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ROYAL UN-CANADIAN NAVY: THE RCN'S WICKED LANGUAGE PROBLEM

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Exercise Solo Flight

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ROYAL UN-CANADIAN NAVY: THE RCN'S WICKED LANGUAGE PROBLEM

INTRODUCTION

“Quebec is first and foremost a maritime province,” albeit not in what is traditionally recognized as the Maritimes. It has a long maritime history that spans centuries in both commerce and warfare.¹ Yet, despite this proud history the proportional representation of French Canadians² in the Royal Canadian Navy (RCN)³ sits at roughly half of that in the Army and Air Force which is much closer to the representation of Francophones in Canada.⁴

As the Navy continues its efforts to “rebalance and recover its workforce”⁵ after a significant period of personnel shortages⁶, the significant under-representation of Francophones presents the Navy with an opportunity to pursue an avenue which could lead to increased recruiting and retention, as well as an improved image in the eyes of roughly one quarter of the Canadian population.

¹ Hugues Létourneau, "The Naval Presence in Québec," in *Citizen Sailors: Chronicles of Canada's Naval Reserve*, ed. Richard H. Gimblett and Michael L. Hadley, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2010), 125; Jean-François Drapeau, "French-Canadian Leadership in Canada's Navy, 1910-1971," in *Loyal Service: Perspectives on French-Canadian Military Leaders*, by Bernd Horn and Roch Legault (Toronto: The Dundurn Group, 2007), 242.

² The term French Canadian or Francophone is used in this paper and is meant to be inclusive of all French speaking Canadians not just those from Quebec. But due to the fact that French Quebecers represent the vast majority of French Canadians a portion of the material presented will be Quebec centered.

³ Acknowledging the fact that the Navy's official name has changed several times over its lifetime (from Naval Service, to Royal Canadian Navy, to Maritime Command back to Royal Canadian Navy), for simplicity the term Royal Canadian Navy, RCN or Navy will be used irrespective of its appellation at the time in question.

⁴ Alec Castonguay, "Malaise francophone dans la marine canadienne." *Le Devoir*, 3 June 2010.

⁵ Department of National Defence, *Royal Canadian Navy Strategic Plan 2017-2022* (Ottawa: Canadian Armed Forces, 2017), 21.

⁶ Department of National Defence, *Evaluation of Naval Forces* (Ottawa: Chief of Review Services, 2013), iv,5; Office of the Auditor General of Canada, *Report 5 - Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention - National Defence* (2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada, Ottawa: OAG, 2016), 5, 14; Department of National Defence, *Royal Canadian Navy Strategic Plan...*, 22; Peter Mallett, "Naval Trades Amalgamated Into One" (*Lookout*, April 24, 2017).

It can easily be established that throughout its history the RCN has struggled to fully integrate the francophone community into its institution. In fact, in the first half of its existence, the RCN resisted external pressures to better accommodate Francophones. However in the second half, significant progress was made only at the insistence of external pressure. But the question is why? This paper will serve three purposes:

Firstly, it will show that in the first half of its existence the RCN was unwilling to integrate French Canadians into the RCN because the institution was an isomorph of the Royal Navy (RN) which provided it with the normative, cognitive and regulative pillars, all of them perfectly aligned, to sustain its internal legitimacy despite not representing English or French Canadian values while its external legitimacy was maintained due to Canada's relationship to British Empire and to the exigencies of the two World Wars.

Secondly, after Unification the RCN began to change one pillar at time into its current form in order to gain greater legitimacy in the eyes of French Canadians. The institutional change started with the Regulative Pillar, followed by the Cognitive Pillar and the Normative Pillar, which is still in the process of fully aligning.

Thirdly, this paper will put forth two ideas for consideration and further study. They are by no means the only options and will not be discussed in enough depth to permit implementation simply to provoke thought and discussion.

The first two points will be illustrated by using Richard W. Scott's concepts on institutions, specifically legitimacy, isomorphism and the three institutional pillars which will be briefly discussed to provide context.

On the first point, after a brief discussion of the unique source of the RCN's legitimacy, an exploration of the isomorphic mechanisms (coercive, normative and mimetic) at play that permitted the RCN to closely mimic the RN will be discussed. Finally, since the normative isomorphic mechanisms tie directly to the normative pillar of the RCN only the Cognitive and Regulative pillars will be discussed.

