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FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS : THE NEXT JOURNEY FOR THE CAF?

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JCSP 45

Exercise Solo Flight

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CANADIAN FORCES COLLEGE – COLLÈGE DES FORCES CANADIENNES

JCSP 45 – PCEMI 45
MAY 2019 – MAI 2019

EXERCISE *SOLO FLIGHT* – EXERCICE *SOLO FLIGHT*

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THE NEXT JOURNEY FOR THE CAF?**

By Major Jaclynn Beaudette

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FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS: THE NEXT JOURNEY FOR THE CAF?

INTRODUCTION

Flexible work arrangements (FWA) are not a new phenomenon. Some industries/companies have formalized processes and policies for FWAs, and others are more informal, and negotiated on an individual basis between employees and their supervisors. Organizational culture and norms, as well as societal gender norms, play a role in how and why FWA are accessed, and by whom. Societal expectations of certain organizations also affect the existence of, and access to, FWA. As a result, certain jobs are considered ineligible for FWAs. One common example is bus driver; obviously, a bus driver cannot work from home and the busses must run on their scheduled times. This does not, however, preclude a bus driver from negotiating another FWA with their employer. For example a driver may request to only working certain days of the week, or for a certain number of days in a month. Soldier is another occupation that society automatically thinks is ineligible for FWAs. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) exists within the Government of Canada (GoC) framework and is subject to National labour laws and regulations; currently there is no statute for FWA for the CAF. Other Governments have already legislated access to FWA for Armed Forces employees and/or are well ahead of Canada on development of policy that allows for FWA in the Armed Forces.

FWAs are becoming more common, and some postulate that as newer generations enter the workforce, and societal norms and values shift to include greater life-work balance, FWA will become the norm rather than the exception.¹ To remain an employer of choice, the CAF will need to implement formal policy that allows for FWAs. The policy will need to be inclusive,

¹ Heejung Chung, Tanja van der Lippe, "Flexible Working, Work-Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction", *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands (2018), 2.

transparent, and applicable to all members. This paper will begin by exploring different types of FWAs that are commonly offered in the private sector. It will then look at how these can be applied in the public sector and more specifically within an Armed Force by reviewing current progress in the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. The GoC research on the requirement to legislate the right to request FWA will be examined for implications on the CAF. Finally a gender-based analysis (GBA+) will be done to highlight areas to be considered when developing a FWA policy for the CAF.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

FWAs can take many forms and are often tailored to the needs of the individual requesting the arrangement while balancing the needs of the organization. Some arrangements are made within formal policy while others are more idiosyncratic, and individually negotiated between employer and employee. Common forms of FWAs seen in corporate structures are flextime, flexplace, job sharing, compressed work week, part-time, and sabbatical (both paid and unpaid). In many studies these different types of FWAs are conflated, however some disaggregated research exists that differentiates between the attraction and benefit of different types of FWAs; this will be examined further in the GBA+ portion of this paper.

Flextime is one of the most common formal and informal forms of FWA. It implies that the employee is able to negotiate different start and end hours to their work day, it is frequently applied to accommodate child-care hours or to avoid periods of heavy traffic during commute times. This form of FWA is currently employed by the CAF on an individual bases as negotiated by an employee and their direct supervisor. Depending on the arrangement, flextime can require an employee to be available during certain core hours (ex. 9am – 3pm, usually to accommodate client access or facilitate meetings and ensure ‘face-time’ in the office), or can be autonomous

where an employee is simply required to work a certain number of hours a week and they can decide when those hours will be.

Flexplace, often called telecommuting, is also fairly common and can be both formal and informal. If an employee has the ability to access work files from their home computer, it is not uncommon to request an informal arrangement to telecommute for a day when personal circumstances require them to be home for a portion of the day. Flexplace can be combined with flextime to provide even more customization to an employee's needs, but flexplace does not immediately imply flextime. The CAF employs this type of FWA on an individual basis both for short-term, short-notice situations such as a sick-child or family emergency, as well as on a more formal basis such as personnel who are geo-located with family but able to telecommute to accomplish their work with their assigned unit. This is usually ad hoc and arranged as unique agreements between individuals and their chain of command.

