive environment and labour market changed, and economic, social, and political forces introduced greater uncertainty. Uncertainty in consumer demand made it difficult for organizations to forecast their human capital demand, and the practice of workforce planning declined significantly. Accordingly, the aforementioned model of internal talent management was no longer practical for most firms. Well-defined career paths disappeared as organizations were forced to restructure to maintain competitive advantage, workers were encouraged to take control of their careers as employers were no longer willing or able to provide any assurance of continued employment, and companies significantly expanded their use of external hiring.<sup>32</sup> This in turn introduces difficulty in forecasting employee turnover, as employees face more opportunities to voluntarily leave for increasingly accessible external jobs, which contributes to uncertainty in talent supply. Another aspect of uncertainty in talent

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid. According to Cappelli and Keller, virtually every contemporary practice in talent management was developed and in place during this period: workforce plans to set direction; sophisticated recruitment and selection techniques for hiring entry-level candidates; assessments of potential (including assessment centers, ability and personality tests, etc.); developmental assignments like job rotations, shadowing, and action learning with coaches; assessments of performance such as 360 feedback and forced rankings; career ladders; and succession planning to fill the important jobs.

<sup>31</sup>Peter Cappelli, "Succession Planning," in *APA Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Vol 3: Maintaining, Expanding, and Contracting the Organization* (Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association, 2011), 676.

<sup>32</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 305-331 .

supply relates to whether an organization's current talent pool, perhaps currently consisting of the right knowledge, skills, and attributes, *will continue to be right* for an uncertain future that potentially demands a different set.

#### Internal and External Approaches to Talent Access

Within this theme of uncertainty, the conceptual approaches to talent management for most organizations lie along a spectrum of options from traditional internal talent pool generation to hiring external talent in a just-in-time manner. At either end of this spectrum, organizations may end up investing significant resources to respectively develop internal talent or attract and enrol external talent. However, their return on investment remains uncertain and it can be difficult to recuperate costs, as practitioner literature on talent management can illustrate.

Harvard Business Review contributors Jean Martin, a key leader in talent management business solutions development, and Conrad Schmidt, a key leader in research on talent management business practices, illustrated through their study around 2009 that “nearly 40% of internal job moves made by people identified by their companies as ‘high potentials’ end in failure.”<sup>33</sup> The scope of their examinations included over 20,000 designated high potential (HiPo) employees in more than 100 organizations worldwide over a six-year period, with research questions entailing “how they viewed their employers, how they were managed, and how they reacted to changes in the economy.”<sup>34</sup> Their study suggests that understanding the state and dynamics of employee engagement is a key dimension in understanding how to make talent management effective for an organization. Correlates of sub-optimal engagement may include intent to voluntarily leave the organization, employees not fully applying their abilities or

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<sup>33</sup>Jean Martin and Conrad Schmidt, "How to Keep Your Top Talent," *Harvard Business Review*, May 2010, 54-61.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*

efforts into the strategic job for which they are required, or misalignment of personal aspirations with the plans of the organization. Informed by research on this theme of engagement, Martin and Schmidt go on to propose a series of best practices and key components to a talent development program, which this study will bring forward to illustrate subsequent analysis.

Cappelli and Keller highlight that organizations solely reliant on just-in-time hiring as their talent management strategy – thereby substituting for workforce and succession planning, internal development, and assessment of talent – still remain subject to uncertainty in labour market supply.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, their research identified “informational, social, and sociocognitive impediments limiting firms’ ability to recoup the costs associated with identifying, attracting, selecting, compensating, and onboarding external candidates.”<sup>36</sup> This essentially highlights the risk that external hires may not end up applying their ability, or organizations may not have adequately set conditions for them, to adapt to the strategic job and perform to their perceived potential.

With respect to strategic nature of jobs within the organization, the literature emphasizes that organizations can use both internal and external approaches. Cappelli suggests that organizations could employ a mix of internal and external approaches, based on supply chain management approaches that were intended to address uncertainty in supply as a key concept.<sup>37</sup> For example, organizations could use internal talent development approaches to address the more predictable aspects of demand and external hiring to meet those that are less predictable – in other words, *make* and *buy* talent depending on the predictability of an organization’s needs.<sup>38</sup> These scholars also suggest that sole reliance on internal development would be counter-intuitive

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<sup>35</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 313.

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup>Peter Cappelli, *Talent on Demand: Managing Talent in an Age of Uncertainty* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2008), 304.

<sup>38</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 314.

to recent studies in career theory showing increasing tendencies towards inter-organizational mobility.<sup>39</sup>

### **Approaches to Talent Management: Exclusive/Inclusive, and People/Positions**

Within the discourse on defining talent management and its scope, a couple of other dominant themes and contemporary debates center on the “distinction between inclusive and exclusive approaches to talent management,”<sup>40</sup> and whether organizations should differentiate their workforce on the basis of people or positions.<sup>41</sup> At their extremes, inclusive approaches fundamentally view talent management applying to all people/positions, while exclusive approaches see it applying to a significantly smaller subset.<sup>42</sup> The cost implications of either approach drive practical considerations for organizations in terms of whether it invests its limited resources into developing all people, or differentially invest in certain people/positions.<sup>43</sup> With respect to the theme of workforce differentiation, the debate surrounds whether organizations should focus their efforts on identifying people who could be employed in a range of roles, or on identifying jobs of strategic value that organizations then need to fill with talent.<sup>44</sup>

In line with the aforementioned deduction that talent management needs to be contextualized for each organization, Bratton and Gold suggest that talent management can manifest in a variety of approaches over the two dimensions of exclusive/inclusive and people/positions, which they depict in a graphic (shown at Figure 2.1) with a generalized fundamental assumption at each quadrant.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

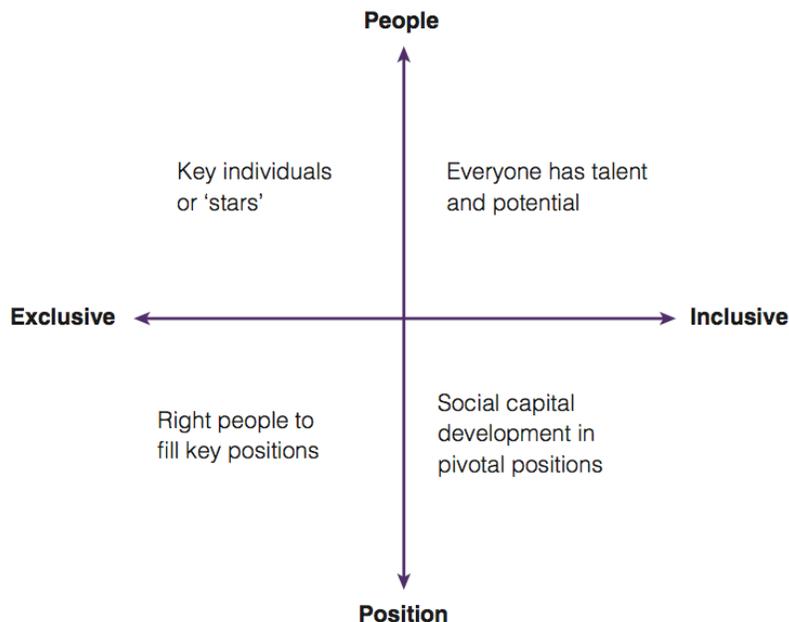
<sup>41</sup>Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 195.

<sup>42</sup>Eva Gallardo-Gallardo, Nicky Dries and Tomás F. González-Cruz, "What is the Meaning of 'talent' in the World of Work?" *Human Resource Management Review* 23, no. 4 (12, 2013), 295.

<sup>43</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 307.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

<sup>45</sup>Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 195.



**Figure 2.1 – A perspective on conceptual approaches to talent management**  
 Source: Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management – Theory and Practice*, 195.

#### Inclusive Approaches – Conceptual Foundations, Merits, and Drawbacks

As depicted, an inclusive people approach generally presumes that “everyone has talent and potential” which aligns with the aforementioned Cappelli and Keller definition of talent including *those individuals who currently or have the potential to differentially contribute to firm performance*. Cappelli and Keller suggest that such approaches draw roots from egalitarian concepts and the rise in tendencies to establish regulations for more equal treatment of employees over the course of recent history.<sup>46</sup> This conceptually aligns with literature on strength-based theories and approaches that focus towards “fulfillment of the natural potential of all employees, and advocates that everyone is entitled to the organizational opportunities,

<sup>46</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 307.

resources, and encouragement required to apply the maximum of their capacities.”<sup>47</sup> The inclusive position approach generally presumes an extant imperative to develop social capital across a range of positions by establishing relationships based on cooperation, trust and goodwill, and accessing networks.<sup>48</sup> It is interesting to note that Bratton and Gold make a distinction within inclusive approaches, given that ‘inclusive’ could implicate all people and all positions (thereby removing the need in inclusive approaches to differentiate a workforce by people or positions). While Bratton and Gold’s explanation of the distinction between this approach and inclusive people is vague, they point to conceptual overlaps with social capital development theory and literature that emphasizes the importance of relational capacities in the contemporary complex environment, as well as the potential benefits such as improving organizational performance and reducing personnel turnover.<sup>49</sup>

Gallardo-Gallardo et al. highlight that inclusive approaches are typically justified within the literature based on arguments such as: it is mostly people (i.e. not technology, not capital) that create value and have become the main determinant of organizational performance in today’s complex environment; organizational success stems from harnessing the value of the entire workforce vice just a few ‘superstars’ (i.e. helping all employees realize their full potential); investing scarce resources in only a few people, within a limited set of roles, is a risky strategy in view of the uncertainty in labour markets; or that a more egalitarian approach to allocating developmental resources and opportunities creates a more pleasant, collegial, and

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<sup>47</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo et al., *Towards an Understanding of Talent Management as a Phenomenon-Driven Field using Bibliometric and Content Analysis*, 274.; Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 272-285 .

<sup>48</sup>Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 196.

<sup>49</sup>Shelly McCallum and David O’Connell, "Social Capital and Leadership Development: Building Stronger Leadership through Enhanced Relational Skills," *Leadership & Org Development Journal* 30, no. 2 (03/06; 2016/04, 2009), 152-166.

motivating work climate.<sup>50</sup> Bratton and Gold suggest that organizations may adopt this approach to focus more attention on developing the team rather than giving attention just to a select few high performers or HiPos, as they point to research illustrating that giving attention to ‘stars’ could actually reduce performance overall.<sup>51</sup> Criticisms of inclusive approaches are typically found in RBV literature, which predominantly highlights the issue of cost. Namely that inclusive approaches may create unnecessarily high costs in terms of HR investments (i.e. in terms of the actual development opportunities, and/or the capabilities to broadly administer talent management), and that exclusive approaches may be more cost-effective and efficient solutions.<sup>52</sup>

#### Exclusive Approaches – Conceptual Foundations, Merits, and Drawbacks

The exclusive people approach typically presumes that a subset of the organization consisting of key individuals or ‘stars’ generate disproportionate value for the organization.<sup>53</sup> Gallardo-Gallardo et al. highlight a range of literature that views talent exclusively as high performers and/or high potentials.<sup>54</sup> Cappelli and Keller highlight that exclusive approaches conceptually overlap with resource optimization theories in strategy literature and the Matthew effect in sociology literature whereby unequal investments end up generating greater aggregate returns.<sup>55</sup> The exclusive position approach is based on the notion that organizations start by identifying the key positions required to meet their strategic imperatives, and then proceed to find people with the ‘right’ skills and attributes (i.e. the talent) to fill the positions. Exclusive

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<sup>50</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 295.

<sup>51</sup>Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 196.

<sup>52</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 295.

<sup>53</sup>Bratton and Gold, *Human Resource Management - Theory and Practice*, 195; Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 305-331; Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 290-300 .

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

<sup>55</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 307.

approaches conceptually align with literature on RBV or portfolio approaches to workforce management that advocate for an ‘ABC’ notion of talent management, whereby there exists some exceptionally high performers (the A players), average performers (the B players), and significantly low performers (the C players) that the organization implicitly treats differently. Gallardo-Gallardo et al. highlight some literature advocating the allocation of the most talented employees to the positions of highest strategic value in the organization (i.e. A positions) whilst placing good performers in support positions (i.e. B positions) and eliminating bad performers.<sup>56</sup> From these rationales for differentiating a workforce either by strategic and non-strategic jobs, the literature highlights that scholars and practitioners face questions like: How does and should an organization identify strategic jobs? What are the implications, of increasing or decreasing the degree of workforce differentiation, on HRM system components such as recruiting, enrolment, career management, personnel appraisal, remuneration, retention, etc.? How can we practically measure return on investment (e.g. improvements to organizational performance or capacity)?

Exclusive approaches draw a number of critiques within the literature, which also highlights some additional tensions and themes within talent management. The first relates to the evaluation of performance and potential. Some literature suggests that, as long as performance can be accurately evaluated, having better workers get better assignments and more privileges may in fact encourage low performers to quit or do better, and thereby lead to a higher-performing workforce overall.<sup>57</sup> A tension arises with the extent to which evaluations of performance and potential can be based on objective indicators, rather than subjective judgments

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<sup>56</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 294.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

by management, which become susceptible to bias.<sup>58</sup> Second, Dries describes another tension that arises between transferable and context-dependent views on talent, where the former assumes talented people will demonstrate their talent regardless of the working environment they are while the latter assumes that it is not always transferable and focuses on the importance of the interactions between talented people and their contexts.<sup>59</sup> This intersects with the notion of talent needing to be ‘a right fit’ for the organization or context. This may manifest as situations where an ‘A player’ might look like a ‘B player’ under certain conditions and vice versa.<sup>60</sup> Third, there are criticisms related to the identification and labelling of talent leading to self-fulfilling prophecies either: through the positive affirmation that can increase self-confidence and commitment to improve performance (i.e. *Pygmalion* effects); or by virtue of the additional developmental support that the organization differentially provides to talent, which in turn makes it difficult to separate whether success is attributable to the individual’s talent or the additional organization support.<sup>61</sup> This raises questions of the validity of adopting an exclusive approach when *Pygmalion* effects could have potential to benefit a broader range of employees.<sup>62</sup> Fourth, there are also criticisms that labelling someone as talented leads to them presuming that they are assured a promotion and key position, and they in turn lose motivation to work for it – sometimes referred to as ‘crown prince’ syndrome’.<sup>63</sup> Fifth, another criticism relates to the aforementioned effect where allocating a significant proportion of resources to a small number of ‘stars’ could reduce overall organizational performance through potential effects like damage to morale, disenfranchising loyal employees, and unhealthy internal competition.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 280.

<sup>60</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 296.

<sup>61</sup>Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 281.

<sup>62</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 296.

<sup>63</sup>Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 281.

<sup>64</sup>Gallardo-Gallardo, Dries and González-Cruz, *What is the Meaning of ‘talent’ in the World of Work?*, 296.

The merits and drawbacks presented in this sub-section provide but a sampling of the literature of the potential dilemmas that organizations may face in making sense of how talent management could be operationalized to enable their desired end-states. For practitioners that need to implement the means to achieve those ends, the elastic conceptual boundaries and numerous research agendas highlight the complexity of the and wickedness in the problem of discerning what talent management approaches and practices would be the best fit for the organization. There are a multitude of other issues related to the psychological effects of talent management on individuals, which are beyond the scope of this paper to cover. Many of these issues intersect with concepts of leadership and the well-being of individuals, which can inform ways and means required to mitigate the potential drawbacks of the various approaches to talent management.

### **Summary and Implications**

Amidst the criticism and discourse, there are several implications and considerations that this paper offers. First, the vast numbers of overlapping HRM theories and practices highlight a need to recognize amidst the hype that *talent management* remains a loaded term with elastic conceptual boundaries, and that a critical view is required – much like other literature in the domains of management. While there may be lots of literature that can explain the importance of talent management within the context of ‘the war for talent’, CAF organizations responsible for exploring talent management as a way to address strategic HRM issues will likely face challenges in finding evidence-based theories to inform the scope of talent management.

Second, a critical and balanced view of the literature is encouraged as some of it can come across as rather cold, such as those investigating the economic rationality of human resources (i.e. the more ‘hard’ approaches to HRM), while others may evoke a warmer embrace

of the value and inherent potential of the human (i.e. the more ‘soft’ approaches to HRM). It is simple to state that an effective form of talent management for the CAF incorporates principles and practices from both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ camps, but it is a considerably more difficult challenge to discern a balanced approach amongst competing organizational values to make a clear statement of requirements for a talent management system that enables excellence in both operations and institutional stewardship.

Third, Cappelli and Keller’s definitions of talent management, talent, and talent pools apply within the context of the CAF, as it conceptually overlaps with existing CAF Personnel System activities such as workforce planning, recruiting (or attraction and enrolling), career management, succession management, succession planning, professional development, personnel appraisal, and selection. Accordingly, one can recognize that there is some degree of talent management as a phenomenon happening within the CAF and its various sub-populations. Others could argue that a more defined approach to talent management is warranted to enable strategic objectives or achieve more synchronized effects within the domain of military personnel management.