On the second point, key milestones and events in the RCN's history will be used illustrate the realigning of the pillars. The creation of the Navy's first French Language Unit, *HMCS Ottawa III* will be examined under the regulative pillar. Similarly the Naval Presence in Quebec (NPIQ) initiative will be used as an example for the cognitive pillar. An assessment of the current state of affairs over the past twenty years will show that the normative pillar is still in transition.

On the third point, the concept of establishing a permanent fleet in Quebec City will be briefly explored as well as the potential merits of prioritizing the posting of French Canadians to Halifax.

FIRST HALF OF RCN EXISTENCE

Legitimacy

From the very beginning of the Naval Service, its legitimacy was questioned. Due to a rising German threat, the British began altering their naval force disposition by concentrating their forces on home waters to eventually meet the German naval threat. This entailed recalling RN ships from the colonies and asking for financial support from the colonies to the RN. All the colonies agreed except Canada; in lieu of providing funds for the RN Canada opted to stand up

its own Navy to defend Canada which would relieve the RN from the burden of defending the Dominion.⁷

This narrative suited the government of the day and their desire to be more autonomous. However, the Official Opposition was vehemently against the plan for two major reasons divided along ethno-linguistic lines: the Anglo-Conservatives believed that direct financial support to the RN was the only way to properly ensure Canada's security while the Franco-Conservatives saw the development of a navy equipped with cruisers would inevitably lead to Canada going to war for a British cause that did not directly affect Canada. These ideologies were diametrically opposed and thus put the government in an impossible situation. If it were to allay the concerns of the Anglo conservatives that appeasement would in turn further justify the concerns of the Franco-Conservatives. Since both schools of thought were resident in the same party the Government was trapped in this paradox of logic. In an attempt to counter both arguments the Prime Minister stated that a Canadian Navy would not be obligated to go to war every time Great Britain did, but would also not stand by if it were in danger.⁸ Naturally, the Franco-conservatives saw this navy as illegitimate and but a puppet of the RN,⁹ and this perception permeated the French Canadian media. One of the Quebec newspapers characterized *HMCS Niobe*, the RCN's second warship, as Canadian in peace but British in War.¹⁰ Despite winning a by-election on this issue and easily passing the Naval Service Act into law,¹¹ the government lost the general election less than 18 months later, and the party that did not want the Naval Service came to

⁷ James Boutillier, *RCN in Retrospect 1910-1968* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), 1,8-9.

⁸ Marc Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century 2nd ed.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 16-17.

⁹ Gilbert Norman Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History Volume I Origins and Early Year.* (Ottawa: Kings Printer, 1952), 136.

¹⁰ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 20.

¹¹ Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada...*, 139; Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 17-18

power.¹² During the interwar period, the demographics of the RCN spoke volumes as to its representativeness of the Canadian population. In 1922, the ratio of Canadians in the RCN to RN personnel was 1 in 10. Five years later, that ratio is reversed. Marc Milner, a distinguished Canadian military historian, explains this demographic shift as the simple permanent transfer of RN personnel to the RCN.¹³ During the Second World War, statistics surrounding the ethnic and cultural make-up of the regular force¹⁴ Navy seemed equally unrepresentative of the population of the time. Eight percent of men in Canada were British-born, whereas that same ethnic group represented 28% of the RCN and 58% of the RCNR. Religious background was equally out of step with the Canadian norm since 50% of the population was catholic, 90% “of the RCN’s officers were Anglican, United or Presbyterian. Even the small number of RCN Officers from Quebec, at 5 per cent of the RCN total well below the 27 per cent of the male population of Canada resident in the province, was protestant.”¹⁵

Isomorphism

Despite the presence of what could be considered conventional threats to its legitimacy, the RCN carried on mainly because it saw itself as more of an Imperial institution than Canadian. It had an isomorphic relationship with the RN. Institutional isomorphism can be seen through the lens of “coercive, normative and mimetic mechanisms that ‘make organizations more similar

¹² Tucker, *The Naval Service of Canada...*, 169.

¹³ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 72.

¹⁴ The distinction between regular force RCN, RCNR and RCNVR is important in this case because the regular force was very small compared to the overall size during the Second World War. The demographics of the RCNVR were closer to the Canadian population.