Job sharing is when two or more people share hours to complete the role of a full-time employee, often conflated with part-time; the difference is that part-time jobs must be able to be completed in the part-time hours. The CAF currently offers a part-time option in the Reserve Force, but no formalized job sharing opportunities. Compressed work week allows employees to work extended hours so that they can accomplish full-time hours in less than five days a week. CAF employs compressed work hours on an individual basis.

Sabbaticals can be paid or unpaid and can be requested for personal or professional development reasons. The CAF addresses these separately. There are formal professional development sabbaticals available such as the year provided to attend Canadian Forces College (CFC) for both the Joint Command and Staff Programme (JCSP) and National Security

Programme (NSP). However, sabbaticals requested for personal reasons are provided as Leave Without Pay (LWOP) and are approved on an individual basis. LWOP is often employed by one half of a service couple if the other member has an employment opportunity in another country but there is no position for the other member. Department of National Defence (DND) civilian employees are able to apply for leave with income averaging. This allows them to take from 5 weeks to 3 months off of work while having their income averaged over a 12 month period so they continue to receive a pay cheque while on leave. Uniformed members of the CAF have paid leave but it is limited to a set number per fiscal year and there is no way to access extra leave in the same manner as income averaging.

FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS FOR AN ARMED FORCE – WHAT OUR ALLIES ARE DOING

It is an accepted reality that not all FWAs work for all employment. The current societal shift towards work-life balance and the demand for a shrinking talent pool has driven many organizations to rethink how and what they offer their employees for options on flexible employment. The challenge, particularly in an Armed Force is how to meet the needs of the institution while still meeting the needs of the employees. With so many jobs and situations not being conducive to FWA, it is complicated for an institution to figure out where to begin to create a formal policy that is transparent and fair to all. While it is not a simple problem to solve, it is not impossible, and several nations have already implemented legislation and/or are much further ahead in the creation of policy than the CAF. Two nations that will be reviewed are the UK and Australia.

United Kingdom

The UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) recognized a need to modernize flexibility of service to help recruit and retain talented personnel. It introduced a Flexible Working Policy in 2015 which included Flexible Duties Trails that informed the creation of the Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Bill.² The Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Bill became law in the UK on 8 Feb 2018; Flexible Service (FS) came into effect on 1 Apr 2019.³ FS was designed with the needs of the institution in mind; it should have no “impact on the military’s ability to deliver its core tasks of defending the country”.⁴ FS applications are weighed against the needs of the service and, in the event of a national emergency, FS personnel can be recalled to full-time service as required.

Full time UK service members now have two new options to request flexibility in their work schedules. They can request part time work; reducing by either 20% or 40%, to work 4 or 3 days a week respectively. They can also request restricted separation from their home base for no more than 35 days a year. The options can be requested separately or can be combined. “Applications can be made for any reason but are limited in length to no more than three years continuously and no more than four years total in a 12 year rolling period. The arrangement can be varied, suspended or ended if needed.”⁵ Approval of FS is not guaranteed and operational

² Government United Kingdom, “Guidance Flexible Service in the armed forces,” last modified 1 April 2019. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/flexible-engagements-system-what-you-need-to-know/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-flexible-engagements-system>

³ Government United Kingdom, “New plans for military flexible working become law,” last modified 9 Feb 2018. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-plans-for-military-flexible-working-become-law>

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Gov’t UK, “Guidance Flexible Service...”

capability of the service comes first. Approval of FS affects the members pay, pension, and some benefits, including leave for part time work.⁶