Fourth, regardless of how mature the concepts of talent management becomes in terms of definitions and evidence-based theories, the CAF would almost certainly still need to contextualize them to suit its needs. Dries suggests that talent management practices should “be designed to align with organizational characteristics such as strategic aims, organizational culture, HR practices, and organizational capacity, as well as cultural characteristics.”<sup>65</sup> The theoretical frameworks that conceptually overlap talent management inform factors or dynamics that organizations might wish to consider when developing a talent management framework, as

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<sup>65</sup>Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 276.

well as potentially what empirical evidence should be gathered to inform a basis of requirements for policy and capability development.

Fifth, the themes of uncertainty, and societal and economic transitions should also resonate with the CAF as it grapples with the extent to which its current pool of personnel with knowledge, skills, and attributes will continue to be right for an uncertain future that potentially demands a different or broader set of competencies. The open labour markets and evolving expectations of the workplace continually challenge the CAF in terms of how it attracts, develops, sustains, and retains personnel within a relatively closed labour market. Cappelli and Keller's concept of *making* and *buying* talent depending on predictability of organizational needs, has some relevance to the CAF/DND in that it clearly has comprehensive ways and means of growing its own personnel (e.g. regular force, reserve force, public service to some extent), but limited means for buying talent (e.g. contracting) with even more limitation on what authorities they can exercise given the unique requirements of the profession. A general implication for the CAF is that it will continue to require a significant degree of *intra-*organizational mobility as part of *making* its own talent, but it will most likely have to sell its members (particularly those who seek more *inter-*organizational mobility) on the notion that military careers, postings, and PD opportunities provide a commensurate value proposition.

Sixth, the discourse over exclusive and inclusive approaches to talent management is one of the more salient issues for the CAF to grapple. Their respective merits and drawbacks reflect several tensions, which could be viewed as an overarching consideration of how to practically reconcile competing values of economic rationality and human relations.

Whether the CAF or RCAF agrees if talent management is important within their context is likely a simple question. The more difficult questions surround how to contextualize talent

management amidst the discourse on what the scope entails, and the following themes in talent management literature will help inform issues that merit consideration. The study of these conceptual themes can help CAF organizations situate its understanding and practice of talent management amidst the conceptual space (i.e. how it defines talent, how inclusive/exclusive it is, how to identify talent, or how to measure the effectiveness of the activities and processes used to manage it, etc.), and more importantly consider if there is more to talent management than its extant HRM management practices. This can then drive further consideration of the extent to which the CAF's human capital model, and the ways and means within the CAF Personnel System, could be sharpened to better respond to a CAF organization's strategic climate (characterized by uncertainty) and deliver requisite performance or expanded capacity.

### **SITUATING THE CAF AND RCAF**

In situating the CAF within the theme of challenges in defining talent management, this paper brings forward an academic definition offered earlier as *process through which organizations anticipate and meet their needs for talent in strategic jobs*. This study assesses that talent management implicitly occurs through various CAF and RCAF policies and practices, rather than through an inclusively defined and scoped talent management approach (i.e. a high-level strategy or policy) that seems to be *en vogue* with an increasing number of organizations. Within the theme of approaches, the documented talent management approaches are exclusive in nature and geared towards the development of senior appointments.

### **CAF Military Personnel Management Doctrine**

Notionally a capstone document, the CAF Joint Doctrine publication on Military Personnel Management Doctrine is relatively silent on the concept of talent, however it emphasizes the importance of people in that "a key distinguishing element of military personnel

management is the view that people are a vital capability, generated to achieve the desired effects in operations.”<sup>66</sup> The doctrine establishes the conceptual links of the overall CAF Personnel System to the wider CAF force development, force generation, force employment, and force management functions. A depiction of the conceptual model for the CAF Personnel System – its base, strategic pillars (i.e. recruit, train & educate, prepare, support, honour & recognize), overarching functions (i.e. planning/coordination/integration/research, and career management), to produce the strategic outcome of right person, right place, right time – is provided at Figure 2.2. Although career management is mentioned throughout the document, it is treated as a “filter”<sup>67</sup> or ‘black box’ to achieve a stated intent (i.e. achieving the effect of right person, right place, right time) without being prescriptive as to how to do it. Despite being relatively silent on the concept of talent, it still has bearing on formulating a talent management strategy and developing its associated capabilities in the CAF in that it provides: foundational “guidance from the strategic and functional authority perspective . . . from which more specific aspects of military personnel management and personnel generation flow”<sup>68</sup>; and the strategic-level governance processes by which the CAF develops military personnel capabilities (defined as “any policy or initiative that addresses an existing deficiency or future requirement”<sup>69</sup>).

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<sup>66</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-005-100/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 1.0 Military Personnel Management Doctrine*, 1-3.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 4-1.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., vii.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 6-1.



**Figure 2.2 – Conceptual Model of the CAF Personnel System**

Source: Canada. National Defence, *About Chief of Military Personnel* (website), <http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/about-org-structure/chief-military-personnel.page> (updated 11 February 2016)

### **Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAOD)**

The 5000 series of the DAODs provide some of the high-order policy for key CAF Personnel System activities and anticipated results generically implicate the concept of *anticipating and meeting needs for jobs*, but are relatively silent on the concept of differentiating

*strategic jobs* from others.<sup>70</sup> DAOD 5002-0 *Military Personnel Requirements and Production* details the process of *personnel generation*, which serves to provide “individually qualified CF members to meet CF employment requirements. It includes strategic planning, attraction, recruiting, selection, retention, professional development and career management.”<sup>71</sup> DAOD 5070-0 *Military Employment Structure* and DAOD 5070-1 *Military Employment Structure Framework* provides the “elements that define, structure and classify CAF work requirements to meet current and evolving strategic capability requirements.”<sup>72</sup> These DAOD policies are also relatively silent on the concept of talent, but they are highlighted as they provide an all-encompassing foundation for the CAF approaches to defining the workforce structure and position requirements (which informs *talent needs*) and some of the ways in which the positions can be filled to meet the talent need. For example, subordinate policies and practices will define the preferred manning levels (PML) for the occupation/rank groups to inform other processes that generate personnel towards trained effective strength (TES), which in turn are cyclically reviewed through processes such as the Annual Military Occupation Review (AMOR). At the time of this study, the published DAOD collection did not include a DOAD on career

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<sup>70</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5002-0, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Military Personnel Requirements and Production* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.; Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5002-1, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Enrolment* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.; Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5002-5, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Canadian Forces Personnel Selection* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.; Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5031-0, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Learning and Professional Development* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.; Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5031-2, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Individual Training and Education Strategic Framework* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.; Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5070-0, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Military Employment Structure* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.; Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5070-1, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Military Employment Structure Framework* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services. These, amongst the 5000 series, were reviewed.

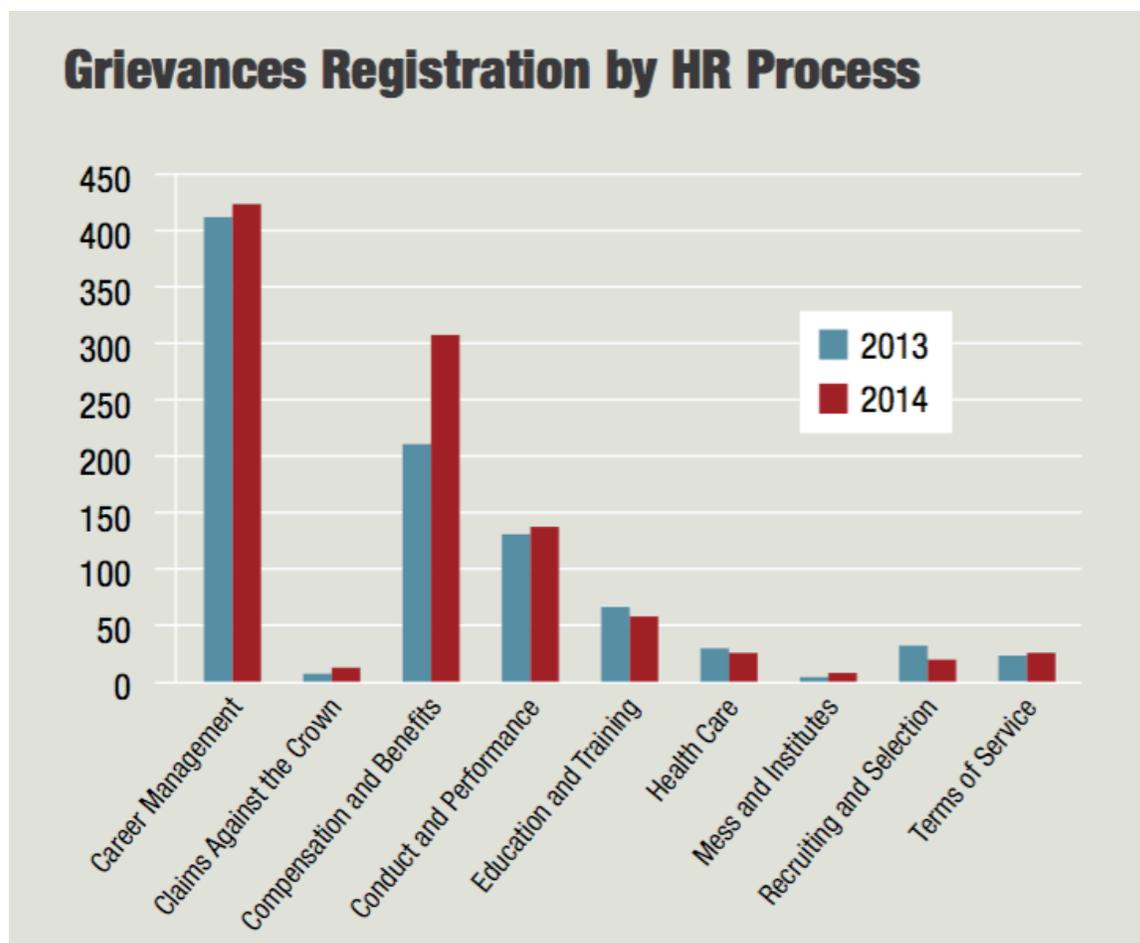
<sup>71</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5002-0, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Military Personnel Requirements and Production*

<sup>72</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. DAOD 5070-1, *Defence Administrative Orders and Directives: Military Employment Structure Framework*

management or related activities (e.g. promotion, postings and tour length). High-level policies related to military career management take form in dated Canadian Forces Administrative Orders (CFAO) and subsequent policy amendment vehicles (e.g. Canadian Forces General Messages (CANFORGEN)).

While it is not the purpose or within scope of this paper to delve into aspects of the health of the policy framework (such as the degree of policy coherence or fragmentation), it is a practical area for consideration as the policy instruments are integral to talent management capability and efforts to modernize or adapt them are complicated by numerous sources of institutional friction. Sources of institutional friction can include the need to involve multiple stakeholders, interests, degrees of power/influence, complex situational factors, organizational culture factors, complicated bureaucratic processes for developing policy, and staff capacity. Fragmentation of policy can hamper the effective delivery of career services (e.g. having to decipher multiple layers of DAOD, CFAO, and CANFORGEN messages to render decisions), or worse lead to inadvertently non-compliant decisions, which aggrieves members and potentially generate formal grievances that can add more workload to an already burdened system. The grievance system can provide a 'sense function' in terms of areas that implicate talent management. By way of example, the *2013-2014 Biennial Report on the State of the Canadian Armed Forces Grievance System* discusses general trends but provides a snapshot of the proportionality of HRM issues, depicted at Figure 2.3. Amongst the 865 and 1,021 new grievances registered respectively in 2013 and 2014, grievances filed under the career

management category ranked the highest, and matters therein related to performance appraisals (typically 250 related grievances per year), release, promotions, and postings.<sup>73</sup>



**Figure 2.3 – 2013-2014 Grievance Registration by HR Process**

Source: Canada. National Defence, *2013-2014 Biennial Report on the State of the Canadian Armed Forces Grievance System*, 3.

Returning to characterizing the talent management approach in the CAF, this paper assesses that the DAOD/CFAO level of policy provides the foundation for career management practices within the CAF. Additionally, it could be conceptualized as a point of departure from

<sup>73</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *2013-2014 Biennial Report on the State of the Canadian Armed Forces Grievance System* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Director General Canadian Forces Grievance Authority, 2015), 3.

which each environmental component establishes their succession management policies and practices, or in other words begins a differentiated approach that resembles talent management.

### **CAF Succession Management Concept Paper**

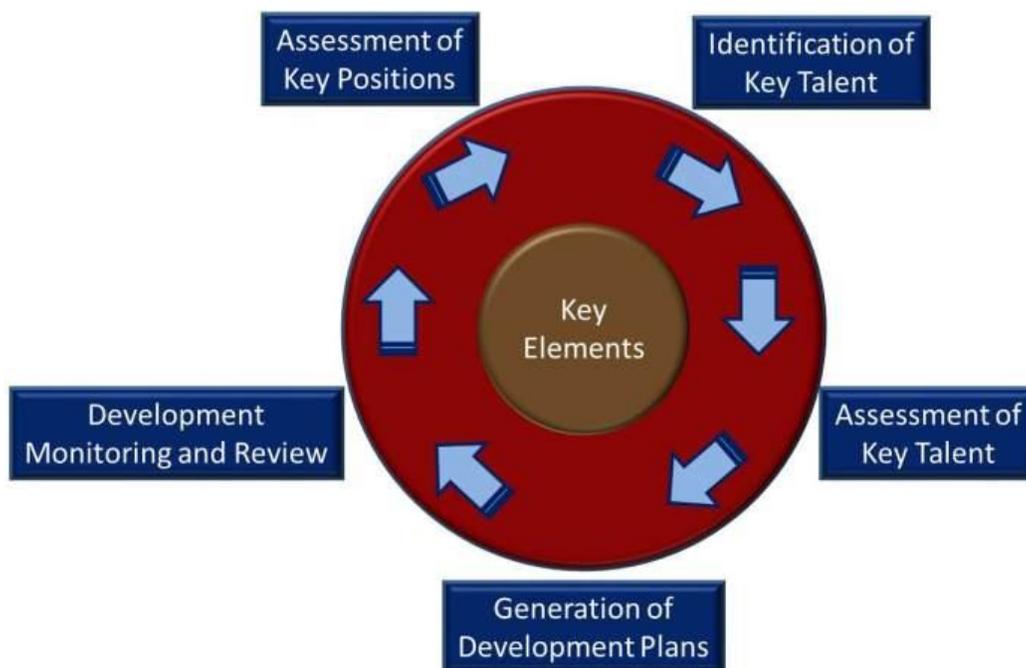
In 2013, the CAF produced a succession management concept paper in support of developing a military personnel capability to succession manage institutional leadership positions, which entailed the following fundamental objective:

Succession Management (SM) is an integrated and systematic process that allows for the identification of current and future leadership requirements for key positions, in order to develop and retain leadership continuity necessary to mission success. It is about developing pools of talent to fill key areas and positions that are critical to an organization's ongoing operations and long-term goals. Succession management helps high potential members acquire the competencies they need to compete for these positions when they become available.<sup>74</sup>

The SM concept paper provides a relatively clear indication of what talent means (high potential members, competency-based approach to defining talent and ostensibly measuring and identifying it), how exclusive or inclusive the approach to talent management is (exclusive/position approach, focused on leadership requirements for key positions), and a need to develop talent pools (to fill key areas and positions that are critical). Figure 2.4 depicts the SM concept paper proposed generalized framework with the key elements required in a SM process to achieve the above objective.

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<sup>74</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Succession Management: A Concept Paper* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Director Military Personnel Strategies and Coordination, Revised 12 June 2013), 1.



**Figure 2.4 – Key Elements in CAF Succession Management Concept**

Source: Canada. Department of National Defence, *Succession Management: A Concept Paper*, 9.

The paper also highlights the following limitation related to this paper’s finding on the lack of explicitly defined and scoped talent management approach:

Because the CAF currently does not have an integrated succession plan, each Environment (i.e., RCN, CA, RCAF) and a number of branches and occupations within have developed their own individual succession plans that are focussed on meeting the needs of their particular organization and not those of the CAF as a whole. That is, current succession planning is designed to meet the needs of a particular Environment, branch, or occupation first, while the overarching need for developing institutional leaders is a secondary consideration.<sup>75</sup>

The paper further assessed and provided recommendations related to improving defined criteria, transparency and fairness, and development of officers for employment as strategic leaders in employment areas of personnel, resource management, acquisition, policy and force development (i.e. beyond the domains of force employment and force generation).<sup>76</sup> With respect to transparency and fairness, the paper advocated for members to have the necessary

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 11.

information to make informed decisions on whether to be included in the succession planning process, as well as their input towards career matters and more flexibility.<sup>77</sup> This lends support to this paper's aforementioned notion of a talent management strategy setting conditions for strengthening employment relations and sustained engagement. This study found that the establishment of pan-CAF succession management policies has not significantly advanced since the SM concept paper, however some of the paper's findings and recommendations have been considered in complementary efforts like the operationalization of the LDM.<sup>78</sup> One general implication from this analysis is a question of whether the integration of SM concepts and the LDM, as a more integrated set of ways and means to enable a competency-based approach to identifying, developing, assessing, and deploying talent, could enable a more inclusive form of talent management in the CAF.