¹⁵ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 73.

without necessarily making them more efficient.”¹⁶ In the case of the RCN, these forces were powerful.

From a coercive standpoint, Canada initially had trouble legally sailing the ships past its three nautical mile territorial limit since the legal status of the new dominion navy was in question. The issue, which was not resolved until the spring of 1911, revolved around whether or not the ships would be under RN control once in international waters. Attempts to “Canadianize” the identity were equally blunted when the Admiralty refused to allow the Canadian Government to fly a Canadian Ensign, a design that simply added a green maple leaf over a cross to the RN ensign, on its ships; the RN ensign would be flown on Canadian ships until 1965, three years prior to Unification. The only allowance for a Canadian identity was the permission to add the word Canadian in His Majesty’s Ship, hence HMCS.¹⁷

As for mimetic mechanisms, they were implanted without much difficulty. In 1911, the RCN, and other Colonial or Dominion Navies, had adopted several pieces of legislation whose aim was to ensure these new organizations dove-tailed as seamlessly as possible into the RN. For example, the *King’s Regulations and Admiralty Instructions* and the *Naval Discipline Act of 1866*, allowed for a common discipline and military justice system entrenched in law across the Empire. Furthermore, “training was to be to RN standards, that pay, promotion, and service experience were transferable, and that a common seniority list should be adopted...”¹⁸ Lastly,

¹⁶ W. Richard Scott, *Institutions & Organizations: Ideas, Interests and Identities* (Washington: SAGE Publications Inc., 2014), 185.

¹⁷ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 22; Tony German, *The Sea is at Our Gates: The History of the Canadian Navy* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Inc. The Canadian Publishers, 1990), 28.

¹⁸ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 23.

when deployed these Dominion ships would be expected to act on behalf of the Empire where it was deemed appropriate to do so.¹⁹

Even on more foundational issues of Canadian identity, normative mechanisms of isomorphism came to play when Cabinet was rebuffed by its own Naval Staff. The Minister of the Naval Service, Louis-Phillipe Brodeur, a Francophone from Quebec who fought hard for the creation of the RCN, inquired as to when the entrance exams would be translated into French to permit unilingual Francophones to join, the simple answer was that it would not be ““desirable that candidates should be permitted to take the [entrance] examination in French,’ [...] Moreover, any attempt to combine the two languages would be detrimental to the service.”²⁰ This resistance to one’s own legal authority is explained partly by the fact that Cabinet did not want to push the disagreement into the public domain since it would validate some of the Francophone opposition’s concerns²¹ but also by British normative values and the fact that the Naval Staff was composed of British officers. This is important because the officers of the time were of the generation that were used to seeing France as a traditional enemy,²² therefore the idea of having the French language on an equal footing with that of English would have gone against the grain of their normative values. After all, the RCN was just an extension of the RN which had existed for over 350 years. Moreover, because the RCN was so small, even more so after the closing of the Royal Naval College of Canada, Canadian-born officers were sent to train primarily on British capital ships, returning with a very different set of values than those they had before they left. Thus, the maintenance of the normative mechanisms of isomorphism and by

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Paul W. Collins, *One Empire, One Navy: The Creation and Early Years of the Royal Canadian Navy, with Selected Literature Review* (Master's Literature Review, St-John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2004), 2; James Boutillier, *RCN in Retrospect 1910-1968* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982), 6.

extension the normative pillar was maintained for decades to come.²³ It would not be until a few years after the Second World War, that the issue would come to a head, when a rash of mutinies occurred within a few months of each other. An inquiry was ordered and led to the production of what is now known as the Mainguy Report. One of the primary issues raised was the fact that the officers had a culture that was fundamentally un-Canadian.²⁴

Therefore, with the legal authority of the Admiralty, combined with the normative values of RN officers at the head of the RCN and the agreement allowing legal, administrative, and operational systems mimicking the RN, it is without a doubt the RCN is an example of Isomorphism unto the RN.