For members looking for FS for less than 3 months there are other Flexible working options available, depending on the nature of the job, and the units ability to maintain operational capacity. The options listed as available to service personnel are: working from home, variable start and finish times (same number of hours), compressed hours, transfer of leave (move leave into your service spouses account), call forward of leave (borrow up to 10 days from next year's leave period), Enhanced leave (available once for personnel with over 15 years of service to take a continuous 50 day period of leave in lieu of 30 day annual leave allowance), unpaid leave (up to 93 days at one time), or a career intermission (3 -6 months, 6 -12 months, 1 -3 years).⁷ For members requiring FS for more than 4 years in a 12 year rolling window there is the option of Reserve service, which can be either part-time or full time.⁸

Australia

The legislation that exists in Australia is the right to request FWA under the Fair Work Act of 2009, there is a very distinct list of circumstances that allow individuals to be eligible to request FWAs, it does not explicitly state that it extends to the Military.⁹ That does not mean the FWAs aren't available to the Military, only that the requirement is not legislated. The Australian Army published a guide in November of 2013 on FWAs. The FWAs listed as available are: Part Time Leave Without Pay, Temporary Home Located Work, Variable Work Hours, Job Share,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Government United Kingdom, "Flexible Working options," Last accessed 29 April 2019. <https://flexibleservice.mod.gov.uk/raf/flexible-service/flexible-service-flexible-working-options>

⁸ Government United Kingdom, "Reserve Service," last accessed 29 April 2019. <https://flexibleservice.mod.gov.uk/raf/flexible-service/flexible-service-reserve-service>

⁹ Australian Government, Fair Work Ombudsman, "The right to request flexible working arrangements," last accessed 29 April 2019. <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/how-we-will-help/templates-and-guides/best-practice-guides/the-right-to-request-flexible-working-arrangements>

and Remotely Located Work (at authorized office location not co-located with unit).¹⁰ While the Australian Army was progressive in publishing a guide for commanders and soldiers on FWA, the Assistant Minister of Defence and acting Chief of Defence Force at the time decided a more formal policy was required and launched Project Suakin. Project Suakin had been under development for several years prior to launch and aimed to improve the Australian Defence Force (ADF) ability to recruit and retain personnel by providing a more flexible work structure.¹¹ The project developed the Total Workforce Model (TWM) for this purpose; it is a tri-service management framework that offers a range of full and part-time service arrangements across both the permanent and reserve forces.¹²

The TWM is unique in that it plans to offer a secure e-portal to all employees and ex-employees that allow the individual to indicate their availability and the organization to indicate any career opportunities.¹³ The goal is to allow “the ADF to draw on the skills and experience of its entire workforce in a more agile and integrated way...[to] access the right people at the right time to get the job done.”¹⁴ The TWM also creates a spectrum of service that dismantles the traditional trichotomy of Member full-time, Active Reserve full-time, and Reserve part-time and allows members to choose a Service Category (SERCAT) that fits their current needs and flex as required, all in support of the needs of the ADF. While the TWM is not yet being implemented in

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, “Flexible Work Arrangements: Army’s guide to Flexible Work Arrangements for Commanders and Soldiers,” *Army Headquarters* (2013). 10 -28.

¹¹ Australian Defence Reserve Associate. “Project Suakin (Total Workforce Model),” last accessed 29 April 2019. <https://dra.org.au/news/14285>

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Dennett, Harley, “Give a commitment choice with the ‘service spectrum’,” *The Mandarin*, last modified 20 April 2016. <https://www.themandarin.com.au/63500-total-workforce-giving-employees-commitment-choice-service-spectrum/#>

¹⁴ Australian Government, Department of Defence. “ADF Total Workforce Model,” last accessed 29 April 2019. <http://www.defence.gov.au/ADF-TotalWorkforceModel/Default.asp>

its entirety, the ADF transitioned to the new service spectrum continuum in 2016/17.¹⁵ The service spectrum includes 7 SERCATS and 3 Service Options (SERVOP) that allow members to access flexibility as their careers, and their lives, progress.

“A SERCAT groups members into like service and duty arrangements that share mutual obligations and conditions of service. All members are categorised in a single SERCAT at all times, and these may be combined with SERVOPs”.¹⁶ The seven SERCATS are detailed below in Table 1.