### **Air Force Personnel Doctrine**

Expanding upon CAF Military Personnel Management Doctrine and amplifying upon personnel aspects in CAF Aerospace Doctrine (i.e. the B-GA series of publications), the Air Force Personnel Doctrine publication serves "as an authoritative source with respect to how the Air Force develops, manages and supports personnel involved in the conduct and support of aerospace operations."<sup>79</sup> It provides guidance on various HRM functions such as workforce planning, recruiting, training, career management, the need for succession planning, principles towards supporting and retaining personnel. The net result is that it articulates some the

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 3-13.

<sup>78</sup>Based on author's professional experience with the LDM initiative and discussions with involved staff. The SM concept paper also implicates the development of the CAF Competency Dictionary, which is a central component to the LDM.

<sup>79</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GA-407-001/FP-001, *Air Force Personnel Doctrine* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2010), 80.

foundational concepts and principles that overlap with talent management, but with a particular focus on operations.

### **RCAF Appointment Process and Succession Planning Process**

The RCAF has developed some considerably comprehensive personnel management policies for its officers and non-commissioned members (both regular and reserve force) that lie within the conceptual boundaries of talent management. The policies acknowledge the role of career managers (who are accountable to MILPERSCOM, outside of RCAF lines) in monitoring and directing individual careers, but provide supplemental guidance with respect to RCAF “succession planning and selection for appointment to key positions.”<sup>80</sup> In consideration of the RCAF officer cadre, *Air Force Order (AFO) 1000-7 Air Force Personnel Management – Officers* states the following objective:

. . . to ensure that individuals with the capability to achieve senior appointments are identified, tracked and provided with developmental opportunities very early in their careers. This will ensure the selection and guidance of the most appropriate individuals towards senior command.<sup>81</sup>

*AFO 1000-7* defines two overarching processes to enable this objective within the scope of ranks up to and including that of Colonel: an *Appointment Process* to “meet the near-term requirement to assign individuals to key positions”; and a *Succession Planning Process* to “address the longer-term requirement to identify, track and mentor individuals having the potential and motivation to achieve senior appointments within the CF.”<sup>82</sup> These cyclical processes take place annually and are coordinated to mutually inform one another. The features of *AFO 1000-7*

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<sup>80</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. *AFO 1000-7, Air Force Orders: Royal Canadian Air Force Personnel Management - Officers* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Royal Canadian Air Force, 2010-01-26).

<sup>81</sup>Ibid.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid.

reflect an exclusive approach to talent management where the identification of *strategic jobs* is focused on senior appointments (such as those leading to senior command).

The generation of talent pools takes place through the defined succession planning process, which outputs potential lists (titled O1, O2, and O3 lists for the regular force; and RO1, RO2, and RO3 lists for the reserve force) and ranking lists (titled A and B lists for the regular force; and RA and RB lists for the reserve force). Potential lists serve to identify “those who have demonstrated high potential for executive rank and whose careers require additional attention to ensure that such potential can be realized.”<sup>83</sup> O3 lists are effectively pools of Majors and senior Captains with potential to advance quickly through the next two ranks, and thereby potentially feed into the O2 and O1 lists.<sup>84</sup> Ranking lists serve to “articulate the pan Air Force perspective on which individuals are best suited for promotion . . . based on an appropriate combination of impressive potential combined with outstanding performance” where A lists include those “who will compete for promotion over the next year” and B lists include those “who should be in competition for promotion within two to three years and who should be challenged accordingly.”<sup>85</sup> To strike a balance within talent pools, the Lieutenant-Colonel ranking lists must also “include high performers who are not O listed.”<sup>86</sup> The implications of this practice is interesting in terms of how it may mitigate ‘crown prince’ syndrome and some of the aforementioned risks to worker engagement associated with talent management programmes. To limit the size of talent pools, the maximum number of personnel on the O3 list must not exceed 15% of the *preferred manning level (PML)* for the occupation-rank group.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid.

In terms of defining talent, the criteria for selection onto potential lists and appointments to key positions include evaluation against experience, competencies, behavioural indicators and other attributes such as leadership, judgment, communication, credibility, HR management, interpersonal relations, courage, knowledge, ethics and conduct, dress and deportment, confidence, presence, care of subordinates, and work-life balance.<sup>88</sup> The identification and assessment of talent occurs regularly as *Advisory Groups (AG)* responsible for these functions must “review their O3 lists annually, and officers must remain competitive in order to remain on the list.”<sup>89</sup> Implicitly, the review may be informed by several CAF Personnel System processes and activities such as selection board results (e.g. annual promotion lists), personnel appraisal (i.e. CFPAS reports), results from key PD opportunities, and inputs from the chain of command to name a few. This highlights a practical scenario that leverages a fusion of outputs from the LDM concept and its components (i.e. a set of defined competencies, PD results, and personnel appraisal that inform decisions within career planning practices).

With respect to the concept of job tenure (i.e. posting or tour length) in talent management, *AFO 1000-7* states “the Air Force will accept risk and permit certain officers to spend less time in key developmental positions.”<sup>90</sup> The RCAF needs to manage talent within a closed employment system that has a compulsory retirement age (CRA) of 55 or 60 years of age and often promotes attrition upon completion of 35 year of cumulated service, and within this system it must ensure that personnel within its potential lists have enough time remaining to serve at the targeted rank levels. The ‘generalist’ approach to developing senior leaders is also a driving factor behind this practice of shorter job tenure. The rationale and drawbacks for this approach within the RCAF context has been highlighted in recent research projects that raised

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., Annex B.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

talent management issues and questions such as the effectiveness of a ‘generalist’ approach in terms of preparing senior leaders for employment at the strategic/institutional level and dealing with the complexities and uncertainty in that environment.<sup>91</sup>

The aforementioned issues with *labelling talent* identified in the literature implicate a significant tactical issue regarding how organizations communicate with their talent. *AFO 1000-7* directs: that “AG Chairs must verbally confirm with each respective officer that they are willing to accept a career path that will prepare them for senior command before the individual is nominated for placement on the O3 List”; the issuance of formal letters to notify their units when they have been selected on a succession planning list, with a request to include a statement in their personnel appraisal that articulates the RCAF’s view of their ranking and/or potential; and that individuals “may request in writing that his/her name be removed from a list, or be re-added to a list should circumstances change.”<sup>92</sup> While policy enables some degree of consistency in communications with respect to nomination and selection, the quality of communications with talent significantly implicates mentorship and leadership. The conceptual links to talent management in terms of increasing commitment and retention are highlighted in a recent study on the RCAF Mentorship Program, but it also cautioned that the nascent program required “a training program, supported by a RCAF-specific guidebook, [to] clearly define participants’ roles and responsibilities and [to] foster the required mentoring skills and strategies.”<sup>93</sup> This has some interesting implications in terms of developing talent management capabilities: to what extent should/could the conceptual foundations of talent management and ‘best practices’ be

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<sup>91</sup>Lynne Chaloux, "RCAF Succession Management: A Strategic Perspective" (Master of Defence Studies research project, Canadian Forces College, 2014), , 78-84.

<sup>92</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. *AFO 1000-7, Air Force Orders: Royal Canadian Air Force Personnel Management - Officers*

<sup>93</sup>M. Rodgers, "Assessing the RCAF Mentorship Program" (Master of Defence Studies research project, Canadian Forces College, 2014), ii.

documented and trained? How might a broader understanding of contemporary talent management in a CAF and RCAF context help improve the quality of career-related decisions or transactions, and increase motivation and retention of talent?

### **Additional Discussion and Implications**

#### **Impact of Uncertainty, Understanding Engagement**

An implication related to the notion that understanding employee engagement is a key dimension of internal talent management, is to question whether the CAF and RCAF existing approaches to understanding employee engagement are adequate given the uncertain state of talent demand and supply that has been discussed. Formal exit surveys conducted upon voluntary or compulsory release or *Your Say Survey* are arguably sub-optimal at informing talent engagement trends that may be required for an evidence-based approach to talent management program development, as they are infrequent and may often be too late – they are lagging indicators. Despite some of the complications with conducting human research within the CAF, consideration could be given to investing in shorter but more frequent surveys, as well as focus groups to provide more proactive awareness (i.e. leading indicators) of the state of the complex dynamics of talent engagement, among other possible HRM issues.

#### **Impact of Uncertainty, External Labour Markets**

In contrast to most contemporary private firms, military organizations like the CAF have closed employment systems and utilize practices that resemble the aforementioned traditional internal talent development model. They are also subject to economic, social, and political forces that introduce uncertainty in talent supply and demand. For example, the same forces of open labour markets that can stimulate voluntary attrition. However, the closed nature of the system does not generally facilitate external hiring (also discussed in later sections). One key

implication for this theme of uncertainty in talent management discourse is that the CAF or RCAF may wish to question to what extent its talent management model should include more ways and means to create *a more open employment system* within its human capital model (for example, creating points or areas in the model for lateral entry of external talent) in order to provide more flexibility or adaptability to uncertainty within the strategic (operational and institutional) environment. Some examples of other military organizations and their approach to addressing this theme will be presented in the next chapter.

Cappelli and Keller also reviewed a lot of literature on external hiring in private sector as a way to mitigate the aforementioned uncertainty, acquire knowledge, implement strategic changes, enhance capacity to innovate, and acquire people who can influence or expand business.”<sup>94</sup> Some of these benefits such as injecting knowledge or diversity into an organization, accessing key talent to implement strategic changes, or expanding influence within the sector are generally applicable to the military. However, there are generally limited means for the CAF to access external talent, which can include secondments, attachments, foreign exchange postings, certain programmes to accelerate enrolment of specialists or former members of foreign militaries, or component transfer programmes (e.g. Reserve Force transfer to Regular Force). One implication from this theme is that while external talent access may not be broadly feasible to military organizations, it should remain a consideration in their human capital model and talent management strategy. Routine consideration could be given to the scenarios under which the benefits of injecting external talent (e.g. public service employees, contractors, academia, foreign military) make it worth the investment in resources to access and integrate them within the unique operational and cultural needs of that particular military organization.

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<sup>94</sup>Cappelli and Keller, *Talent Management: Conceptual Approaches and Practical Challenges*, 321. Interestingly, but much less likely for the military to practice, they highlight that private sector goes as far as to even “weaken competitors through poaching.”

Finally, Cappelli and Keller highlight an industry trend where the “explosion of specialized job boards and access to individual profiles on social media sites would appear to provide employers with the ability to target their recruiting efforts.”<sup>95</sup> While it may be self-evident, the implied need to consider these technologies to empower members and leaders through more decision quality information is highlighted given the CAF’s current environment of significant modernizations to its information management systems and information infrastructure.

## **SUMMARY**

Looking towards operationalizing contemporary talent management within the CAF and RCAF context, the multi-disciplinary and multi-functional nature of HRM systems coupled with well-entrenched policies, procedures, and practices within large organizations can contribute to significant institutional friction that requires a commensurate amount of time and energy in order to formulate and implement talent management strategy. Organizations can end up undertaking well-intended initiatives under the talent management banner that ultimately may not yield the desired outcomes in organizational performance or capacity (as Martin and Schmidt previously highlighted). This paper acknowledges that undertaking a journey through roadmaps of talent management strategy will not guarantee success – but would a lack thereof guarantee eventual failure to achieve PAM aspirations in today’s climate of uncertainty? Rather than considering this as a binary problem, this paper encourages a balanced view beyond economic rationality to consider other value propositions that a talent management strategy can bring about in terms of sharpening the CAF’s and RCAF’s human capital model. Particularly, towards setting

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<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 322-323.

conditions for a 'better' career experience for as many members as possible that ultimately strengthens employment relations and sustained engagement in today's climate.

Continued studies encompassing the aforementioned themes could aspire to help extend an understanding of what mediates talent management and organizational success within the CAF. In other words, the CAF and its sub-populations would benefit from further consideration and scoping of what *effective talent management* looks like. What would be the intersection between effective talent management and effective leadership? To what extent could those responsible for developing and administering the CAF Personnel System benefit from a more contemporary understanding of talent management? The themes suggest that *there could be more to talent management* in the CAF, given themes like uncertainty and where the organization currently sits along the exclusive/inclusive and people/positions focus space, than the status quo workforce planning, recruiting, selection, competency analysis, PD, appraisal, career and succession management, retention and terms of service, remuneration and rewards functions that talent management implicates.

### **CHAPTER 3: PROFESSIONAL AIRPOWER MASTERY AND TALENT MANAGEMENT**

*In the long term, and considering the prevailing economic and socio-political environment and security imperatives of democratic nations, a purely tactical air force does not equate to full return on the investment made on it. The alternative to this situation is for an air force, however limited numerically, to strive to become one with strategic influence within the broader national security equation. In order to become influential at the strategic level of national security discussions the force needs to have acknowledged, holistic professional mastery of the highest order.*

– Sanu Kainikara, *Professional Mastery and Air Power Education*

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Having considered the relatively elastic conceptual boundaries of talent management, important contemporary themes, and where currently documented policies situate the RCAF within a talent management approach space, this paper will now present some considerations and examples towards further conceptualizing talent management within the RCAF organizational context. Brad Gladman, an operational research analyst at the Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre (CFAWC), led a team of military, research, and academic experts that recently published a concept paper on Professional Airpower Mastery (PAM) and the RCAF, which focused on formal, structured airpower education, but highlighted “the role experiential learning has to play” along with an “attendant requirement for careful talent management.”<sup>96</sup> In consideration that talent management is not an end in itself and is a loaded term as mentioned earlier, this study undertook an exercise to conceptualize and articulate in more detail how talent management issues intersect with the RCAF’s aspirational goal of PAM.

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<sup>96</sup>Brad Gladman et al., *Professional Airpower Mastery and the Royal Canadian Air Force: Rethinking Airpower Education and Professional Development* (Trenton: Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre, 2016), 3.

## A CONFLUENCE OF CONCEPTS

By way of context, the following provides some of the key terms and concepts that have been developed thus far to articulate what the RCAF aspires to achieve:

*Air power and airpower.* Air power can be thought of as the delivery of an air force's output (essentially, the bones, muscle, and organs of the RCAF; the physical manifestation of our activity). Airpower is a more comprehensive notion that includes the physical aspects (the physical component), conceptual and intellectual elements (the conceptual component), and the moral compass (the moral component) that guides and develops the delivery of air power.<sup>97</sup>

*Professional airpower mastery.* The aspirational level of airpower, professional airpower mastery (PAM), can be applied to an individual or the entire institution. For the RCAF it represents the institutional requirement to maintain expert levels of comprehension of airpower; ability to contemplate and debate airpower in future development terms; an understanding of organizational theory and institutional functions; a professional awareness of the joint, combined, and interagency environments; and the ability to apply operational, strategic, and governmental decision-making constructs. All this in order to fully understand the science of airpower but also to be able to effectively apply the necessary art to be considered airpower and war-fighting experts.<sup>98</sup>

*Airpower mindedness.* With a focus on the individual, airpower mindedness refers to an attitude or mindset. Based on an in-depth, comprehensive understanding of airpower's large body of knowledge achieved through training, education, analysis, and debate, airpower mindedness allows the individual to automatically see problems and opportunities through an airpower lens. Key to airpower mindedness is not merely the understanding of the underpinning theoretical concepts of airpower but also the requisite depth of comprehension of systems (planning, execution as well as platforms and training, techniques, and procedures) in order to practically deliver air power.<sup>99</sup>

The concept of airpower is analogous to the concept of military or fighting power, and their constituent conceptual, physical, and moral components, found in other forms of CAF doctrine,<sup>100</sup> which fundamentally implicates personnel, at the heart of the force generation and

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<sup>97</sup>Ibid.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 01 Canadian Military Doctrine* (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, 2009), 86.

employment of capabilities, as well as the concept of talent management among other HRM as enablers.