Cognitive Pillar

The cognitive pillar, simply put, comes down to ways of thinking and pre-formatted templates under which to view and understand the environment.²⁵ As far as the RCN is concerned a lot of their ways of thinking were heavily influenced by the RN, but also from the environment of the institution. Perhaps the most illustrative example of the cognitive pillar is the reasoning used to defend the RCN's recruitment policy during the Second World War. R. Scott Sheffield is an academic at the University of the Fraser Valley who has specialized in indigenous military history, wrote an article on Indigenous recruiting practices during the Second World War in Canada which explains the RCN's policy and its justifications. To join the RCN one had

²³ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 72; Boutilier, *RCN in Retrospect...*, 76-77.

²⁴ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 184; Department of National Defence, *Report on certain "Incidents" which occurred on board H.M.C. Ships ATHABASKAN, CRESCENT and MAGNIFICENT and other matters concerning the Royal Canadian Navy* (Report made to the Minister of National Defence, Ottawa: King's Printer and Controller of Stationary, 1949), 33,37,51.

²⁵ Éric Ouellet, "Les forces armées comme institution," in *Les études stratégiques au XXIe siècle*, by Éric Ouellet, Pierre Pahlavi and Miloud Chennoufi, 263-285. (Outremont: Athéna Éditions, 2013), 266.

to be “of pure European descent and of the White race.”²⁶ This obviously had the effect of preventing a visible minority or indigenous person from enrolling in the RCN, but this rule was not instituted in the other two services. Where the cognitive pillar comes to play is in the justification of such a policy in the face of criticism from the government. In a report to written for the government the Commanding Officer Pacific Coast provided three reasons. Firstly, that confined living conditions made the mixing of ethnicities problematic and that these conditions were unique to the Navy. Secondly, that because the RCN still had a daily ration of rum, which indigenous people were prohibited from receiving, the unequal treatment of different crew would negatively impact morale. The third reason was an attempt to justify the fact that the RN had certain minorities aboard their ships and the RCN did not. The reason centered on the fact that in the RN, these minorities held servant positions and they were berthed separately and only onboard larger ships than the RCN had at the time, therefore it was not possible.²⁷ Sheffield’s article is also explicit in stating that Indigenous people were but an example of the RCN’s intolerance towards minorities in general and that Francophones were very much discriminated against while their situation in the Army and Air Force were not nearly as bad.²⁸ The reasoning presented illustrates the logic that was common place within the senior leadership of the RCN.

Regulative Pillar

The regulative pillar represents the body of rules, laws and policies that allow an institution to regulate its self and its members including powers of punishment and reward.²⁹

²⁶ R. Scott Sheffield, "'Of Pure European Descent and of the White Race': Recruiting Policy and Aboriginal Canadians, 1939-1945." *Canadian Military History* 5, no. 1 (2012): 9.

²⁷ Sheffield, "'Of Pure European Descent...", 10.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 14.

²⁹ Scott, *Institutions & Organization...*, 59-60.

There is no need to go in great depth on this pillar since examples of it have already been discussed previously, but a concise summary and their effects will be sufficient to illustrate the regulative pillar. The *Naval Service Act of 1910* gave birth to the RCN. Among the mimetic mechanisms, the *King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions* and the *Naval Discipline Act of 1866* ensured that the institution aligned itself to the RN and in doing so created the conditions under which its members would be remunerated, promoted and punished. The RCN's recruiting regulations limited who could join to ensure a continuum of the institutions desired sustainment. In the first half of the RCN's existence the regulative pillar served to reinforce the normative and cognitive pillars to ensure that the RCN remained a subset of the RN irrespective of the perceived legitimacy in the eyes of the people it was protecting. It would not be until decades after its debut that regulative instruments would force the institution to change in order to maintain its legitimacy.

SECOND HALF OF RCN EXISTENCE

Regulative Pillar

The late sixties were a tumultuous times not only for the RCN but for the Canadian military as a whole. Unification as it came to be known, involved the dissolution of the individual services and merging them into one unified force, the Canadian Armed Forces. Milner described that the "old guard" elements of the RCN that clung to the RN culture were crushed by Unification.³⁰ Additionally, other separate but related outside pressures forced it to change and it was initially done through the regulatory pillar. The Chief of Defence Staff at the time, General Victor Allard, provided the impetus for the Navy to change it's stance towards Francophones, by

³⁰ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 185.