¹⁵ Australian Government, Department of Defence. Annual Report 17-18. Published 2 Oct 2018. <http://www.defence.gov.au/annualreports/17-18>

¹⁶ Australian Government, Department of Defence. “ADF Total Workforce Model,” last accessed 29 April 2019. <http://www.defence.gov.au/ADF-TotalWorkforceModel/Default.asp>

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|---|
| <p>SERCAT 7 – Permanent member rendering full-time service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum service obligation with commensurate conditions of service • Afforded career management oversight • Posted to fill an established position |
| <p>SERCAT 6 – Permanent member rendering a pattern of service other than full time, who are subject to the same service obligations as SERCAT 7.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of flexible service arrangement, varies depending on needs of service and member (ex. days per week, weeks per month, or months per year) • Includes inherent liability to serve on a full-time basis if required by ADF. • Some conditions of service (ex. salary) pro-rated • Afforded career management oversight • Posted to fill an established position |
| <p>SERCAT 5 – Members of the Reserves who provide a contribution to capability that extends across financial years and who have security of tenure for the duration of their approved commitment to serve. They are liable for call out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability in terms of a specific pattern of service and the number of days to be served • Afforded career management oversight • Normally be posted to fill an established position |
| <p>SERCAT 4 - Members of the Reserves who provide capability at short notice, with their notice to move defined by their Service. They are liable for call out and available to be 'called for'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of capability at short notice (typically through Continuous Full-Time Service), with the length of that notice defined by individual Service • May be afforded career management oversight • Normally posted to fill an established position |
| <p>SERCAT 3 - Members of the Reserves who provide a contingent contribution to capability by indicating their availability to serve, or who are rendering service to meet a specified task within a financial year. They are liable for call out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be afforded career management oversight • May be posted to fill an established position |
| <p>SERCAT 2 - Members of the Reserves who do not render service and have no service obligation. They are liable for call out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stand-by component of ADF, do not render service |
| <p>SERCAT 1 - Employees of the Defence Australian Public Service (APS) who are force assigned.</p> |

Table 1: Total Work Force service continuum Service Categories (SERCAT)¹⁷

The SERVOPS allows the ADF to group members “who provide needed capabilities where differentiated arrangements are required to achieve capability”.¹⁸ “A SERVOP may be applicable

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

to more than one SERCAT and, when used, must be in conjunction with a SERCAT.”¹⁹ The SERVOPs are detailed in Table 2.

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| <p>SERVOP C Reserve members serving in SERCATs 3, 4 or 5 who are rendering Continuous Full-Time Service (CFTS).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous full-time service Reservist • Defined period of time • Applies to members serving SERCAT 3 - 5 |
| <p>SERVOP D Permanent members in SERCAT 6 or Reserve members in SERCAT 5 who are serving part-time in the ADF while also working part-time for a civilian employer under a formal shared service/employment arrangement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Defence and civilian employer arrangement is set out in an agreement between the Service and that industry partner • Applies to SERCAT 5 or 6 |
| <p>SERVOP G Permanent or Reserve members rendering full-time service in the ADF Gap Year Program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members aged 17 – 24 • Period of up to 12 months • Employment precludes operational deployment, but can include domestic exercises • Applies to SERCAT 3,5 or 7 |

Table 2: Total Work Force service continuum Service Operations (SERVOP)²⁰

Once the TWM has been fully rolled out it will be the most comprehensive and flexible working arrangement available to current Western Armed Forces.

WHERE CANADA SITS

The idea of FWAs was not new to the GoC; a comprehensive review of Part III of the Canada Labour Code (the Code) commenced in 2004 when Harry Arthurs was appointed by the Minister of Labour to head a commission.²¹ The Arthurs Commission released a 324 page report in the fall of 2006 that had a significant focus on the need for flexibility in work arrangements to enhance employee rights.²² The recommendations in the Arthurs report related to FWAs were not implemented into legislative reform. Nine years later, in November 2015, the

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Bonny Mak and Rachel Devon. “Towards a More Flexible Workplace for Employees: Recent Changes to the Canada Labour Code”. Law Society of Ontario. (21 June 2018) 17-2.