The concept of PAM highlights a requirement for a breadth and depth of individual and collective expertise over increasing levels of the institution. Sanu Kainikara, a well-published airpower academic and retired Indian Air Force fighter pilot, provides a complementary explanation of these levels as a progressive requirement for mastery from personal technical mastery, to technical mastery within a unit, to professional mastery of increasing scope (i.e. single service, to joint, to military strategy, to national security, to grand strategic level).<sup>101</sup> He frames individual professional mastery as *the combination of* “the sum of an individual’s knowledge and understanding of air power” *and* “the ability to apply it confidently through the lens of personal experience and intellect”, and collective professional mastery as the cohesive harnessing of the force’s individual professional mastery through “leadership that is skilful and effective.”<sup>102</sup> Kainikara also highlights the requirement for leaders to create “the culture and the environment that will automatically steer the organization towards becoming committed to learning and growth, both individually and collectively,” and the requirement to develop the professional status of an air force so that it remains a trusted entity that can competently provide a selection of appropriate options to government within the broader national security calculus.<sup>103</sup>

This study emphasizes that these concepts align with the theoretical constructs found in CAF doctrine on the profession of arms that describes the relationship between the components of professional ethos, identity, expertise, responsibility, and the principle of government

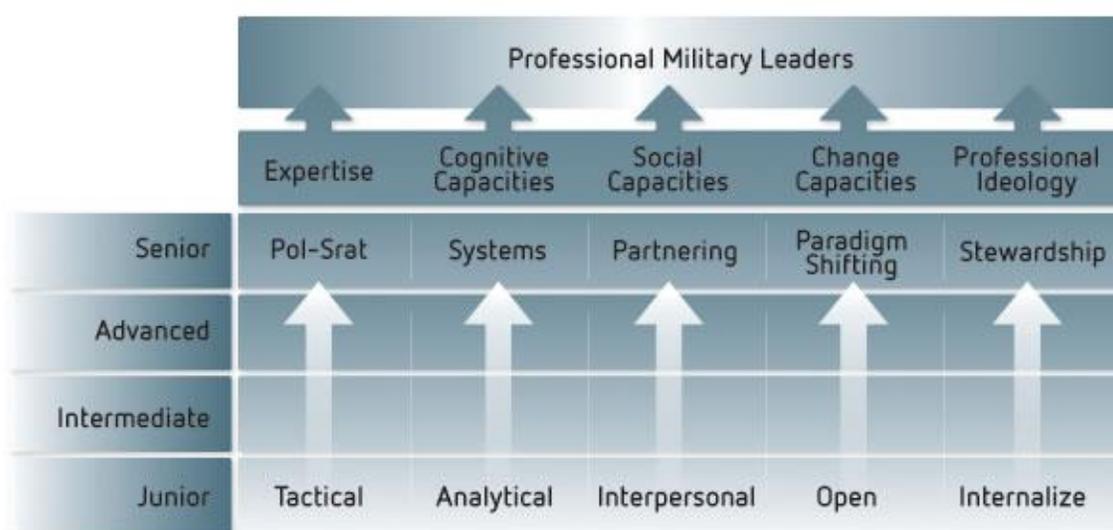
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<sup>101</sup>Sanu Kainikara, "Professional Mastery and Air Power Education (Reprint of Royal Australian Air Force Air Power Development Centre, Working Paper 33)," *The Royal Canadian Air Force Journal* 3, no. 4 (Fall, 2014), 49-55.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid.

<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

direction and control.<sup>104</sup> CAF leadership doctrine was built from the doctrine on the profession of arms, which in turn provides a leader development framework (LDF) that identifies a broad of requisite competencies (e.g. expertise, cognitive capacities, social capacities, change capacities, professional ideology meta-competencies) over increasing levels (e.g. from junior/tactical to senior/strategic).<sup>105</sup> Figure 3.1 provides a graphical depiction of the LDF.



**Figure 3.1 – CAF Leader Development Framework (LDF)**

Source: Canada. National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Professional Development* (website),

<http://www.forces.gc.ca/en/training-prof-dev/index.page> (updated 11 March 2016)

In sum, the increasing scope of leadership responsibility and breadth of expertise, from individual to grand strategic levels, required to achieve PAM overlaps with the *raison d'être* of the CAF LDF. As introduced earlier in this paper, the leader development model (LDM) is intended to provide ways and means to operationalize the LDF, through a system that integrates

<sup>104</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-001, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2009), 8.

<sup>105</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-006, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2006), 130.

competency dictionary (a basis for describing talent needs and managing talent), PD (developing talent), career planning (identifying, developing, and deploying talent), and personnel appraisal (assessing talent, informing career planning). Thus, to contribute to the sense-making and discussion of how to contextualize contemporary talent management for the RCAF, this paper adopts the view that there is a confluence of concepts whereby the requisite end state of PAM requires talent management to anticipate and meet the RCAF needs for talent in its jobs, and the LDM components, detailed in the next chapter, provide a sub-set of the ways and means to do so. This provides a point of departure for further consideration of how the RCAF could define talent and scope talent management. While there are other possible ways to conceptualize and articulate this, this paper considers some aforementioned concepts and contemporary themes in talent management in terms key implications on the conceptual, physical, and moral components of airpower.

### **Talent Implications and the Conceptual Component of Airpower**

CAF Joint Doctrine highlights that the conceptual component provides the *thought process* required to develop, generate, and employ military power, which may include aspects such as principles of war, doctrine, and conceptual frameworks for capabilities.<sup>106</sup> This paper examines talent management as an aspect of the capabilities framework, and posits that contemporary talent management literature and themes inform a key task that requires attention within the conceptual component. Namely, in order to enable collective understanding, how to define the loaded terms *talent* and *talent management* for the RCAF organizational context, as the conceptualization of these terms should be a pre-condition for their use in strategy formulation and policy development. The options could conceivably range from simply re-

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<sup>106</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 01 Canadian Military Doctrine*, 2-3.

packaging and re-branding status quo practices already implicated under the relatively exclusive succession management label to a conceptualization that progressively includes more people, more pivotal roles or jobs in general, and integrates more CAF Personnel System (or doctrinal) functions, as well as more attendant care of factors that can sharpen motivation and commitment (aspects of the moral component) and workforce structure (aspect of the physical component). To help stimulate further consideration of this task, this section will present some examples from other military organizations and draw linkages to some theoretical themes that lend support or imply further consideration.

#### Examples in Contextualizing Talent and Talent Management

Lending support to the notion for more inclusive forms of talent management in military organizations, Group Captain Paul O'Neill – a Royal Air Force (RAF) Personnel Officer, scholar, and designated HR professional – opined that “too often, discussions about talent management end up focusing on the senior, usually commissioned, ranks and either ignoring or under-playing the potential contribution of the majority of the Service.”<sup>107</sup> He asserts that the RAF talent pool goes beyond those destined for the highest ranks and highlights that the UK Defence Human Capability Science and Technology Centre differentiates at least four types of talent:

Officers with the potential to reach senior leadership roles; officers and other ranks who have the potential to lead in functional or professional areas, but not senior leadership potential; officers and other ranks in critical technical roles requiring highly specialized and scarce skills; others not described above but who have talents that may be of value to the Services.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>107</sup>Paul O'Neill, "Delivering Flexibility through People: Harnessing Human Capability," *Air Power Review* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2015), 70.

<sup>108</sup>*Ibid.*

Amongst the literature from other western military organizations reviewed, this study found that the US Army has undertaken one of the more comprehensive efforts in conceptualizing talent management from academic research to strategy formulation. With respect to the strategic context in which the US Army has developed their talent management concept, they assessed three “critical challenges” facing their institution that “necessitate organizational change”:

[First,] significantly reduced defense spending levels;  
 [Second,] fundamental shifts in the nature of work within the Army which requires Soldiers and leaders to be more “adaptive, inventive, and empathetic”;  
 and [third,] the emergence of new required skills and capabilities brought about by the increasingly high rate of technological change. Additionally, many people anticipate that the advantage America has previously enjoyed in military applications of technology will soon be diminishing.<sup>109</sup>

While acknowledging the vast discourse amongst scholars and practitioners on the definition and scope of talent and talent management, they have defined talent as follows:

[Talent is] the unique intersection of skills, knowledge, and behaviors [sic] in every person. Talent represents far more than the training, education, and experiences provided by the Army. The fullness of each person's life experience, to include investments they've made in themselves, personal and familial relationships (networks), ethnographic and demographic background, preferences, hobbies, travel, personality, learning style, education, and a myriad number of other factors better suit them to some development or employment opportunities than others.<sup>110</sup>

Additionally, the US Army takes a significantly more inclusive approach to their definition of talent management by encompassing entry-level to top positions:

Talent Management is systematic planning for the right number and type of people to meet the Army's needs at all levels and at all times so that the majority of them are employed optimally. It integrates accessions, retention, development and employment strategies. Talent management begins with entry-level

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<sup>109</sup>United States. Department of the Army, *Talent Management in the Army: Review, Comment, and Recommendation on Talent Management Models (White Paper)* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2015b), 4.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid.

employees and aligns their talents against the demand for them during their entire careers, to include positions at the very top of the Army.<sup>111</sup>

Michael Colarusso, a senior research analyst and former US Army officer, and Colonel David Lyle, a professor of economics and Director of the US Army's Office of Economic and Manpower Analysis, go further to situate succession planning and replacement planning within the broader talent management approach space:

Succession Planning is a subset of talent management. It is a systematic attempt to ensure continuity of executive leadership by early cultivation of mid-career leaders through planned assessments and developmental activities. Succession planning looks much further down the talent pipeline and differentiates people into talent pools . . . It creates a deeper and more diverse bench of talent, increasing the odds that replacements will not be merely suitable—they will be optimal.<sup>112</sup>

Replacement Planning is a subset of succession planning. It manages the risk stemming from an immediate and unplanned loss of a key executive, ensuring the replacement is at least suitable to the work. Many organizations identify two or three potential replacements for each senior executive and pat themselves on the back for it. This type of limited planning usually results in replacements very much like their predecessors, regardless of the operating environment. While better than reactive replacement (which entails no planning at all), replacement planning is not enough—organizations require far deeper talent pools than it engenders.<sup>113</sup>

In consideration of the academic literature, this paper assesses that the US Army definition of talent, with its emphasis on the *unique intersection of skills, knowledge and behaviours in every person*, can draw a balanced basis of support among several theoretical perspectives. These include: *object* based perspectives of talent which focuses on characteristics or attributes of people like abilities, knowledge, and competencies;<sup>114</sup> and *innate* and *acquired* perspectives of talent, which respectively implicate a focus on practices like identification and

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<sup>111</sup>Ibid., 6.

<sup>112</sup>Michael J. Colarusso and David S. Lyle, *Senior Officer Talent Management: Fostering Institutional Adaptability* (Carlisle: United States Army War College Press,[2014]).

<sup>113</sup>Ibid.

<sup>114</sup>Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 278.; Marian Thunnissen, Paul Boselie and Ben Fruytier, "Talent Management and the Relevance of Context: Towards a Pluralistic Approach," *Human Resource Management Review* 23, no. 4 (12, 2013), 326-336.

selection talent, and training, education, or experiential development of talent.<sup>115</sup> Their recognition of *a myriad number of factors that better suit people to some development or employment opportunities than others*, coupled with the idea of *aligning talents* within their definition of talent management, draws support from inclusive or strength-based theoretical perspectives.<sup>116</sup> *Subject* based perspectives of talent management, which implicate a focus on organizational career management and succession-planning practices are still implicit in their definitions.<sup>117</sup> Notably, these definitions can also draw support from the ‘AMO’ paradigm, which scholars like Paul Boselie – a professor in strategic HRM and strategic management – have framed performance as a function of a member’s ability (A), motivation (M), and opportunity to contribute (O).<sup>118</sup>

To help with conceptualizing an operational model for talent management as a capability, this paper draws attention to a theoretical model for strategic talent management that provides a suitable generalized conceptual framework that reflects some of the context and themes discussed thus far. David Collings, a prominent professor in HRM, and Kamel Mellahi, a distinguished professor in strategic management, developed the following definition of strategic talent management and an accompanying model depicted at Figure 3.2:

. . . activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organisation's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organisation. In this regard, it is important to note that key positions are not necessarily restricted to the top management team (TMT) but also include key

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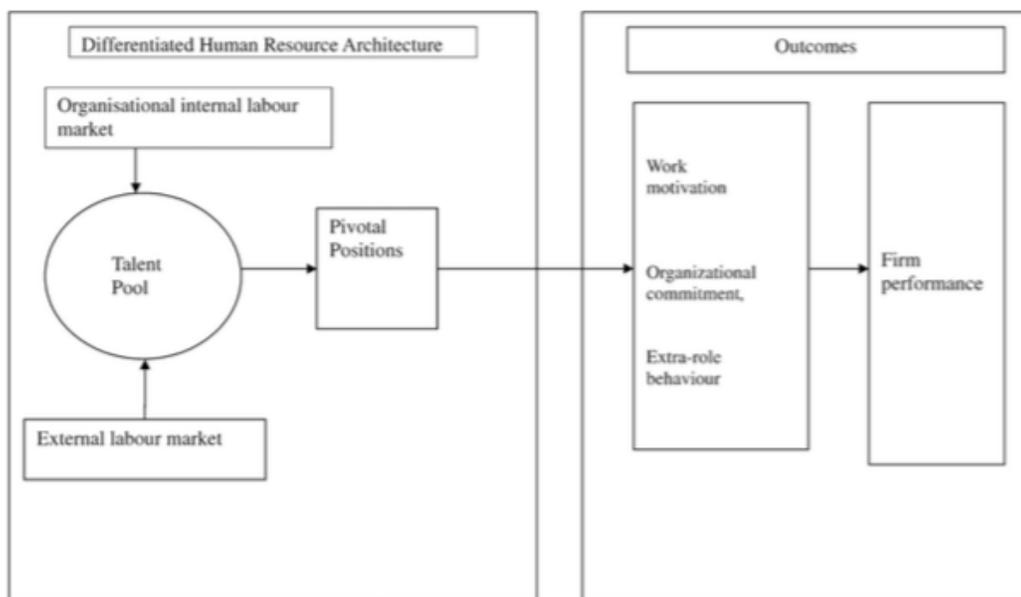
<sup>115</sup>Dries, *The Psychology of Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 279-280.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, 278-281.

<sup>117</sup>*Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>118</sup>Paul Boselie, Graham Dietz and Corine Boon, "Commonalities and Contradictions in HRM and Performance Research," *Human Resource Management Journal* 15, no. 3 (2005), 72.

positions at levels lower than the TMT and may vary between operating units and indeed over time.<sup>119</sup>



**Figure 3.2 – Collings and Mellahi strategic talent management theoretical model**  
Source: Collings and Mellahi, *Strategic Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 306.

Notably generalized to outline the theoretical components and relations, this particular model prescribes to the approach that talent management begins with identifying strategic jobs, followed by development of a talent pool with injects from both internally developed and externally accessed talent. Collings and Mellahi feature the concept of managing the talent pools through a differentiated HR architecture, as they advocate a contingency (i.e. a ‘best fit’) approach to establishing different sets of HR practices that are appropriate to each organization context (i.e. talent acquisition, development, employment and retention needs differ among organizations) vice another school of thought that assumes that there is a universal (i.e. ‘one size

<sup>119</sup>David G. Collings and Kamel Mellahi, "Strategic Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda," *Human Resource Management Review* 19, no. 4 (12, 2009), 304.

fits all’) configuration of HR practices that can improve organizational outcomes.<sup>120</sup> Although it is not depicted in the model, Collings and Mellahi speak to the role of developing individual ability as a function of organizational performance in their paper. However, complementing individual ability as a feature of talent management, their model depicts individual factors such as work motivation, organizational commitment, and extra-role behaviour (e.g. voluntarily going ‘beyond the call of duty’) as antecedents to organizational performance. They notably posit that these individual factors “mediate the relationship” between talent management systems and organizational performance.<sup>121</sup> In essence, their model highlights pivotal jobs (workforce structure), talent pools, differentiated approaches (to managing/developing talent), as well as motivation, commitment, and extra-role behaviour (which are aspects of the moral component) as some of the more salient aspects to focus on in operationalizing talent management.

## Discussion

This section has brought forward one of the key themes in contemporary talent management literature presented a previous chapter: the challenge in defining talent management and scoping its conceptual boundaries. One practical consideration of having a broader and balanced base of theoretical positioning is that it provides an institution with relatively broad arcs of fire in the talent management approach space, which implies more people could be treated as ‘talent’. The broadly encompassing definitions also provide a mandate to integrate several HRM functions (e.g. workforce planning for the *right number and type of people*, integrate *accessions, retention, development, and employment*) as part of a strategy to address their aforementioned critical challenges. The US Army’s comprehensive definition of talent and talent management provides an example of how to relate the importance of structural (physical component)

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid.

considerations such as workforce planning and ‘putting warm bodies in positions’ and a myriad of other (moral component) considerations such as the approach that is taken to fitting abilities and motivations with opportunities (implicating practices to ‘optimize person-job fit’) and further developing abilities and sustaining motivation for longer service. Given the diversity of personnel that the institution seeks to attract, develop, employ, and retain, another implication is that the institution will continually face the tension between what aspects of talent management adopt a ‘one size fits all’ approach and what aspects require a differentiated approach.