ordering it to designate one of its ships as a French Language Unit.³¹ This would enable Francophones to use French as the language of work for the first time in the history of the RCN. Because these changes were mandated from above, through policy and authority, the institution was obliged to comply. There are several examples of RCN resistance at the Cognitive and Normative level which demonstrate that only the Regulative Pillar was at play. The ship chosen to be the RCN'S first FLU ship was the *Ottawa III* and Commander Pierre Simard was chosen to command it. He was General Allard's "naval right-hand man"³² and had participated in the feasibility study to see if it were even possible to field a French speaking crew. But even he kept on referring to his ship as a bilingual ship as opposed to a French language ship. This was likely due to the fact that although they had achieved a ratio of 80% French speaking to 20% Anglophone crew, the reality is a significant portion of the French speakers were bilingual Anglophones.³³ So from a practical perspective, he took a gradual approach to using French as the language of work. His motivations for taking this approach were due to the fact that he knew that there were powerful normative forces at play.

These were evidenced, by local media, specific incidences bigotry or hostile attitudes towards French and even likely comments made to him by his own personal network of peers and acquaintances. Also, the local media in Halifax had admonished the concept.³⁴ Another report indicated that several of the unilingual Anglophone NCOs had displayed inappropriate

³¹ Serge Bernier, "HMCS Ottawa III: The Navy's First French-Language Unit, 1968-1973," in *A Nation's Navy: In Quest of Canadian Naval Identity*, by Michael L. Hadley, Rob Hubert and Fred W. Crickard (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 313.

³² Bernier, "HMCS Ottawa III...", 315.

³³ *Ibid.*, 317.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 316.

attitudes towards French Canadians.³⁵ Even a former Admiral had described the concept of a ship designated as an FLU as “sheer unadulterated lunacy.”³⁶

Cognitive Pillar

The Naval Presence in Quebec project can be used to illustrate the RCN’s Cognitive Pillar aligning towards an acknowledgement that the inclusion of Francophones is necessary for the legitimacy of the institution. The project which began in the early 1980s and lasted 12 years had three phases: move Naval Reserve Headquarters from Halifax to Quebec City, open an additional four Naval Reserve Divisions in Quebec and finally, establish a Fleet School in Quebec City.³⁷ The third phase was initially supposed to be the basing of a destroyer squadron in Quebec City but was deemed not feasible based on the lack of support infrastructure and resource constraints.³⁸ Although there was still resistance from the Naval Reserve lobby, a deal was brokered to ensure that the Naval Reserve would get new ships in exchange for their relocation to Quebec City.³⁹

The impetus for change again came from outside the RCN, this time from the MND of the time, Gilles Lamontagne, but this time with much less resistance. In fact, Rear-Admiral Crickard, Director General (Personnel and Careers) and then Deputy Commander MARCOM, was in favour of it as well.⁴⁰ The difference lay in their respective motivations. Lamontagne wanted to “make sure that our Quebec seamen had a place in the navy that belonged to them, and

³⁵ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 269.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 268.

³⁷ Létourneau, "The Naval Presence in Québec, 133; John R. Anderson, "Vice-Admiral John R. Anderson, 1991-1992." in *The Admirals: Canada's Senior Leadership in the Twentieth Century*, by Michael Whitby, Richard H. Gimblet and Peter Haydon (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2006), 352.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 132, 137.

³⁹ Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 285-286

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 285.

second, integrate Anglophones with their Francophone compatriots, in a French environment. It was good for morale, and good for Canadian unity.”⁴¹ Crickard, on the other hand, saw more practical aspects of this initiative: “There is a whole untapped recruiting base.”⁴² Clearly, the RCN did not have to be legislated or ordered into these changes, but came to see it was in their best interest as an institution to change. At this point in the RCN’s history, manuals and courses were being translated into French, FLUs were on the rise and speaking French in the RCN had attained a degree of normalcy and acceptance.⁴³

Normative Pillar

Since the completion of the NPIQ, there has been very little in the way of major initiatives, concerning Francophones in the RCN, of the same scale as the previous two. In fact, the main focus shifted towards language training for Anglophones.⁴⁴ This section will demonstrate that the RCN still has challenges with respect to its Francophone members that can be observed in academia, the media and also by examining the RCN’s senior leadership. These observations can be interpreted as the normative pillar in flux towards the alignment with the other two.