²² Ibid, 17-3.

Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, mandated legislation be brought forth to amend the Code “to allow workers in federally regulated sectors to formally request FWA from their employers”.²³ The Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, MaryAnn Mihychuk, spearheaded numerous consultations with all stakeholders on the issue. The division of Employment and Social Development Canada published a discussion paper, to propose changes and pose questions to be considered and discussed, in May 2016. The paper “intended to help gather views and perspectives of workers, unions, employers, employer organizations, advocacy groups, academics and other experts”, as well as invite feedback on tools and methods to be used to ensure that implementation of any FWAs, and related initiatives, was effective.²⁴

The collated responses of the engagements resulting from the May 2016 discussion paper were published in September 2016 under the title *Flexible Work Arrangements What was heard*. These papers, in conjunction with various stakeholder consultations informed the language of Bill C-63 (the Bill), which proposed changes to the Code; many of the proposed changes echo those that were suggested in 2006 by the Arthurs Commission.²⁵ The Bill received royal assent 14 December 2017, however many of its changes have not yet come into effect.²⁶ Therefore, it is suffice to say that while Canada would like to be a leader in fair work and employee rights, on the subject of FWA, change is a slow process and Canada is behind compared to some of her Allies. Furthermore, as employees of Her Majesty, the Code does not apply to members of the CAF.²⁷ Consequently, even once the amendment that provides the right to request FWA is put into force, the CAF is not included. Additional legislative changes, like those accomplished in the UK, will be required to extend this right to the CAF.

GENDER BASED ANALYSIS ON FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

FWAs have been used for decades and are attractive to different people for different reasons. Vodafone is one of the world’s largest telecommunication companies; it conducted a survey of over 8000 employers and employees across three continents in 2015, which included

²³ Employment and Social Development Canada, *Flexible Work Arrangements A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: May 2016) 2.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵ Bonny Mak and Rachel Devon. “Towards a More Flexible Workplace for Employees: Recent Changes to the Canada Labour Code”. Law Society of Ontario. (21 June 2018) 17-3.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Canada. Labour Code. R.S.C., 1985, c. L-2. *Minister of Justice*. Copy current to March 27, 2019, Last amended on March 17, 2019. Section 5. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca>

“responses from small and medium-sized companies, public sector organizations and multinational corporations in 10 countries”.²⁸ According to the survey results “75% of companies had a flexible working policy, 58% said their profile was positively impacted, 83% reported an increase in productivity, and 61% reported a boost in profits”.²⁹ According to Statistics Canada, in 2012, “36% of Canadian employees with caregiving responsibilities had flextime [arrangements]”.³⁰ But caregivers are not the only individuals who desire or require FWAs. There have been several studies that indicate that FWA can benefit both employees and employers; it allows employees to better achieve work-life balance and often reduces absenteeism and can increase organizational commitment for the employer.

Employee turnover comes at a great expense to the organization, depending on the job, it is not simple to replace the training and experience that an organization can lose when employees walk out the door. With so many supposed benefits to both the employer and employee it’s sometimes difficult to recognize the impacts of FWA when considering why not all organizations provide FWA options. There are the obvious scheduling impacts for the organization, these can be particularly difficult in the event that the FWA is required short notice and there are core hours or clients that need to be covered. Generally, to provide various FWA an organization would need to restructure compared to traditional company design. Also, as addressed earlier, there are some jobs that simply can’t provide flexibility as presence is required at a certain location for a certain time and part-time is not an option. A military deployment or exercise is one example of this scenario, to participate an employee would need to be available for the duration of the time they are required to do their job.