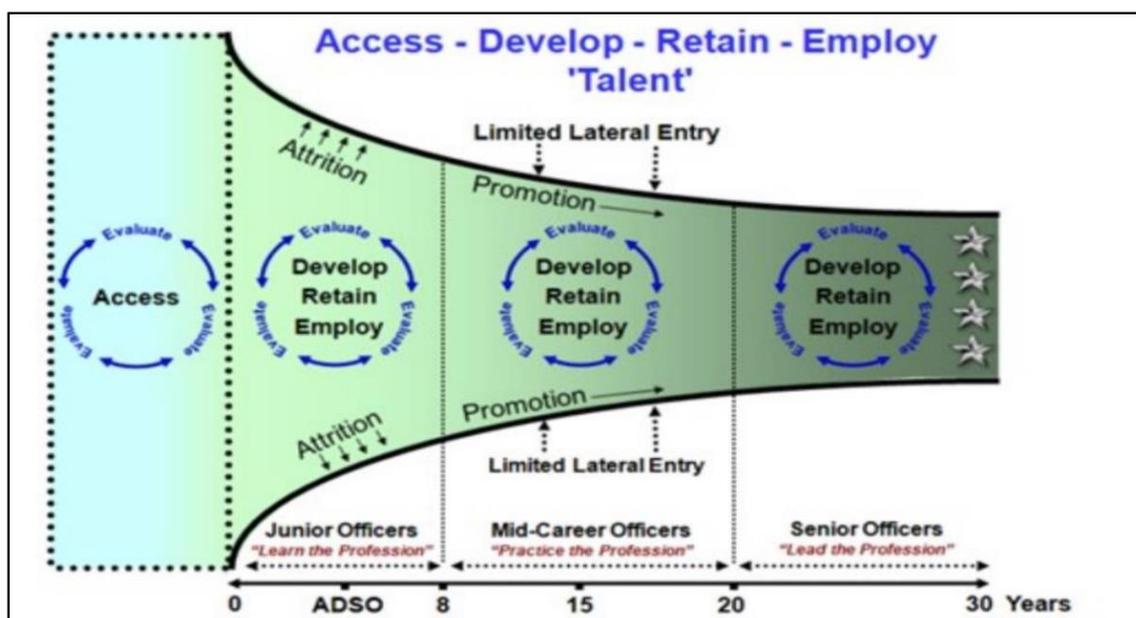
### **Talent Implications and the Physical Component of Airpower**

This section will present some examples for consideration in the conceptualization of how workforce planning and talent management implicate the physical component of airpower. While workforce structure may not be the only talent management aspect that conceptually overlaps, this paper considers it to be a significant factor to consider when bringing forward the aforementioned theme of managing talent in a strategic environment characterized by uncertainty. From the literature surveyed, many organizations formulate concepts or strategies to mitigate uncertainty that involve making their structures and processes more flexible and adaptable to changes in the environment.

#### **Workforce Planning Issues**

Given the relatively closed employment system of military organizations, a dominant paradigm within personnel doctrine and strategy is a pipeline or pyramid structure. Air Force Personnel Doctrine provides a detailed explanation of various determinants within the personnel establishment framework, such as legally authorized manning levels, operational issues (e.g. shift-work), rank-to-rank ratios, and the ‘need to grow our own’, that leads to a net result of the

RCAF's closed employment system and pyramidal structure.<sup>122</sup> Colarusso and Lyle's monograph on US Army officer talent management provides an example of a pipeline human capital model, which is depicted at Figure 3.3.



**Figure 3.3 – Example: US Army Officer Human Capital Model**

Source: Colarusso and Lyle, *Senior Officer Talent Management: Fostering Institutional Adaptability*, 34.

The model highlights the progression of their officer talent through the organizational rank structure from an initial point, that they term 'accession', through notionally increasing levels of rank and responsibility (along the horizontal axis towards more years of service). Over time, the pipeline is shaped by attrition, promotion and limited forms of lateral entry. Some attrition is necessary in consideration of unique requirements of the military profession and practical scenarios such as failures to meet required standards of training/performance or conduct, promotions out of rank groups into new rank groups, occupation transfers out from one group to another, and mandatory retirement age. One of the more salient features to highlight in this

<sup>122</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GA-407-001/FP-001, *Air Force Personnel Doctrine*, 4-1 - 4-5.

model is the conceptual phasing in time and degrees of professional mastery from learning the profession (associated with junior members), practicing the profession (associated with mid-career members), and leading the profession (associated with senior members). In the CAF and RCAF context, one could also overlay its developmental periods (DP) to correlate them to learning the profession (notionally DP 1, 2 which prepares members for), practicing the profession (notionally enhanced through DP 3), and leading the profession (enhanced through DP 4/5).

The pipeline model emphasizes, throughout the phases, a requirement for continual evaluation in support of development and continued employment. Among other concepts, this brings forward the concepts of career paths or career trajectories (i.e. particularly the ‘generalist’ and ‘specialist’ discourse). In the CAF and RCAF context, one could overlay current practices to provide a breadth of employment experience from developmental to more pivotal positions (i.e. the low-, mid-, high- range job taxonomy used in some environmental services or occupations). As alluded to earlier, the implication of talent management in the development of senior leaders has been studied extensively in recent years, particularly in the area of preparing officers for senior institutional leadership roles.<sup>123</sup> While much of the details underpinning these studies are beyond the scope of this report, some workforce structure considerations within the CAF and RCAF context could include: First, developing institutional governance and capacity for a more integrated approach to developing pools of viable candidates for institutional roles, ensuring position and personnel requirements are defined (for those destined and requiring ‘generalist’ experiential development); and second, developing ‘expert staff’ among those “not

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<sup>123</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Officer Developmental Period 4/5: Project Strategic Leader - Report of the Officer DP 4/5 Review Working Group*, 41; Colarusso and Lyle, *Senior Officer Talent Management: Fostering Institutional Adaptability*, 199; David Barno et al., *Building Better Generals* (Washington, D.C.: Center for a New American Security,[2013]).; Nicholas Jans et al., *The Chiefs: A Study of Strategic Leadership* (Australia: Australian Defence College,[2013]).; Margaret C. Harrell et al., *Aligning the Stars: Improvements to General and Flag Officer Management* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation,[2004]).

assessed as having a career trajectory to reach the most senior officer ranks quickly” and to determine suitability “to remain focussed in their core areas of expertise (own occupation or own Service)” or interest and potential to “shift to a breadth domain”.<sup>124</sup> Casey Wardynski, a former US Army Colonel and predecessor to Lyle, highlighted the trade-off between breadth and depth of experience and recommended that militaries seek a distribution of talented ‘generalist’ and ‘specialists’ rather than cornering themselves with an either-or approach.<sup>125</sup> Colarusso and Lyle advocate that one of the outcomes of evaluation is to “to gain intimate knowledge of each officer so that his or her unique talents may be developed and employed by the Army, to the mutual benefit of the individual and the institution.”<sup>126</sup> This aspect of member engagement and understanding how their abilities and aspirations fit within the institution will be revisited in later sections of this paper. The consideration of what distribution optimally enables PAM illustrates but one of the practical challenges in the intersection of talent management, workforce structure, and the physical component of airpower.

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<sup>124</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Officer Developmental Period 4/5: Project Strategic Leader - Report of the Officer DP 4/5 Review Working Group*, 28-29. Having more bearing on the conceptual component of airpower, the concept of breadth domains is explained on more detail in this report. The breadth domains are conceived as a set of interconnected domains in which CAF senior leaders need to operate (and contribute to organizational outcomes): (a) Domestic and International Operations domain pertains to planning and conducting operations and is seen as the CAF’s centre of gravity; (b) The Socio-Political Milieu is the realm of political decision making that shapes direction from the government of the day; (c) The Machinery of Government refers to the regulatory and control functions exercised across government and particularly the bureaucratic processes employed by Central Agencies and the public service writ large to implement broad government direction; (d) The Profession of Arms represents the unique facets of the CAF as a profession as articulated in Duty with Honour including the requirements to engage in professional self-regulation and to develop individual identity and shared professional culture; and (e) The Business of Defence is the domain in which political direction, bureaucratic controls and professional requirements are integrated to set the conditions for success in operations. The breadth domains are overlaid with senior leader areas of employment (or clusters of jobs within the workforce structure) to identify overlaps and differences in intellectual requirements and focus.

<sup>125</sup>Casey Wardynski, David S. Lyle and Michael J. Colarusso, *Towards a U.S. Army Officer Corps Strategy for Success: A Proposed Human Capital Model Focused upon Talent* (Carlisle: U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute, 2009), 28.

<sup>126</sup>Colarusso and Lyle, *Senior Officer Talent Management: Fostering Institutional Adaptability*, 58.

With respect to the concept of lateral entry, Colarusso and Lyle acknowledge that the US Army “is characterized by very limited lateral entry”<sup>127</sup> and suggest that opportunities for more lateral entry could be in emerging technology areas.<sup>128</sup> Subsequently, the US Army produced a concept of operations document to inform development of a talent management strategic, which includes a reference to lateral entry in support of developing its Cyber Branch.<sup>129</sup> The notion of core and periphery workforce structures, while far from being a new concept, deserves consideration in light of its role in enabling organizational flexibility necessary to respond to uncertainty and calls for change. Concurrently, the extents to which authority is centralized and processes are formalized are additional tensions for consideration in building flexibility.

In a recent RAF think piece, O’Neill proposes an Adaptive Design Model (ADM) that builds upon their *Whole Force* approach but with “more diversity and differentiation of the various components of the structure.”<sup>130</sup> Analogous to our Defence Team or Air Force Team<sup>131</sup> concept, the UK Whole Force Concept seeks to maintain a balance of regular and reserve military personnel, Ministry of Defence civilians and contractors.<sup>132</sup> Drawing support from, renowned academic and author on management, Henry Mintzberg’s seminal work on organizational components (i.e. each organization has the following elements: strategic apex, middle line, operating core, techno structure, and support staff), O’Neill posits that it would be more appropriate “to talk about an organization of multiple workforces . . . based on the outputs

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>129</sup>United States. Department of the Army, *Talent Management Concept of Operations for Force 2025 and Beyond* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Publishing Office, 2015a), 32.

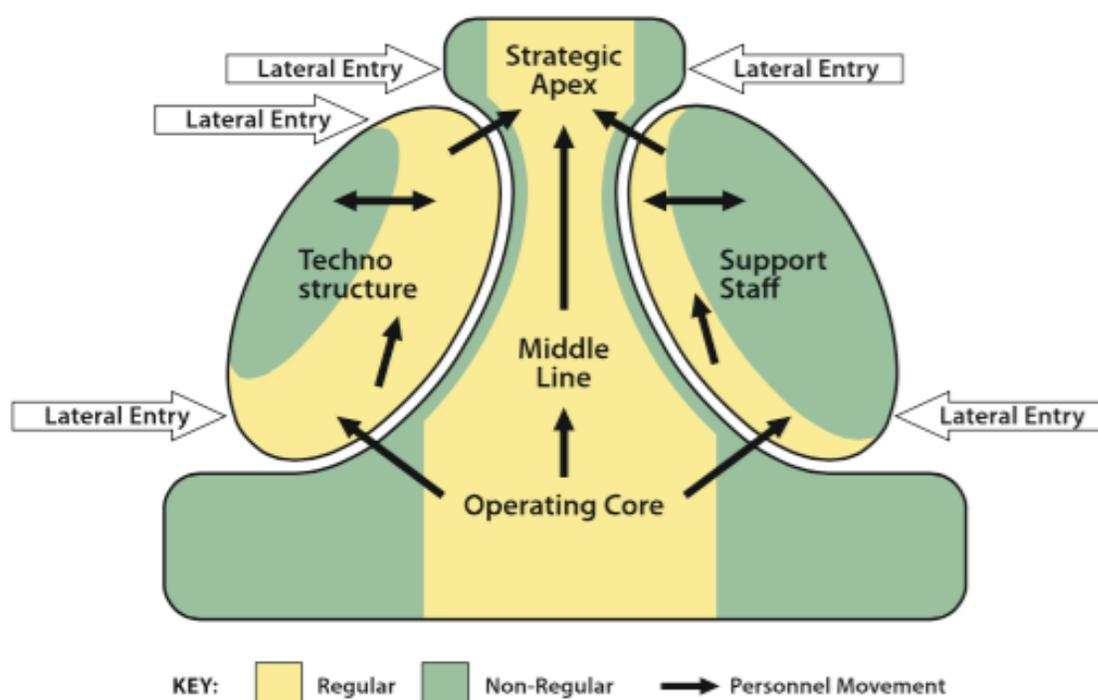
<sup>130</sup>Paul O’Neill, “Developing a Flexible Royal Air Force for an Age of Uncertainty,” *Air Power Review* 18, no. 1 (Spring 2015, 2015b), 46.

<sup>131</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GA-407-001/FP-001, *Air Force Personnel Doctrine*, 80 .

<sup>132</sup>United Kingdom. Ministry of Defence, *The New Operating Model - how Defence Works*, Version 3.0 ed.Ministry of Defence UK, 2012), 58.

expected of the different areas.”<sup>133</sup> Coinciding with the aforementioned concepts for differentiated HR architectures (vice ‘one size fits all’ approaches), O’Neill describes the ADM – depicted at Figure 3.4 – as follows:

The ADM envisages a Core and Periphery workforce continuum comprising regular and Reserve Service personnel, Civil Servants, contractors and partners operating across all the different parts of Mintzberg’s organisational model. Although similar in many respects to the Whole Force Approach, it seeks to move beyond this by challenging some of the current limitations, including conceptual, . . . by including bureaucratic and adhocratic elements. It requires much greater differentiation in how different groups are organised, viewed, managed and rewarded.<sup>134</sup>



**Figure 3.4 – Example: An Adaptive Design Model**

Source: O’Neill, *Developing a Flexible Royal Air Force for an Age of Uncertainty*, 54.

<sup>133</sup> O’Neill, *Developing a Flexible Royal Air Force for an Age of Uncertainty*, 49. O’Neill describes these components as follows: “The ‘Strategic Apex’ provides the overall direction and control for a ‘Middle Line’ (or management) that oversees production by the ‘Operating Core’, supported by a ‘Techno-structure’ that designs, plans and changes the operating workflow and trains people to implement the processes. Finally, a ‘Support Staff’, including procurement, finance, HR and training functions, supports the other parts of the organisation by providing specialist advice and acting as the lubricant that reduces friction in the other components, especially where the different organisational elements come into contact.”

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

O'Neill's conceptualization is based on Henry Mintzberg's seminal works, including *Structure in Fives* (1983).

In this model, the core component (analogous to the brain and skeleton) would largely consist of regular force personnel – represented as the yellow shaded parts, while the periphery component (analogous to the flesh that would build around the skeleton and change in size and shape according to need) would include reserve force and civilian elements (e.g. public servants, contractors, academia, and other partners that can provide requisite expertise) – represented as the green shaded parts.<sup>135</sup> Lateral entry would supplement traditional development of talent from within, but it is also interesting to note that external talent can conduct work in more flexible ways (e.g. contractors or academia not necessarily bound to the same bureaucratic structure or formalized processes). Referring to Mintzberg's taxonomy of 'Machine Bureaucracy' and 'Adhocracies', he highlights that while bureaucracies with their characteristics of centralization and formalization (of processes) enable effects such as predictability and accountability, particularly in permissive environments, they do not cope well with uncertainty, whereas the comparatively smaller organic structures and decentralized approaches of adhocracies facilitate faster adaptation.<sup>136</sup>

While he is not prescriptive in how to practically balance these two approaches, a salient point is simply that provide courses of action from a strategy formulation perspective and it resonates with the aforementioned calls from talent management scholars for differentiated HR architectures. Certain organizational components may lend themselves more to one approach or the other. The operating core (e.g. flying units) and middle line (e.g. operational staffs) may remain largely regular and reserve force, and require varying degrees of bureaucratic structures

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<sup>135</sup>Ibid., 55-59.

<sup>136</sup>O'Neill, *Delivering Flexibility through People: Harnessing Human Capability*, 50.

with formalized process depending on the criticality of the operations. Whereas techno structure and support staff may contribute more optimally to the end state under an adhocracy with lesser framework of structure and process (e.g. a tiger team responsible for a rapid technology insertion or capability development for a new theatre of operations). Having a more diverse mix of regular, reserves, and civilians in the techno structure, support staffs, and strategic apex could help inspire innovation and augment the skills that internal talent development framework struggles to fill.<sup>137</sup>

## Discussion

Air Force Personnel Doctrine and the RCAF Campaign plan both recognize the importance of forming an integrated team of regular, reserve, and civilian entities. The concept of integrating core and periphery groups of talent is not new, and will likely continue to be a consideration when faced increases or decreases to CAF authorized manning levels. In practice, the tensions between centralized versus decentralized structures and authorities, and the associated degree of formalization in the processes required to support these approaches, may manifest in considerations of how to innovate our workforce structure (e.g. concepts for air expeditionary or main operating wings). Other practices this may implicate include the establishment, occupation structure, production, and manning lines of effort in the HR portion of the RCAF Campaign Plan.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, these tensions can manifest in considering how talent management is governed (e.g. accountabilities, responsibilities, authorities of central authority career managers, branch advisors, chain of command, etc). An investment into flexibility as a means to PAM has a myriad of implications and costs in terms of overcoming the institutional

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid.