Attrition studies in the late 1980s and 1990s show that not only is there a significantly higher attrition rate among Francophones than Anglophones,⁴⁵ but that of the Francophones that

⁴¹ Létourneau, "The Naval Presence in Québec, 133.

⁴² Milner, *Canada's Navy: The First Century...*, 285.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 286

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Marilyn A. Montgomery, *An Examination of Attrition and Retention Predictors for Canadian Naval Personnel* (Master's Thesis, Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1991), 41; Kelly M.J. Farley, *The Turnover Behaviour of Francophone Sailors in the Canadian Navy: An Example of the Utility of the Canadian Forces Attrition Monitoring System* (Master's Thesis, Halifax: Saint Mary's University, 1994), 61.

left a significant portion had intended to stay a lot longer than they did.⁴⁶ Additionally, studies of that time show that the Army and Air Force do not experience this phenomena.⁴⁷ This would seem to explain why a more recent study in 1996 would disagree with the previous findings,⁴⁸ but mainly because it was focused on the CAF as a whole, and since the Army in particular outnumbers the Navy their respondents (which do not experience the same language issues) would outweigh the responses from Francophone naval participants in the research. An extensive study done, in 2006, demonstrated the MFRCs struggled to provide official language minority services, particularly when in a unilingual location.⁴⁹ Although no specific bases were named in the study, another study, in 2007, conducted at CFB Esquimalt confirmed that that particular MFRC's struggles to provide francophone services under the guise that it does not want to duplicate services provided by the local Francophone Society of Victoria.⁵⁰ Interestingly enough, said society reported not being in contact with many military families since they get all their services through the MFRC, clearly there is a disconnect in the system.⁵¹

In the early 1990s, allegations of harassment of Francophones were made public through the media.⁵² In 2010, on the occasion of the RCN's centenary, an article in *Le Devoir* was published citing several military sources of the plight of French Canadians in the RCN. It lamented the fact that English is the language of work throughout the RCN fleet with the

⁴⁶ Montgomery, *An Examination of Attrition...*, 45.

⁴⁷ Farley, *The Turnover Behaviour of Francophone Sailors...*, 63.

⁴⁸ David U. Molinari, *A Psychometric Examination and Refinement of Canadian Forces Attrition Information Questionnaire: Comparing the Reasons Cited by Anglophones and Francophones in the "Leave Decision Process"* (Master's Thesis, Calgary: University of Calgary, 1996), 91-92.

⁴⁹ Emmanuelle Ladouceur, *The Challenge of MFRCs in Supporting Canadian Forces Official Language Minority Families* (Master's Thesis, Victoria: Royal Roads University, 2006), 146-151.

⁵⁰ Gabriel Asselin, *Ni civiles, ni militaires. Marginalité et identité parmi les familles militaires francophones de la Base des Forces Canadiennes d'Esquimalt en Colombie-Britannique* (Master's Thesis, Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2007), 4-6, 100-101.

⁵¹ Asselin, *Ni civiles, ni militaires...*, 4-6.

⁵² The Gazette, "Navy Denies Francophone Sailors Harassed; Report Claimed Anglos Hurling Anti-French Slurs at Shipmates," 7 December 1991.

exception of one ship. Additionally, it cited an Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages report that listed the use of English as “outrageously dominant”⁵³ in the RCN.⁵⁴ Even as recently as 2017, after Canada’s new defence policy, Strong Secure and Engaged, was released the issue of Francophones in the RCN gets attention at the political level. Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament, Michel Boudrias, raised the issue that despite all of the mentions of gender and diversity not one mention is made Francophone issues.⁵⁵

In 2009, retired Capt(N) Letourneau wrote a book review on a recently published book on the RCN’s first Francophone Flag Officer, Victor Brodeur.⁵⁶ In this review, he outlines the state of Francophones in the Canadian Admiralty over its history: “Out of some 200 people in the Canadian Navy to have risen to the rank of rear-admiral, only six – three percent – have been French-speaking Quebecers.”⁵⁷ He goes on to outline the 58 year gap between the second and third Francophone to attain that rank.⁵⁸ What is also interesting is despite the fact that some of those rear-admirals have even been promoted to vice-admiral, none has served as Commander of the RCN. Since that article several others have been promoted to that rank⁵⁹ and when considering the short timespan the situation seems to be improving.