There are several barriers to the application of FWAs. One of the largest is culture, in North America there tends to be an ideal worker culture which dictates that an employee should prioritize work above all other obligations; this idea is also deeply gendered and can affect who uses FWAs and how.³¹ Associated with the ideal worker culture is the culture of accommodation

²⁸ Vodafone Group, “Vodafone global survey reveals rapid adoption of flexible working”, last updated 8 Feb 2016. <https://www.vodafone.com/content/index/media/vodafone-group-releases/2016/flexible-working-survey.html#>

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Employment and Social Development Canada, *Flexible Work Arrangements A Discussion Paper* (Ottawa: May 2016) 6.

³¹ Heejung Chung and Tanja van der Lippe, “Flexible Working, Work-Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction”, *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands (2018), 6.

rather than a culture of trust; with the ideal worker culture permeating the organization, any FWA is viewed as an accommodation by the employer to the employee.³² When FWA are viewed as an accommodation it can lead to extra unpaid work on behalf of the employee, either because the employer feels justified in asking for it as a result of the favour of a FWA, or the employee feels compelled to prove that they continue to be a high performer despite the FWA. If instead a culture of trust is established, the employer is seen as enabling the employee, vice accommodating, there is an understanding that the work will get done and the employee feels more like a valued and contributing member of the organization than a burden who is being accommodated.

An additional layer of culture exists for an Armed Force; there are both societal expectations to overcome, as well as the ingrained military culture. While the CAF has come a long way in integration and places high value on diversity in its ranks, Canadian society still has certain predisposed biases about who and what a soldier should be. The CAF is expected to be available on a moment's notice to defend Canada's sovereignty or assist in domestic natural emergencies, there is also an expectation of a highly trained and capable force, and at times this is hard for Canadian society to rationalize with an institution that provides FWA for its members. Both in society, and within the CAF, there is a strong belief that soldiers are required to be available 24/7. These norms and biases are then amplified in the CAF culture of 'never fail' and 'service before self'. Further to that there is a stigma attached to part-time soldiering, or 'weekend warriors' that implies since they are not serving full time and making the same sacrifices as Regular Force personnel that they are somehow lesser soldiers. This issue was raised in the UK during the third reading of the Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Bill in the House of Lords. There was concern that personnel who chose to restrict their geographical movement would be referred to as 'part-timers', with the understanding that this was a derogatory term as they were not as committed as their colleagues who were not restricted.³³

Legislative or policy changes that allow CAF members to apply for FWA will not be sufficient; for the program to be successful and equally accessible by all there is a requirement

³² Brandie Weikle, "Flexible Work – for everyone – is key to keeping women in the workforce, experts say," last modified 23 April 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/flexible-work-everyone-women-workforce-1.5096100>

³³ Earl Howe, Minister of State in the House of Lords. Letter to Lord Boyce reference the third reading of the Armed Forces (Flexible Working) Bill, 2 Nov 2017.

for a culture shift within the CAF. The Chief of the Australian Army addresses this shift in the guide to FWA by explicitly stating the expectations that: it will become usual for members to access formal and informal FWAs, it will be normal for units to plan to accommodate FWA in daily routine, training and exercise plans, there will be no disadvantage to members who access FWA, and Commanders will consider FWA requests with the expectation that they will find a way to accommodate.³⁴ Directing culture change, however, is easier than achieving culture change; it will take time for acceptance and use of formal FWAs within the CAF, but the first step is to design a viable policy.

When designing a policy the CAF must consider what they are trying to achieve and who can access, and benefit from, it. One perceived benefit to FWA is employee attraction and therefore recruitment. To be a competitive employer the CAF needs to modernize and formalize FWAs. Research has demonstrated “that organizations offering FWAs are more attractive to applicants than those that do not”.³⁵ One study differentiated between flextime, flexplace, and a combination of both and found that providing any flexible working option made an organization more attractive than not providing one at all; these organizations were perceived as more supportive and thus more attractive.³⁶ Furthermore, they determined that respondents didn’t seem to discriminate between a moderate amount of flexibility or a high amount of flexibility.³⁷ This has significant implications for the CAF as there are already many informal flextime, and some flexplace, arrangements in place. By creating a formal policy that recruiters can reference and explain the CAF will become a more attractive organization to applicants. Finally, by offering FWAs in recruiting the CAF is boosting the perception of an organization that is supportive and values its people, thus espousing the ‘People First’ narrative in Strong, Secure, and Engaged (SSE).