<sup>138</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Royal Canadian Air Force Campaign Plan, Version 2.0*, 44-48.

friction to innovate structures and processes, as well as force generating the necessary distribution ‘generalist’ and ‘specialist’ talent within core and periphery components.

### **Talent Implications and the Moral Component of Airpower**

CAF Joint Doctrine broadly highlights that the moral component concerns the “persuasion of people to fight” and conceptually overlaps with a broad range of aspects such as culture, morale, leadership, and effective management.<sup>139</sup> Although talent management implicates these same aspects amongst others highlighted in the literature examined thus far, this section underscores a perspective that one of the foremost concerns within the intersection of talent management and the moral component is setting conditions for long term motivation and commitment, through a central thrust of member and organizational engagement. In this regard, there is significant overlap with the conceptual foundations of CAF leadership doctrine wherein it describes various principles towards one of the CAF’s essential organizational outcomes: *member well-being and commitment*.<sup>140</sup>

There have been many theories and practices developed towards furthering our understanding and fostering motivation and commitment in the work place. The details would go well beyond the surface of this examination, which merely highlights that dominant approaches in the literature include some combination of applying extrinsic and intrinsic ‘rewards’ or ‘motivators’. By way of example, a recent research project examined the framing of motivators under paradigms such as Herzberg’s two-factor (i.e. Hygiene and Motivator

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<sup>139</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GJ-005-000/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 01 Canadian Military Doctrine*, 2-4.

<sup>140</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-004, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, Vol. 2 (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy - Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 144. CAF Leadership Doctrine describes an organizational effectiveness framework that consists of Essential Outcomes (mission success, internal integration, external adaptability, member well-being and commitment) & Conduct Values (military ethos), Perceived effectiveness and legitimacy, and Secondary Outcomes (reputation, trust & confidence, and support).

factors) theory and its application towards retention within the CAF, and it highlighted among several conclusions related to strategy formulation the need for more combinations of approaches in response to the increasing diversity of demographics, what members value within these factors, and how these can change over time.<sup>141</sup> Other studies have explored with more granularity the sub-populations of the CAF,<sup>142</sup> and even the cultural norms of the various communities within the RCAF,<sup>143</sup> which all can further inform considerations such as targeting and delivering differentiated motivator effects to shape the proverbial ‘war for talent’. The various calls to understand these nuances can be related back to aforementioned Collings and Mellahi strategic talent management paradigm that work motivation, organizational commitment, and extra-role behaviour mediate the relationship between talent management and organizational performance – particularly, their premise that talent management identifies talent, deploys them to the organization’s pivotal jobs, and supports them with a differentiated HR architecture to maximize the potential for motivated task execution, organizational commitment, and extra-role behaviour (going ‘beyond the call’).<sup>144</sup>

CAF leadership doctrine lends theoretical support for the call to *support talent with a differentiated HR architecture*, as well as some guiding principles to start contextualizing leader responsibilities and practices to answer that call. The integrative CAF leadership model informs that the essential outcome of motivation and commitment is a function of individual and/or group

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<sup>141</sup>M. A. Jacula, "Two Factor Theory for Innovative Retention in the Canadian Armed Forces" (Master of Defence Studies research project, Canadian Forces College, 2014), 120.

<sup>142</sup>Nancy Otis and Michelle Straver, *Review of Attrition and Retention Research for the Canadian Forces* (Defence Research & Development Canada - Centre for Operational Research and Analysis: Technical Memorandum TM 2008-030, 2008), 70.

<sup>143</sup>Allan English and John Westrop, *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations* (Trenton ON: Canadian Forces Aerospace Warfare Centre, 2007), 267.

<sup>144</sup>Collings and Mellahi, *Strategic Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 304-313

capabilities, behaviour and performance,<sup>145</sup> which in this context could be driven by factors such as the degree to which the organization employs *facilitative*, *supportive*, and *participative* leadership approaches (influence behaviours),<sup>146</sup> as well as workplace structure, resources, and practices (HRM system characteristics). Regarding the latter system characteristics, this paper has alluded to the notion that personnel doctrine, policies, procedures, practices, tools, and other requisite components of a talent management framework are challenged constantly to provide sufficient differentiation to accommodate its extant, or increasing necessity for a more diverse, workforce against the aforementioned myriad factors of institutional friction. However, while leadership efforts towards improving options for extrinsic and intrinsic rewards or reduced friction in delivering them are important, sustained engagement between the institution (as represented by the leadership within the chain of command and central authorities) and its members to remains an essential element to nurturing the talent pool. In other words, we work with what we have and consider how to optimize the breadth and depth of engagement and empowerment of leaders and members in developing talent. In terms of which functional areas within talent management to consider optimizing engagement and empowerment, the scholarly and military literature reviewed in this study typically point to HRM component activities such as career and succession planning, PD, personnel appraisal, and mentorship. While extrinsic rewards such as compensation and benefits, social programs, and honours, awards, and recognition are also contributors to work motivation, organizational commitment, and extra-role behaviour, a detailed examination of those functions would be well beyond the scope of this study.

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<sup>145</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-004, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, 120-121.

<sup>146</sup>*Ibid.*

## Engagement and Career / Succession Planning

With respect to engagement in career and succession planning, dominant points of discussion tend to revolve around the concept of setting conditions for person-job fit and meaningful work, and trust in the career management system. Corroborating professional intuition and doctrine, literature on person-organizational fit can show that the more an individual fits into an organization the greater the organizational commitment.<sup>147</sup> Studies into CAF exit surveys have described factors that influence decisions to leave the organization, and amongst the more dominant descriptors were terms such as “the feeling of accomplishing meaningful work”, “the career management system”, and “I trust career managers to strike a fair balance between service requirements and my personal circumstances.”<sup>148</sup> In contrast to the more proactive and intentional care that is afforded through the aforementioned succession management processes, Okros highlights that “vacancy management generally reflects a more passive, reactive approach of developing policies and procedures to fill positions if and as these arise.”<sup>149</sup> Thus, while the organization and its leaders may articulate intent to optimize person-job fit, the practice may not actually facilitate the intent and can contribute to dissatisfaction.

It is a challenge to understand the extent to which the intent-practice gap is a result of passive, reactive, or inadequate engagement (influence behaviours), rigidity in operational requirements, resources (e.g. funding for relocations), or practices (system characteristics), or if there was not enough information available to support a more optimal solution. Okros highlights the nature of the CAF Personnel System “lacks the person- or job-specific information to actually make decisions at the individual level” and much of the formal information available for

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<sup>147</sup>Collings and Mellahi, *Strategic Talent Management: A Review and Research Agenda*, 310.

<sup>148</sup>Kathy Michaud and Irina Goldenberg, *The Canadian Forces Exit Survey: Descriptive Analyses of 2008 to 2011 Data* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis Technical Memorandum TM 2012-026, 2012).

<sup>149</sup>Okros, *Becoming an Employer of Choice: Human Resource Challenges within DND and the CF*, 167.

career decision-making tends to articulate “broader, transferable competencies” rather than position specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and other attributes (KSAO).<sup>150</sup> By way of context, the appraisal system (a key function that informs career/succession planning) applies a standardized set of items across the CAF with common ‘word pictures’ for each rank level rather than providing either position- or occupation- specific evaluations of actual performance.<sup>151</sup> Thus, in support of enhancing engagement, one consideration for the RCAF is how to adequately define the competencies required for talent and pivotal positions that contribute to the higher levels of PAM (e.g. domestic joint headquarters, international coalition headquarters, machinery of government positions), which overlaps with the concepts and context that Kanikara and Gladman et al. provide. Some positions will inevitably lend themselves to a ‘broad transferable competencies’ approach (e.g. senior appointments typically for more senior officers or NCMs, or perhaps those associated with supervisory occupations), whereas others might lend themselves to more position specific KSAOs (e.g. those associated with mission-critical functions, airworthiness/safety, mission assurance/support).

#### Engagement and Professional / Self- Development

One aspect of PD that relates to this thread on engagement is further consideration of how experience, either already acquired or through postings/secondments/attachments, could provide qualification equivalencies or means to go beyond standard career paths. An example benefit could be in avoiding redundant training and development (i.e. ‘checks in the box’) and divert the talent towards more meaningful work. Another could be that it provides more effective means for emerging techno-structure or specialized staff support roles not adequately

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<sup>150</sup>Ibid., 171.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.

reflected in the availability of education opportunities in our PD system.<sup>152</sup> CAF leadership doctrine lends support to the concept of ‘adult-learning’ and *andragogical* methodologies for “those experienced, inquisitive, self-starting and intellectually oriented leaders.”<sup>153</sup> This highlights a consideration on the other side of the engagement coin, whereby members have a key role in terms of engaging in self-development towards PAM. In particular, the literature highlights that ‘self insight’ is key for developing the flexibility to shift leader role from one context to the next, investing in personal growth is key to increasing one’s capacity for influence (tactical to strategic), and also to “unlearning some facets of effective leadership at the tactical level when moving to the strategic domain.”<sup>154</sup>

#### Engagement and Personnel Appraisal / Selection

With respect to personnel appraisal in the CAF context, CFPAS provides one of the key ways and means to formally communicate and engage talent, but also to inform career planning and the promotion system. The appraisal criteria (e.g. performance assessment factors, potential assessment factors, ordinal rankings) and selection board scoring criteria (SCRITs) can play a significant role in driving workplace behaviour and organizational commitment. Overall, rigid regulations governing promotion criteria,<sup>155</sup> policies governing selection board execution and SCRIT development (e.g. the annually updated CF Selection Board Manual), and a comprehensive system for board result review and redress of grievance provide the CAF with a robust ways and means to achieve well-intended principles such as fairness and merit. However, a practical challenge that implicates SCRIT development is how to tune them to enable

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<sup>152</sup>O'Neill, *Delivering Flexibility through People: Harnessing Human Capability*, 76.

<sup>153</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-006, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*, 151.

<sup>154</sup>Alan Okros, *Leadership in the Canadian Military Context* (Kingston: Canadian Defence Academy, November 2010), 50.

<sup>155</sup>For example: Canada. Department of National Defence. QR&O 11.02, *Queen's Regulations and Orders: Conditions Governing Promotion* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Directorate Strategic Corporate Services.

development of differentiated talent pools, for example: senior leaders or ‘generalists’, as well as those with potential to lead in functional or professional areas (but perhaps not senior leader potential). Long-term commitment can wane when members in the latter have ability and motivation but do not get the opportunity to serve in a position that is given relatively high weighting in the SCRIT for promotion due to systemic issues (e.g. few positions, protracted wait-times for opportunity, funding for relocations). Although ‘bypass promotions’ (the practice of promoting someone ranked lower than the next person due to be promoted on the merit list) provide some organizational flexibility, the relatively rigid nature of the system to require promotion by ordinal ranking can lead to sub-optimal results in terms of person-job fit. For example, if the organization has to bypass person number 10 and promote number 11 because they possess specific functional or professional competencies, the organization would be compelled to promote number 10 in the interest of fairness and merit but may also need to manage the perception of effectiveness when number 10 is forced into the only available job for which they might not be a fit.

While a detailed analysis of CFPAS is beyond the scope of this examination, a recent research project highlighted issues such as under-utilization of the *Personnel Development Review* (PDR) and calls for the *Personnel Evaluation Report* (PER) to incorporate more details on members’ readiness to pursue career courses, readiness for geographical relocations, readiness to accept promotion, member’s career objectives, and to provide differentiated overall potential assessments (e.g. lateral progression to a position at same level, potential for promotion within next two years, high potential for promotion to two ranks higher within 5 years).<sup>156</sup>

Among other potential benefits, the existing PDR framework provides means to articulate

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<sup>156</sup>R. F. Lagacé, "Réforme Du Processus De Promotion Et D'Évaluation Dans Les Forces Armées Canadiennes : Vers Un Modèle Systématique Et Transparent" (Master of Defence Studies research project, Canadian Forces College, 2015), , 50, 82-103.

objectives and plans to develop mastery, members' developmental needs and career aspirations, and to conduct less formal appraisals of performance to enable coaching and improving person-job fit. In reality, professional experience calls to mind significant theory-practice gaps whereby the PDRs are not appropriately used to achieve these benefits. Accordingly, there are considerations that could be given towards sharpening the focus on PDRs to ensure meaningful PDRs (or some other feedback mechanisms) are provided with sufficient frequency to optimize engagement. Empowering leaders and their members to articulate readiness and aspirations for courses, relocation, and promotion could provide the career management and promotion system with better decision-making information, and provide all with more meaningful opportunities for self-examination and enhancing self-awareness.

#### Engagement and Mentorship Programs

Mentioned earlier, mentorship is another one of the key ways and means to engage talent in a manner that complements the above components. Its very nature of coaching and passing on wisdom and knowledge can accelerate the development of ability and person-job fit, engender self-awareness, and sustain motivation and commitment. The literature highlights insufficient familiarity with the process and its value.<sup>157</sup> A recent CAF student research project examining a RCAF mentorship program also highlights some potentially dysfunctional outcomes of mentorship such as sponsorship of mentees leading to unfair advantage or effectively nepotism, elitism and the aforementioned adverse affects of exclusive talent management, and mentor neglect.<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, the study suggested, "the current program incorrectly assumes that all leaders are capable of being mentors," and made a call for increased documentation and training

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<sup>157</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-006, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*, 138.

<sup>158</sup>Rodgers, *Assessing the RCAF Mentorship Program*, 26.

to “encourage constructive mentoring behaviours and prevent potentially destructive mentoring behaviours”, as well as information management tools to facilitate mentor-mentee matching.<sup>159</sup>

The previous chapter alluded that there are some interesting linkages between developing mentorship and talent management capacities. Particularly in light of the overlapping interest in the importance of engagement, further consideration could be given to examine the adequacy of the training and documented guiding principles and practices that the organization (as represented by the leadership within the chain of command and central authorities) to engender effective behaviours in the tactical aspects of talent management.

#### Discussion

Placing an emphasis on a central outcome of engagement and empowerment provides a unifying theme to appreciate the interconnected nature of the aforementioned functions implicated in talent management, and to perhaps underpin an integrated approach to developing, employing, and retaining talent. This section has merely scratched the surface to illustrate what this study considers to be some of the key challenges and considerations that the institution has in differentiating the ‘unique intersection of knowledge, skills, and behaviours’ – to borrow the US Army vernacular – of its members and the competencies that its positions require. Additionally, it begs consideration of how to ensure effective individual and organizational behaviours in carrying out career/succession planning, professional/self- development, appraisal/selection, and mentorship that engender sustained motivation and commitment, in spite of the rational constraints and limitations that the current state of centralization, formalization, and information management within those functions imposes.

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<sup>159</sup>Ibid., 80-82.

CAF leadership doctrine emphasizes the need for this type of consideration in the derivation of the conceptual boundaries for effective leadership in the CAF, based on Robert Quinn's model describing the competing values of organizational effectiveness.<sup>160</sup> This particular examination deduced that rote workforce structures, developmental paths, centralized authorities, and formalizations are (perhaps well-intended) implementations towards values of internal integration and economic rationality that compete with (perhaps equally well-intended) considerations to increase human relations through engagement and empowerment, and adaptability through differentiation. Being stuck in the 'messy middle' of these two realities can be ineffective, too nebulous, and unsatisfactory from a practitioner standpoint. Thus, to stimulate some further consideration towards developing vectors out of this organizational dilemma and 'messy middle', the next chapter of the paper presents some research on practices and the emerging LDM concept.

## **SUMMARY AND ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS**

In exploring how to make further sense of talent management and offering considerations towards conceptualizing it as a way towards the RCAF's end of achieving PAM, this chapter has related some talent management themes and specific HRM functions of consequence to the conceptual, physical, and moral components of airpower. Conceptually, efforts contextualize the meaning of talent and scope of talent management should complement other efforts towards PAM, such as the consideration of formalized airpower education for which Gladman et al. have called. The examples of how other military organizations have conceptualized talent and the scope of talent management could be leveraged but tuned to our particular end and strategic context (societal, demographic, normative, economic, among others). The theme of uncertainty

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<sup>160</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PA-005-000/AP-004, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Conceptual Foundations*, 32-34.

in talent management behoves military organizations with its closed employment systems and personnel caps to consider how workforce structure and planning can be more adaptable. If the RCAF (and CAF for that matter) is going to use the term ‘talent’, then it would be better served to consider how it defines it and more clearly articulate what scope of practice it is willing to invest to manage it – particularly who it will include, how much differentiation it is willing to provide to develop and sustain motivation and commitment.