When examining all these different perspectives it is clear that there are shortcomings in how Francophones fare in the RCN. These various indicators can be interpreted as issues that need improvement but also that the situation is slowly improving. Over the last twenty years, the

⁵³ Translated by the author

⁵⁴ Castonguay, "Malaise francophone...."

⁵⁵ Michel Boudrias, *Politique de défense canadienne : « Le temps est venu d’avoir notre juste part des investissements faits dans les Forces »*, 11 June 2017, <https://www.blocquebecois.org/2017/06/politique-de-defense-canadienne-le-temps-est-venu-davoir-notre-juste-part-des-investissements-faits-dans-les-forces-michel-boudrias/> (accessed May 6, 2018).

⁵⁶ Hugues Létourneau, "Book Review of Victor Brodeur: Officier de la Marine Canadienne (1909-1946)," *Canadian Military Journal* (9, no. 4, 2009): 121-122.

⁵⁷ Létourneau, "Book Review ...", 121.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Luc Cassivi, Gilles Couturier & Peter Ellis (in alphabetical order)

media articles have shifted away from issues of harassment to more practical issues of integration and policy. While French Canadian representation at the senior echelons was sparse throughout its history it seems to have improved over the last 15 years. This could be indicative of the normative institutional pillar is in the process of aligning to the other two in favour bettering the francophone condition but it is not quite there yet. Regardless of where the Normative Pillar is the RCN has a perception problem in the eyes of French Canadians that dates back to its creation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Post All Francophones To Halifax

Posting Francophones to Halifax as much as is practicable has the potential to significantly ease the family issues raised earlier.⁶⁰ For example, Nova Scotia has a much broader and deeper francophone community, largely due to its Acadian heritage thus making it easier to integrate francophone military families into the francophone community. The school network is more expansive and developed at the primary, secondary and even university level. There are 4 Primary and 2 secondary schools in the Halifax area. A fifth primary school will be opened in the fall of 2018.⁶¹ Université Sainte-Anne has its main campus approximately 2 hours and 30 minutes from Halifax but also has a satellite campus in Halifax. From a military perspective, massing Francophones in one location would make it easier to establish a critical mass of Francophones to maintain French as a working language in more than just one unit, thereby potentially approaching a similar situation enjoyed by the Canadian Army in Valcartier.

⁶⁰ See Ladouceur (2006) and Asselin (2007).

⁶¹ <https://csap.ca/>

This situation would have the potential to improve the retention rate of Francophones mentioned previously. Given the personnel challenges the RCN faces, this course of action could be represent one line of effort among others leading towards personnel manning recovery over the long term.

Implementation however, is likely to be challenging; consideration needs to be given as to whether a quick bold change would be effective compared to a gradual one and vice versa. A bold mass posting would involve uprooting many families on both coasts (especially Non-Commissioned Members) which may contribute to a spike in attrition. While a gradual approach may seem preferable, such as focusing on all new francophone recruits, it may not be as effective and would not be as quick. If the critical mass is not there new Francophones recruits could be assimilated into the predominant Anglo-culture and hinder their ability to use French as the language of work, such as in the initial days of Ottawa III. Therefore a blended approach may be worth considering as well.

Station Ships In Quebec City

Another idea that could be considered is establishing a permanent fleet in Quebec city to mimic some of the geo-demographic conditions from which the Canadian Army, and to a certain extent the RCAF, benefit. This proposal is far more complex and much grander in scale than the first proposal since it would engender larger costs and have implications for infrastructure. The advantage from the Francophone perspective is that it would provide greater opportunity for Francophones to live in a francophone community, and in the case of Francophone Quebecers likely much closer to their hometown, on a more regular basis throughout their career.

Integration of francophone military families would obviously be easier since the French school

network is vastly more developed as well as all of the social services. This expansion of the RCN footprint in Quebec would also provide a more suitable environment for Anglophones to immerse themselves in their second official language and likely achieve better results in a more consistent fashion. As with the first proposal, the difficulties lie in the implementation.