Another touted benefit of FWAs is retention. For the CAF, and other organizations, the cost of attrition is two-fold, there is the cost of training for a new recruit as well as the loss of force employment until a new recruit is brought up to the same skill level as the individual lost.

³⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, “Flexible Work Arrangements: Army’s guide to Flexible Work Arrangements for Commanders and Soldiers,” Army Headquarters (2013) i.

³⁵ Rebecca J. Thompson, Stephanie C. Payne, and Aaron B. Taylor. "Applicant Attraction to Flexible Work Arrangements: Separating the Influence of Flextime and Flexplace." *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology* 88, no. 4 (2015): 739.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 740.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

For that reason there is great interest in retention of trained members; providing FWA policies in the CAF could aid in both attraction and retention of talented individuals. All of the case studies portrayed on the Government UK Flexible Service website are highly, and expensively, trained trades; all four members were part of the Flexible Duties trial and, for different reasons, it allowed them to continue their service. By offering FWA the CAF could help to retain the experience and talent that currently exists in the Force.

Research indicates that one of the benefits of FWAs is the ability of an employee to better manage both their work and life demands. The CAF has a strategic objective of reaching 25% women in the Forces by 2026; there have been targeted recruiting campaigns and lots of research on female specific retention. Previous studies have indicated “that flexible working allows mothers to maintain their working hours after childbirth” by permitting better work-life balance, it is then postulated that FWAs could be a useful tool in enhancing gender equality in the workforce.³⁸ There are certain gender considerations that must be taken into account when developing the FWA policy. As mentioned above, the ideal worker culture is highly gendered, as are the societal norms of the division of labour between men and women. This can have a drastic effect on how FWAs are accessed and the effects of the individual’s careers if it is not taken into consideration.

Gender stereotyping ascribes different characteristics on men and women, and gender roles exert normative influence on behaviour; these are then internalized by individuals and tend to affect the division of household labour.³⁹ As a result women tend to be more responsible for household management and caregiving responsibilities, even in a dual income household where both partners work. Men are more often cast in the breadwinning role and therefore fit easier into the ideal worker culture where the highest obligation is work. In this vein, women are expected to access FWAs to lessen the impact of work on their family domain where men are expected to use FWAs to increase their capability through training or increase their hours.⁴⁰ This is reflected in pay differentials where men are working more hours or increasing their knowledge and thus

³⁸ Heejung Chung and Tanja van der Lippe, “Flexible Working, Work-Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction”, *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands (2018), 2.

³⁹ Hyondong Kim and Yaping Gong. "Effects of Work-Family and Family-Work Conflicts on Flexible Work Arrangements Demand: A Gender Role Perspective." *The International Journal of Human Resource Management* 28, no. 20 (2017): 2938.

⁴⁰ Heejung Chung and Tanja van der Lippe, “Flexible Working, Work-Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction”, *Social Indicators Research*, Springer Netherlands (2018), 2.

earn more money, women are flexing their hours to accommodate unpaid work and household responsibilities and thus earning less money.⁴¹

Often FWAs are applauded as a solution to work-life balance; however, family structure needs to be taken into consideration. There is a risk that, if not employed properly, a blurring of the lines between work and home can lead to increased work-life conflict. Studies have shown that, for both men and women, flexible work can lead to increased multi-tasking and less division between work and home boundaries, particularly during the transition to parenthood; thus FWAs were most effective for relieving work-life conflict for single persons.⁴² “Different arrangements may have different outcomes for men and women”, females tend to have better balance with more control over their schedule, but less balance if working from home compared to those working from the office or satellite locations.⁴³ It is important to note that the fluidity between boundaries of work and home will differ for different individuals, depending on the priorities they set and how they identify with work and home.⁴⁴ Just as important is the fact that how an individual prioritizes work and home is not necessarily a choice, it can be a combination of external demands (ex. Single income, single vehicle home, single parent, elderly parents, etc.) and the pressures of societal norms.⁴⁵