RCAF strategic guiding documents like *Air Force Vectors* and the *RCAF Campaign Plan* reflect some of these themes in its aspiration to fully harness the human dimension towards PAM, particularly in articulating an operational design for how certain HRM lines of operation need to be synchronized and asserting that it will contribute to “influencing and implementing CAF Human Resources programmes”.<sup>161</sup> The complex interrelated nature of systems that enable engagement of talent (a critical aspect of fully harnessing human capital) such as PD/self-development, career/succession planning, appraisal, and mentorship suggests the need for an integrated approach (an alignment of each system’s outcomes, and enhancing sharing of information amongst systems). While centralized and formalized ways and means may be more difficult to adapt, consideration in the mean time could be given to enabling lower levels of the organization improve mastery of the complex interrelated system of systems and grasp the themes highlighted in this examination of talent implications. Mindful that leaders and members at all levels in the chain of command and central authorities play a critical of role, consideration could be given to expanding upon or supplementing the strategic guidance to provide a more clear articulation of how to sharpen its engagement of talent.

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<sup>161</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Royal Canadian Air Force Campaign Plan, Version 2.0*, 44-48.

## **CHAPTER 4: INTEGRATING TALENT MANAGEMENT WAYS AND MEANS**

*The institutional capacities to differentiate among the distinct strengths of individuals and to thereby plan for the succession of those individuals into appropriately differentiated positions (and hence maximize effectiveness of and congruence with the institution) are fundamental to the CF's succession planning and long-term success.*

– *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution (2007)*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapters derived some broad considerations and key tensions within the approach space defined by contemporary talent management concepts. They particularly emphasized engendering long-term commitment within the CAF/RCAF's relatively closed employment system as an organizational imperative. They also highlighted challenges with engaging RCAF talent, in part due to the complicated relations between CAF Personnel System components like workforce planning (defining 'talent requirements'), professional/self-development, career/succession planning, appraisal, and mentorship (arguably not an institutionalized component) that have each been designed and implemented to achieve a multitude of desired outcomes. It alluded to a conceptual challenge of developing a vector out of being stuck in a 'messy middle' characterized by (perhaps well-intended) implementations towards organizational values of internal integration and economic rationality (e.g. glacial workforce planning and job analysis framework, developmental paths, centralized authorities, and formalizations) that compete with (perhaps equally well-intended) calls to increase human relations through engagement and empowerment, and adaptability through differentiation. This chapter will provide some examples of practices and initiatives, with the intent to stimulate further consideration for more integrated approaches to these systems in terms of aligning

outcomes and enhancing information sharing. The proposed net effect is to enhance engagement and empowerment in managing talent, which evidently is a key to developing a vector out of the ‘messy middle’ in harnessing human capital towards PAM.

## **CONSIDERATIONS FROM PRIVATE SECTOR PRACTICES**

While CAF Personnel Doctrine adopts a critical view of such practices, it acknowledges that the CAF Personnel System imports many of the attributes and best practices from traditional personnel management and HRM used in the private sector.<sup>162</sup> This section begins by bringing forward Martin and Schmidt’s research on talent development programs of over 100 firms and adapts some of their findings and “core set of best practices for identifying and managing emerging talent.”<sup>163</sup> Table 4.1 lists their findings and correlates them to the aforementioned career/succession planning, professional/self- development, appraisal/selection, and mentorship functions. The intent is not to provide a detailed analysis of their findings nor to further belabour issues within CAF Personnel System functions, but merely to illustrate some of the contemporary thinking in the labour pool that exists outside the CAF/RCAF and to stimulate further consideration of the need to integrate the effects of those CAF Personnel System functions towards engaging and empowering talent.

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<sup>162</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence. B-GL-005-100/FP-001, *Canadian Forces Joint Publication (CFJP) 1.0 Military Personnel Management Doctrine*, 1-3.

<sup>163</sup>Martin and Schmidt, *How to Keep Your Top Talent*

Table 4.1 – Martin and Schmidt Core Talent Development Practices

<b>Core Practice</b>	<b>Functions Implicated</b>
<b><i>Explicitly test candidates in three dimensions: ability, engagement, and aspiration.</i></b>	Appraisal, Self-Development (articulate aspirations), Mentorship, Career/Succession planning
<b><i>Emphasize future competencies needed (derived from [organizational]-level growth plans) more heavily than current performance when choosing personnel for development.</i></b>	Career/Succession planning, Mentorship, Appraisal (development reviews), Professional/Self- Development
<b><i>Manage the quantity and quality of high potentials at the [organizational] level, as a portfolio of scarce growth assets.</i></b>	Career/Succession Planning, Mentorship,
<b><i>Forget rote functional or unit rotations; place [emerging] leaders in intense assignments with precisely described development challenges.</i></b>	Career/Succession Planning, Self-Development (align aspirations), Mentorship, (informed by) Appraisal
<b><i>Identify the riskiest, most challenging positions across the [organization], and assign them directly to rising stars.</i></b>	Career/Succession Planning, Self-Development, Mentorship, (informed by) Appraisal
<b><i>Create individual development plans; link personal objectives to the organization’s plans for growth, rather than to generic competency models.</i></b>	Appraisal (development reviews), Mentorship, Professional/Self- Development
<b><i>Reevaluate top talent annually for possible changes in ability, engagement, and aspiration levels.</i></b>	Appraisal, Self-Development (articulate aspirations), Mentorship, Career/Succession planning
<b><i>Offer significantly differentiated compensation and recognition to star employees.</i></b>	Remuneration (less practical), Honours, Awards & Recognition
<b><i>Hold regular, open dialogues between high potentials and program managers, to monitor star employees’ development and satisfaction.</i></b>	Mentorship, Self-Development
<b><i>Replace broadcast communications about the [organization’s] strategy with individualized messages for emerging leaders—with an emphasis on how their development fits into the [organization’s] plans.</i></b>	Mentorship, Self-Development, Career/Succession Planning

Adapted from: Martin and Schmidt, “How to Keep Your Top Talent”, 55.

It noteworthy that they highlight extrinsic reward factors such as compensation and recognition, which implicates CAF remuneration and honours, awards & recognition. While it is beyond the scope of this paper to delve into the details of those functions, a salient and somewhat evident point is that the CAF compensation system is based on an egalitarian approach that all at the same rank share the same set of professional responsibilities and obligation.<sup>164</sup> Some differentiation is provided through specialist pay and allowances, but those are appropriate to recognizing differences at a group level. Evidently, it is considered inappropriate within the organizational context to provide differentiated pay to ‘star performers’, however some forms of additional leave, training/education opportunities, and a robust system of honours, awards, and recognition provide but a few other means of distinguishing those who disproportionately contribute to the CAF/RCAF.

Private sector practices prominently feature the integration of numerous stand-alone HRM practices (or stovepipes) to provide an end-to-end process that notionally spans phases from attraction to retirement. Josh Bersin, a prominent talent management consultant and executive leader, highlights that integrated talent management approaches sought to address amongst these stovepipes issues such as the lack of: unified vision of talent capabilities and gaps; connection or responsiveness to business requirements; ability to share information and processes; responsiveness to employee demands; and administrative efficiency.<sup>165</sup> Accordingly, an entire industry (including consultancy, information technology among others) was built around the lofty goal of giving organizations “an integrated view of capabilities, leadership gaps, succession pools, and even talent needs for the future”, which remains to this day a significant

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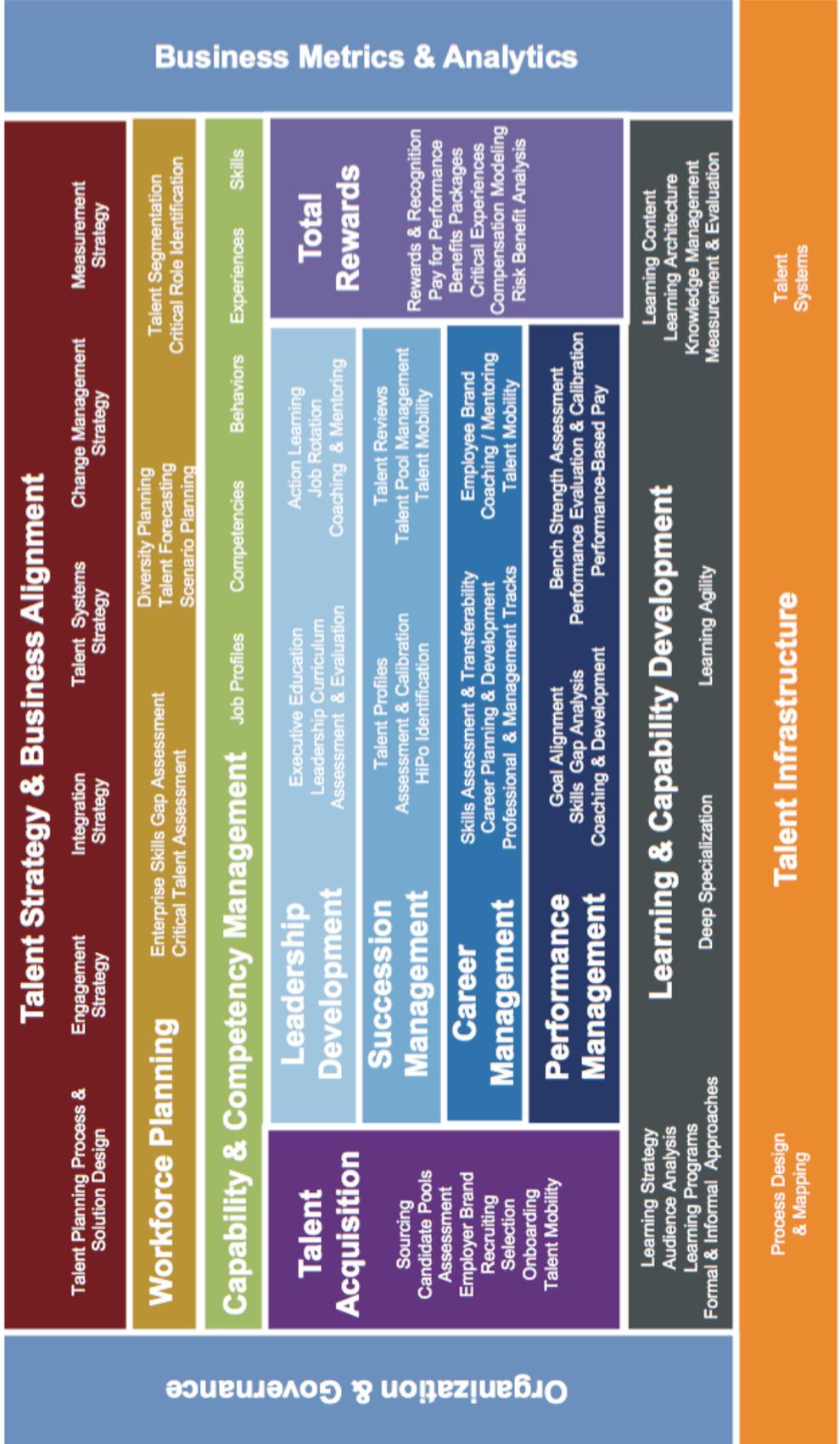
<sup>164</sup>Okros, *Becoming an Employer of Choice: Human Resource Challenges within DND and the CF*, 174.

<sup>165</sup>Bersin, "Why People Management is Replacing Talent Management," *Bersin* (blog), last modified 25 January 2015, <http://joshbersin.com/2015/01/why-people-management-is-replacing-talent-management/>.

challenge.<sup>166</sup> Talent management research and consultant firm, Bersin & Associates, developed a framework depicted at figure 4.1 to articulate its approach to integrating practices and processes within a talent strategy.

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<sup>166</sup>Ibid.



**Figure 4.1 – Example: Bersin & Associates Talent Management Framework**  
 Source: Bersin et al., *The Talent Management Framework – Executive Summary*, 6.

Despite being a complicated model that may not be easily understood, the Bersin & Associates model is evidently very comprehensive in terms being able to depict the relationship amongst vast number of HRM functions and issues. It can guide the myriad of components (or requirements) to consider addressing within activities such as enterprise/business analysis, strategy formulation, solution development, and performance measurement. The integrated talent management system approach may be suitable for larger enterprise organizations. The US Army Human Dimensions Capabilities Development Task Force recommended developing a “hybrid talent management model” that combines the aforementioned Colarusso & Lyle model as the core model, with elements of the Bersin & Associates model added as appropriate to its organizational context.<sup>167</sup>

In consideration of the CAF Personnel System (of systems), an implication of these examples of calls for integrated approaches and systems is the need to understand how changes to one function will impact the other functions and the overall system. While this may be somewhat evident, there is also only so much change that the CAF Personnel System can absorb given aspects such as the limited staff capacity within the CAF/DND and information management project scope (e.g. what is within scope of projects like MPMCT / GUARDIAN, or funding). As mentioned throughout this paper, a talent management system is not an end in itself; therefore sophisticated software solutions should not be seen as silver bullets, but rather enablers of the persistent requirement for leaders and members to sustain engagement. Bersin highlights that total integration of core HR processes was “once considered the nirvana of talent management” but is no longer the top of mind issue today; integrated systems still have their place – particularly to help simplify work and alleviate ‘overwhelmed employees’ – but he

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<sup>167</sup>United States. Department of the Army, *Talent Management in the Army: Review, Comment, and Recommendation on Talent Management Models (White Paper)*, 18.

places more emphasis on the need to focus on engagement and more inclusive approaches to development.<sup>168</sup> The next section will examine some developments within the CAF intended to integrate some of the ways and means implicated in talent management, generate efficiencies to alleviate work, and enhance engagement and empowerment.

## **DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE CAF**

As introduced in the first chapter, one of the more significant on-going initiatives implicating the CAF Personnel System is the development of the CAF LDM as an integrated set of ways and means to operationalize the CAF LDF (depicted earlier in Figure 3.1), which is the doctrinal articulation of the types of capacities that the CAF deems necessary to develop in its personnel in order to achieve organizational effectiveness. While the original focus of applying the LDF was towards guiding officer PD requirements and changes to the PD sub-system, it was determined that aspects of the LDF (particularly the competency-based approach to development) could be applied to NCM PD and other applications including appraisal, selection, and career planning.<sup>169</sup> From a HRM capability development perspective, the LDM provides a vehicle to scope out how much system integration the central authorities would undertake and to seek endorsement through CAF strategic-level governance committees (e.g. Canadian Forces Personnel Management Committee, Armed Forces Council). The endorsed scope integration proposed through the LDM concept includes development of a CAF competency dictionary to describe in more detail the LDF meta-competencies (expertise, cognitive capacities, social capacities, change capacities, professional ideology), and using this framework of competencies to align modernizations to: the PD system (e.g. individual training and education, self-

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<sup>168</sup>Bersin, *Why People Management is Replacing Talent Management*

<sup>169</sup>Karen J. Rankin and L. E. Noonan, *Canadian Armed Forces Competency Model (CAF CM) - A Framework for Application* (Defence Research & Development Canada: Scientific Report DRDC-RDDC-2015-R196, October 2015), 1.

development, updating key guiding documents, aligning PD governance); career planning activities (e.g. career, succession), and personnel appraisal/selection.<sup>170</sup> This paper will now highlight some current developments that support the LDM and some of their implications on talent management themes, concepts, and practices discussed earlier.

### **Development of CAF Competency Models and Dictionaries**

Recognizing the theoretical or conceptual nature of the LDF, the CAF has undertaken several efforts in recent years to develop competency dictionaries to operationalize it for use in practice. While it is beyond the scope of this examination to detail these developments, the theoretical considerations, and practical validations, Director General Military Personnel Research and Analysis (DGMPRA) research reports reflect significant academic rigour behind investigating the most appropriate approaches to establish a common framework that can be applied to developing competency dictionaries that enable differentiation of requirements for officers and NCMs.<sup>171</sup> Leveraging a breadth of literature, one report adopts the following definition of competencies:

Competencies are global, broad, and comprehensive characteristics that include Knowledge, Skills, Ability, and Other Attributes (KSAOs), such as values, and personality traits that are linked to strategic organizational goals, and can be used to measure performance in a reliable and discriminating manner. They provide a flexible work taxonomy that addresses the demands of changing organizations and can be the basis for organizational Human Resource (HR) systems.<sup>172</sup>

In developing a common framework to define competencies, a CAF Competency Model has been proposed to comprise four major components (depicted at Figure 4.2): CAF values,

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<sup>170</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Meeting Record and Decision Sheet - Armed Forces Council #141202 - 2 December 2014*.

<sup>171</sup>Francesca Ruscito and Karen Rankin, *The Development of a Competency Dictionary for the Canadian Armed Forces* (Defence Research & Development Canada: Technical Memorandum DGMPRA TM 2013-029, December 2013), 124.; Rankin and Noonan, *Canadian Armed Forces Competency Model (CAF CM) - A Framework for Application*, 38.