As previously discussed, this idea has been considered previously in the 1980s, where limitations of the facilities and infrastructure, such as the lack of “wharfs, cranes, or icebreakers for the winter,”⁶² essentially made it a non-starter. However, considering that the RCN is scheduled to receive its first ice-capable ship this limitation should be reviewed as well as the others since the port in Quebec City has likely evolved its capabilities in the last 35 years. Another main difference is the maintenance model for ships is no longer the same. Maritime Coastal Defence Vessels and Arctic Offshore Patrol Vessels use an In Service Support Contract for their maintenance and repairs. This means that private companies not the Fleet Maintenance Facilities (FMF) are responsible for that aspect of support and they are mandated to do it where ever the ship is located. This not the case for the Frigates which are maintained by FMFs, therefore stationing a Frigate would necessitate the contracting out of that maintenance to industry. Some inefficiency would inevitably be created such as the distance to firing, radar and acoustic ranges as well as the ammunition depot would all be increased, necessitating extra sea days to do the same activities that ships in Halifax would not require. While it is a valid statement of fact, it is important to remember that some of the same inefficiencies exist for the entire pacific fleet, notably firing and acoustic ranges which require at least a day at sea just for travel. A project of this magnitude would absolutely require political support to achieve. Interestingly enough, it is likely that this kind of initiative could appeal to any political party

⁶² Létourneau, "The Naval Presence in Québec...", 132.

considering that federal election ridings of the Quebec city area can be considered swing ridings since they have not consistently elected a particular political party since 1984. Therefore, there would be a political incentive for any party in power to invest some political capital in such an initiative in order to make or consolidate gains in that area. The NPIQ had a similar set of circumstances since it began under a liberal government and continued on with a conservative government over the 12 year life of the project.

CONCLUSION

This paper has demonstrated that in the first half of its existence the RCN was an isomorph of the RN and all of its institutional pillars were aligned as such. The legislative and policy framework surrounding the RCN at the time constituted the Regulative pillar which supported policies to make all colonial navies operate rigidly to the same standard. The fact that Canadian officers had to go train and operate in Great Britain and that many RN officers operated within the RN resulted in the importing of British values that were not Canadian, reinforcing the normative pillar. The arguments used to justify discriminatory practices in recruiting for the RCN demonstrated the cognitive pillar. What's more is that the source of its legitimacy was resident in its relationship with the British Empire. This meant that the RCN was perfectly able to ignore the Francophone population even at the expense of the legitimacy in the eyes of French Canadians.

After Unification, the Pillars began to shift; the first was General Allard's Bilingualism initiative which forced the RCN to designate a ship as a FLU. This represented the first time that French Canadians would be able to work in their first official language. With Minister Lamontagne initiating the NPIQ, the RCN saw the utility in being more inclusive by establishing

a much more significant footprint in Quebec. Specifically, the potential to tap a previously under-utilized source of recruiting, as well as being able to advance certain capital projects proved to be beneficial for the institution. While things have improved dramatically since its inception, there is still evidence that the normative pillar has not fully aligned with the others yet. The issue of French as a language of work in the RCN still gets media attention. There are also issues with Francophone families feeling isolated in the Anglophone communities of Esquimalt which has the potential to affect retention. The representation of French Canadians at the highest levels of the RCN has been historically very low but is improving.

The two recommendations presented are meant to stimulate discussion and perhaps even inspire an innovative solution. The first one involved maximizing the posting of Francophones in Halifax in order to better support Francophone families and allow for the designation of more FLUs and/or bilingual units. The second recommendation involved the permanent assignment of ships and the establishing of a fleet in Quebec City, in order to create a naval presence *à la* Valcartier. This idea, whilst previously explored and discarded, merits revisiting since some of the factors that originally led to the dismissal of the concept may no longer be valid. While both solutions would require political level blessing the latter option has economic impacts that are beneficial to Quebec City but detrimental to Halifax. The first option is more economically neutral.

The under representation of Francophones has been an omnipresent reality.⁶³ The Army and the RCAF have likely benefited from the reduced competition for recruits since they can assure French Canadians that it is possible to spend a significant portion of their careers working in French. The RCN has an opportunity to make living and working conditions better for

⁶³ Drapeau, "French-Canadian Leadership in Canada's Navy...", 237-238.

Francophones, but even with the most optimistic of plans it is likely to take a long time to reverse the institutional habits and values created over 100 years ago.

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