Another potential pitfall to FWAs is increased hours of unpaid overtime, as the CAF does not pay overtime, this would translate to a decrease in work-life balance and personnel working more hours than a standard workday would require. This is already evident in the CAF culture in the use of issued cellphones and dial-in work from home after hours. There is also a gendered stigma associated with flexible working. Men are more likely to perceive that those who work flexibly generate more work for others, and women perceive that those who work flexibly have less chance of advancement and experience negative career consequences.⁴⁶ One way to help offset the gendered outcomes of different FWAs is to relieve some of the unpaid domestic burden, this can be accomplished with a professional network of member support services such as accessible child care, elderly care services/benefits, and access to affordable

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid, 5.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid. 6.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 10.

services to offset household duties.⁴⁷ Also protective mechanisms for workers to reduce the blurring of boundaries and ensure FWA do not encroach on family life would be important when designing policy.⁴⁸ Stigma could also be reduced and best practices modeled by having higher ranking individuals being seen supporting FWA and accessing them to balance family needs vice simply work longer hours.⁴⁹

Sex and gendered social norms are not the only intersections to consider. Age also plays a role when considering FWAs, one study that examined the effects of FWA at different ages found that while FWAs didn't decrease work engagement in any of the respondents, there was a correlation between increased work engagement in younger workers utilizing FWAs.⁵⁰ Lifespan theory suggests that this is because older and younger people allocate and deploy their resources differently, at a young age they are more focused on growth-related goals, and as they age they shift towards maintaining resilience.⁵¹ Millennials now dominate the work-force and research indicates that they prioritize work-life balance over pay and prestige, so FWAs will become more normalized as this generation moves into management positions. Furthermore, those that are aging out of work are not interested in just quitting one day and prefer an option to ease into retirement, FWAs can provide that while maintaining their experience and mentorship for a longer period of time.⁵²

CONCLUSION

To become a modern employer and continue to attract and retain talented individuals the CAF needs a formal FWA policy. While the CAF already employs several types of flexible arrangements, with no formal policy, access to arrangements is not standardized and can be viewed as accommodations for individuals rather than enhancing the organization as a whole. Furthermore, the use of FWA in the CAF is not widely known and thus does not aid in attracting

⁴⁷ Ibid, 13.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 12.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 13.

⁵⁰ Rudolph, Cort W. and Boris B. Baltes. "Age and Health Jointly Moderate the Influence of Flexible Work Arrangements on Work Engagement: Evidence from Two Empirical Studies." *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology* 22, no. 1 (2017): 54.

⁵¹ Ibid. 42.

⁵² Weikle, Brandie, "Flexible Work – for everyone – is key to keeping women in the workforce, experts say," last modified 23 April 2019. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/flexible-work-everyone-women-workforce-1.5096100>

potential new members. Both the UK and Australia have published policies which clearly demonstrate that FWAs are possible for an Armed Force. For such a policy to be effective there will need to be a culture shift within the CAF that normalizes the use of FWAs and recognizes the benefits to both the individuals and the institution.

When developing the policy there are several factors that the CAF must take into account. While it can improve work-life balance, if not implemented properly it can also increase work-family conflicts; measures must be taken to ensure that the boundaries between work and home are not distorted. It has been demonstrated through research that different arrangements affect people differently and therefore a thorough GBA+ must be completed on any policy that the CAF develops. Consideration must be made on how gender, cultural background, rank, service and household structure affect member's access to and the use of FWAs. One area for further development would be to research how the CAF structure would need to change to accommodate FWAs. This should include different applications of the employment of Reserve personnel, examining what components of our Allies plans would work with the Canadian structure, and finally what will need to change in how members are supervised and evaluated to accommodate the new FWAs.

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