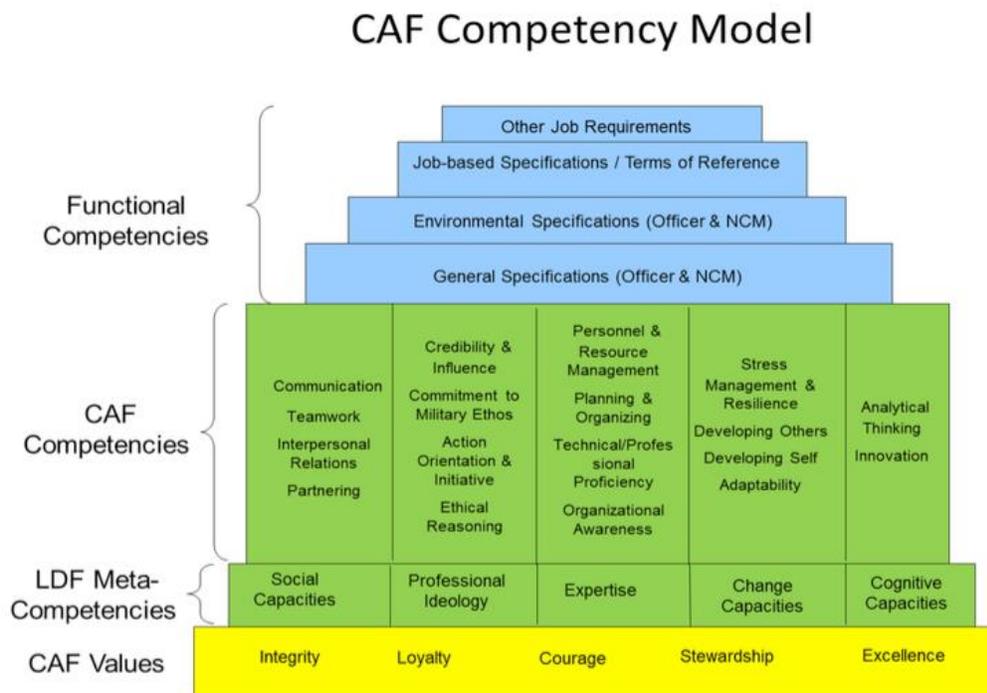
<sup>172</sup>*Ibid.*, 1-2.

LDF meta-competencies, CAF competencies, and Functional competencies.<sup>173</sup> Forming the foundation of the model, CAF values include the core values of integrity, loyalty, courage, stewardship, and excellence articulated in *DND and CAF Code of Values and Ethics*. The LDF meta-competencies provide another layer of conceptual basis to align other competencies. From the five LDF meta-competencies, 19 CAF (i.e. organizational) competencies were derived “to reflect what members at all levels of the CAF have to deliver on the mission” and validated through scientific research.<sup>174</sup> Functional competencies serve to account for work requirements such as those detailed general specifications (officer and NCM), environmental specifications (officer and NCM), occupation specifications, specialty specifications, job-based specifications (e.g. terms of reference), etc.

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<sup>173</sup>Ibid., 10.

<sup>174</sup>Ibid. “Each competency contains a sample of Behavioural Indicators (BIs), which are observable and measurable behaviours representative of average, effective performance, at each rank level. The CAF CD was designed to illustrate the progressive natures of competencies as individuals progress up through the ranks . . . As part of its development, the CAF CD was validated with thousands of officers and NCMs representing 12 rank levels (i.e., NCMs from Cpl/LS to CWO/CPO1; officers from Lt/SLt to BGen/Cmdre) to ensure that the competencies and BIs were accurate, relevant to the performance of their work, and that they resonated in terms of the terminology used in the competency names and in the content of the BIs.”



**Figure 4.2 – Proposed CAF Competency Model**

Source: Rankin and Noonan, *Canadian Armed Forces Competency Model – A Framework for Application*, Scientific Report DRDC-RDDC-2015-R196, 11.

Using this framework, analysts are currently proceeding with competency studies of different rank groups, which in turn implicate the development of more detailed competency dictionaries and refinements to the myriad of aforementioned types of specifications and to the PD, Career Planning, and Appraisal components of LDM components. Evidently, there remains a large sum of work to study various ranks, occupations, specialties, qualification specifications, and job analysis to name a few.

One implication from the above definition of competency is that it should be considered in the basis of formalizing a definition of talent within the CAF/RCAF context. The aspects of KSAOs, values, and personality traits conceptually overlap with the definition that the US Army adopted (unique intersection of skill, knowledge, and behaviours in every person). From a perspective of engaging individuals, an emphasis on developing and employing ‘broad

transferable competencies’ may have some interesting implications, as it may present many possibilities to some members for more differentiated career-, professional-, and self-development paths – a feature of more inclusive talent management.

As highlighted earlier, consideration will need to be given to what types of jobs or positions would lend themselves to employing ‘broad transferable competencies’ versus more specific KSAOs. Thus, another consideration, from an organizational perspective, is the extent to which environmental, occupational, specialty, etc. specifications will be refined towards a competency-based approach, as that could have significant implications on how individual training and education is conducted to achieve the progressive levels of professional mastery. Researchers have recommended further work to understand how to best incorporate CAF competency dictionaries into the CAF individual training and education system (CFITES) and PAS.<sup>175</sup>

### **CAF Personnel Appraisal System Renewal**

As mentioned in the first chapter, the CAF is progressing with a replacement for CFPAS. While there are many details underlying a project of this magnitude, this section will highlight some of the salient features implicated in the themes of exclusive/inclusive approaches to talent management, and enhancing engagement and empowerment. A concept design paper produced to articulate principles and high-level requirements provided the following vision for a renewed personnel appraisal system (PAS):

The renewed PAS will support the career development and planning of CAF members by providing timely, accurate and constructive performance feedback, and by optimizing their potential to rise to, and succeed at, higher ranks through valid and transparent procedures. CAF members will have confidence and satisfaction in the replacement PAS as a fair and efficient system that will reflect individual choices and flexible career plans. CAF leaders will trust the system’s

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<sup>175</sup>Ibid.

capacity to identify and select the most suitable, motivated, and deserving members for promotion and senior appointment.<sup>176</sup>

The project, named Personnel Appraisal and Talent Management System (PATMS), identified a series of principles and overarching practices aimed to address issues identified through various research, working groups, and stakeholder engagements.

First, is the use of *standardized evaluation and development criteria* based on competencies detailed in a CAF Competency Dictionary.<sup>177</sup> This implicates the aforementioned theme of issue identifying talent, as well as issues with the extant CFPAS where inflated assessments make it more difficult for selection boards to distinguish between high performers with and without actual potential to assume increased rank.<sup>178</sup> Within this call for increased standardization, a somewhat evident consideration for the RCAF (and other environments or level 0/1 organizations) is the extent to which centralization and formalization of succession planning (e.g. criteria for potential ranking boards) and appointments (e.g. refining competency requirements for key positions) will be agreed upon, given the current approaches to succession management and principle of command prerogative to select commanders (i.e. empowering the chain of command).

Second, is enhanced *system integration* among aspects of the career management, such as the linkage of specifications (e.g. organizational and functional competencies) to career/succession planning, PD, and personnel appraisal using a common competency framework.<sup>179</sup> The integration should enable personnel appraisal to inform (based on a common competency framework) selection for promotion, training and education, and employment in a

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<sup>176</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Concept Design for New Personnel Appraisal System*, 1.

<sup>177</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Briefing Deck to CFPAC - Personnel Appraisal and Talent Management System (PATMS)* (National Defence Headquarters Ottawa: Director General Military Careers, 25 September 2015).

<sup>178</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Concept Design for New Personnel Appraisal System*, 2.

<sup>179</sup>Ibid.

manner that meets short- and long-term organizational objectives.<sup>180</sup> The integration requires alignment of policies and information systems (e.g. performance evaluation, potential assessment, electronic scoring boards) among other requirements, as well as engagement highlighted in the previous point. If successful, this initiative could address the aforementioned need for better decision-making information in talent management.

Third, is *individualized consideration* through “proactive career planning that supports members’ career aspirations and other input, empowers them with career planning information, and enhances communication with decision makers.”<sup>181</sup> The PATMS is intended to implement a Member Aspiration Profile (MAP) as part of the personnel appraisal software, in order to “enhance awareness of a member’s motivation for various career opportunities and of their family considerations.”<sup>182</sup> The MAP will provide a means to articulate career and PD aspirations, to ‘opt-out’ of competing for promotion or senior/key appointments, and to communicate specific circumstances.<sup>183</sup> Evidently, this would be an enabler towards the aforementioned themes of engagement, empowerment, and differentiated career-/development-paths – provided that leaders and members use the tool and manage expectations appropriately. This further implicates the fostering of self-awareness and mindfulness of the requirements to succeed at higher levels of professional mastery.

Fourth, is *efficiency* through innovation and technology.<sup>184</sup> One of the featured changes in PATMS is to remove the extant PDR process and implement a Performance Feedback Notes (PFN) process. Amongst several, the intents include implementing the PFN as part of the

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<sup>180</sup>Ibid.

<sup>181</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Briefing Deck to CFPMC - Personnel Appraisal and Talent Management System (PATMS)*

<sup>182</sup>Ibid.

<sup>183</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Concept Design for New Personnel Appraisal System*, 10.

<sup>184</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *Briefing Deck to CFPMC - Personnel Appraisal and Talent Management System (PATMS)*

integrated information system (vice printing/signing paper PDR forms), and providing performance feedback on a continuous or as required basis (vice more formal PDR cycles). This generally aligns with principles of continuous improvement, and the implication of achieving tactical efficiencies (make the tool more usable) could be positive in terms increasing engagement.

## SUMMARY AND ADDITIONAL IMPLICATIONS

A further consideration is to examine the extent to which the evolving CAF competency framework and PAS could interface with the development of ‘dual professionals’, such as those in military legal or health care occupations that require externally regulated licensing to practice, and those who need to hold other types of regulated professional/specialist authorities/designations in domains such as engineering, project management, and finance amongst others. By way of providing some RCAF context, there are particular training and experiential requirements in developing authorities under the *DND/CF Airworthiness Program* and the emerging *DND Project Management Competency Development Program (PMCD)*.<sup>185</sup>

In an attempt to highlight some ways and means towards addressing some of the conceptual issues that intersect talent management and the RCAF’s professional airpower mastery aspirations, this chapter has focused on ways and means that enhance engagement and empowerment based on the aforementioned concept that it set conditions for longer-term

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<sup>185</sup>Canada. Department of National Defence, *DND Project Manager (PM) Qualification Process Handbook*, Version 1.0 ed. (Gatineau: Department of National Defence, 2013).; Canada. Department of National Defence. A-PD-002-000/SG-XXX, *Standard for Project Manager Competencies* (Gatineau: Department of National Defence, 2014). While the airworthiness program is well-established and broadly understood in the RCAF, the DND PMCD remains an emerging initiative for which these publications provide additional detail. The PMCD program may have interesting implications on the RCAF’s strategic influence in materiel aspects (e.g. procurement, systems engineering and management). For consideration, if more senior leadership positions within this employment domain become mandated to hold higher levels of PMCD authorities that in turn require more years of experience in projects, the development of talent may require adjustments to military career-/professional-/self- development paths and selection criteria for advancement, or more use of other components (e.g. DND civilian).

commitment of talent. Examples of researched ‘best talent management practices’ in portions of the private sector highlighted the ‘soft HRM’ themes of engagement, as well as the concept of integrating HRM functions. While much work remains, efforts to develop a CAF competency dictionary and to replace CFPAS with a more integrated PAS reflect should be encouraging. The PATMS does not just superficially use the term talent management, as its underlying principles reflect contemporary talent management themes such as the benefits of more inclusive approaches and providing means for improved empowerment and engagement. A salient consideration in improving engagement comes back to the issue of training and/or providing adequate guidance on aspects such as talent management principles, understanding talent (or competency) requirements, and how to effectively use tools like PATMS once it is implemented.

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Mindful of the increasingly pervasive use of the terms ‘talent’ and ‘talent management’ in the theory and practice of HRM across many organizations, this study was undertaken as an exercise in academic and strategic thought to contribute to the sense-making of these nebulous terms. Necessarily broad in scope and exploratory in nature, this paper examined conceptual boundaries and demonstrated overlaps amongst these nebulous terms, aspects of the CAF Personnel System, and the RCAF’s aspirations to ‘harness intellectual capital’ towards professional airpower mastery (PAM). This study presumed that organizations like the CAF and RCAF can benefit from extending their understanding of contemporary HRM by examining current themes within talent management literature, situating itself within the elastic conceptual boundaries of talent management, and considering the implications of other organizational concepts and practices.

While the themes and tensions within talent management approaches could have been presented through a variety of narratives, ‘the story’ that this paper told to stimulate further thought has demonstrated several points. First, talent management remains a loaded term that needs to be contextualized for organizational factors such as strategic environment, strategic ends, HRM practices, capacity, and behavioural characteristics. Second, the major conceptual themes and tensions characterized by uncertainty, internal/external labour pools, inclusive/exclusive approaches implicate several sub-systems within the CAF Personnel System, and RCAF personnel management policies and practices. Third, there is a confluence of concepts whereby the requisite end state of PAM requires talent management to anticipate and meet the RCAF needs for talent in its jobs and the CAF Leader Development Model (LDM) components provide a sub-set of ways and means to do so. Fourth, the theme of challenges in

defining talent and the scope of talent management as a capability intersects with the conceptual component of airpower and implies a need to intelligently discern the tensions between inclusive/exclusive approaches, differentiated/centralized HRM capabilities, and bureaucratic formalizations versus adhocracies that shape a member's ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) to contribute to the organization. Fifth, the theme of managing talent under uncertainty intersects with workforce planning aspects of HRM and the physical component of airpower, and this implicates considerations towards adaptable workforces. Sixth, one of the foremost concerns within the intersection of talent management and the moral component of airpower is setting conditions for long term motivation and commitment, through a central thrust of member and organizational engagement. Seventh, there are some noteworthy practices from the private sector that lend support to taking an integrated approach to talent management, generating efficiencies to alleviate workload, and thereby enhancing capacity for engagement and empowerment. Finally, the CAF LDM promises to provide some integrated ways and means through the development of a CAF Competency Dictionary and the Personnel Appraisal and Talent Management System (PATMS). An ultimately positive outcome would be that as these capabilities mature, they enable efficiencies, a clear articulation of competency requirements throughout the organization, enhanced capacity to identify, develop, employ, assess, engage, and empower talent in a more inclusive manner.

### **Limitations**

Having taken a broad conceptual approach to this examination, there are several limitations to scope and depth of the overlapping concepts that this paper could report. With respect to workforce planning, there are a myriad of possible models for occupation structures, terms of service, and career paths that could be considered to achieve a net effect of adaptability.

In practice, however, significant changes to future workforce structures can be relatively difficult to make considering the complications inherent with the highly formalized and centralized system for managing the establishment. With respect to concept of engagement, there are also vast numbers of behavioural theories and extrinsic/intrinsic motivators that could have been explored to sustain work motivation, engender organizational commitment, and encourage extra-role behaviour. Evidently, this paper was able to highlight several tensions to inform considerations of how to approach talent management and potential vectors for modernization, but not necessarily a finite point of arrival in the vastly complex solution space. This examination was also limited to applying broad talent management concepts to the RCAF, but not any deeper into its constituent sub-populations or communities – for example, occupational communities (e.g. aircrew, technicians, engineers, logisticians), occupational sub-communities (e.g. aircraft type, operational community, operational community supported).<sup>186</sup> Further examination into these communities could inform competency studies or considerations towards differentiated approaches to managing talent therein, and therefore inform further contextualization of the LDM and initiatives such as the PATMS.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Throughout this paper and the themes presented, an overarching commentary has been to consider *whether there could be more to talent management in the CAF/RCAF than the status quo* workforce planning, recruiting, selection, competency analysis, PD, appraisal, career and succession management, retention and terms of service, remuneration and rewards functions that talent management implicates. It is not a simple task to grasp the complicated interactions amongst the various CAF HRM sub-systems that implicate the management of talent towards

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<sup>186</sup>English and Westrop, *Canadian Air Force Leadership and Command: The Human Dimension of Expeditionary Air Force Operations*, 157. English and Westrop highlight this particular taxonomy and provide some unique insights into cultural aspects.

organizational objectives. The various institutional policy and personnel doctrines provide pieces of the overall puzzle (perhaps more akin to the multi-faceted Rubik's cube), but each piece alone does not address all types of organizational objectives. The gaps in understanding need to be bridged through thoughtful articulation of strategy or guidance. As mentioned earlier, documents like the RCAF Campaign Plan are encouraging in terms of its relatively comprehensive linkage of HRM functions towards enhancing PAM. However, more could be done to help airmen and airwomen at all levels grasp the integrated effects that talent management could bring about.

It is therefore recommended, that the RCAF in collaboration with central authorities engage in formulating a widely accessible and understandable talent management strategy that provides: an inclusive definition of talent, an inclusive scope to talent management, principles and refers to practices that maximizes levels of engagement and empowerment in career-/professional-/self- development matters, and enables personnel to grasp and apply the forthcoming CAF Competency framework and PATMS. Doing so would contribute to a more meaningful grasp of its stated objective to 'harness intellectual capital' towards professional airpower mastery.

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