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## The Crisis of a Changing Identity: An Examination of Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces

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**THE CRISIS OF A CHANGING IDENTITY: AN EXAMINATION OF DIVERSITY IN THE  
CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

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## **THE CRISIS OF A CHANGING IDENTITY: AN EXAMINATION OF DIVERSITY IN THE CANADIAN ARMED FORCES**

### **ABSTRACT**

In 2021, diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) is not reflective of the diversity embodied in the wider society it serves. The institution has not yet met its established targets to rectify the variance in diversity since supportive data began to be nominally shared in 2006. As a step towards understanding the diversity variance between the CAF and Canadian society, and the effects of the CAF's ability to meet its expected 2026 employment equity targets, this paper identifies several factors contributing to the diversity variance. These include the warrior identity, the exclusion of other possible identities, the acceptance of discrimination, customary decision-making, and institutional resistance. This paper then applies identity theory to evaluate these factors to advance the institution's understanding of the effects of diversity variance on recruitment and retention. This paper offers recommendations to narrow the divide between Canadian society and the CAF through practices supported by identity theory concepts.

## INTRODUCTION

Although the CAF advertises itself as an institution that reflects society, the current and past makeup of the organization has shown that this is not the case. The CAF remains a heavily white, male organization at all levels of leadership. The demographics of Canada have been shifting dramatically since the 1990s. Visible minorities grew from 9.4% of the population in 1991 to 22.3% of the population in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Indigenous peoples accounted for 4.9% of the population in 2016, growing four times faster than any non-indigenous group in Canada.<sup>2</sup> Women made up 48% of the modern workforce in 2016.<sup>3</sup> All three of these groups are considered Designated Group Members (DGM) as defined by the Employment Equity Act of Canada (EEA).<sup>4</sup> This act, established in 1995, was created to ensure no individual was denied fair employment due to being a DGM and applied to all public institutions. The CAF was included under the EEA's coverage in 2002, with a caveat to adapt any portion of the act to ensure "operational effectiveness."<sup>5</sup> However, even though the demographics of Canada have shifted year after year, the demographics of the CAF have not. The composition of the CAF as of 2019 was 8.7%

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<sup>1</sup> Statistics Canada Government of Canada, "Number and Proportion of Visible Minority Population in Canada, 1981 to 2036," October 12, 2017, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/dai/btd/othervisuals/other010>.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Peoples in Canada: Key Results from the 2016 Census," *The Daily*, October 25, 2017, 1.

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, "Canadians in the Workforce, 2016 Census of Population," November 29, 2017, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/11-627-m/11-627-m2017037-eng.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> "Employment Equity Act, c. 44" (1995), 1–2, <https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/e-5.401/page-1.html>.

<sup>5</sup> Carol Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies* 19, no. 2 (2018): 273; Employment Equity Act, c. 44, 29–30.

visible minorities, 2.8% indigenous, and 15.7% women, far removed from equivalent percentages of the Canadian population.<sup>6</sup>

The variance between the diversity in the country and the diversity in the CAF is significant and troubling. Three consecutive reports from the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) in 2002, 2006, and 2016 note the challenges and failures the CAF faces with recruiting and retaining members in its ranks, in addition to the lack of diversity.<sup>7</sup> The typical CAF member is a white male from a rural community in Canada of under 100,000 people.<sup>8</sup> Yet, 85% of the Canadian population is now living in an urbanized area.<sup>9</sup> Population growth through natural births has hit a record low, with a replacement rate of 1.47 births per woman in 2019, far below the 2.10 required for replacement, leading to a dependence on immigration for labour and population growth.<sup>10</sup> Considering its typical recruitment base is diminishing, the CAF is potentially facing a manning crunch in the next decade.

Staffing is not the only reason why the CAF's lack of diversity is a problem. The Canadian military requires public confidence to maintain its legitimacy and autonomy in

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<sup>6</sup> Department of National Defence, "Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces 2020-21 Departmental Plan" (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2020), 37.

<sup>7</sup> Auditor General of Canada, "National Defence - Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel" (Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2002), 14; Auditor General of Canada, "National Defence—Military Recruiting and Retention," Audit, 2006 May Status Report of the Auditor General of Canada (Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2006), 55–56; Auditor General of Canada, "Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence," Audit, 2016 Fall Reports of the Auditor General of Canada (Ottawa: Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2016), 52.

<sup>8</sup> Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 291.

<sup>9</sup> Christian Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 40.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, "Births 2019," *The Daily*, September 29, 2020, 1, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/200929/dq200929e-eng.htm>.

the application of military force. The CAF lauds itself of being a professional public institution following the rule of law and enforcing strict discipline among its members. Nevertheless, current news coverage speaks otherwise. The External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces released in 2015, colloquially known as the “Deschamps Report,” displayed damning evidence of a highly sexualized culture in the military.<sup>11</sup> Coverage of soldiers taking part in extremist activities has persisted in the media since 2017.<sup>12</sup> Sexual assault allegations across the uppermost echelon of the military dominate news coverage in 2021.<sup>13</sup> Paired with the rise of identity politics such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008), the Me Too movement (2017), and Black Lives Matter (2020), the CAF’s disconnection from society is becoming a greater concern in the public conscious.

This is not the first time the CAF has faced an identity crisis. The 1993 murder of 16-year-old Shidane Abukar Arone by CAF members during Operation DELIVERANCE in Somalia sparked national outrage and condemnation from the Canadian public. The aftermath of what was later dubbed the “Somalia Affair” included a reduction of defence spending, a tarnished image of an institution filled with racists, and sweeping changes in the way the organization operates. In 2021, like in 1993, the CAF identity presents an

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<sup>11</sup> Marie Deschamps, “External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces” (External Review Authority, March 27, 2015), i.

<sup>12</sup> Lee Berthiaume, “Tackling Extremism Priority for New CDS: Trudeau,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 16, 2020, sec. National, <https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/canada/fighting-systemic-racism-extremism-will-be-priority-for-next-military-chief-trudeau-573410061.html>.

<sup>13</sup> Murray Brewster, “The Military’s Sexual Misconduct Crisis Is Turning into a National Security Problem, Say Experts,” *CBC News*, April 1, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/military-sexual-misconduct-1.5971495>.



unappealing image to diverse members as it harkens back to its unwelcome past behaviours.

To understand why the demographical variance between the Canadian population and the CAF, this paper will examine the situation using *identity theory*. Identity theory endeavours to describe the makeup of identities, identities interactions with each other and the environment, and the effects of these outcomes.<sup>14</sup> This paper will explore various factors to understand the CAF's demographic variance, including the distinct identities present in the CAF, the public's response to a CAF identity crisis, the interaction between the organization's values against society's values, the identity of DGMs themselves, and possible lessons. Factors will include the organization's warrior identity, concerns over cohesion, customary behaviours, and the institution's resistance to change. In addition, the examination of multiple identities available in a person, such as race, gender, family status and others, will be provided through a holistic approach known as *intersectionality*. Identity theory builds upon the arguments of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination by providing additional motivations for the challenges of integration and describing why DGMs may be detracted from joining or encouraged to leave the CAF.

Canada's military in 2021 is dealing with another conflict of identities. This conflict has led to an organization that struggles to recruit and retain diverse members of society. With the changing demographics of Canada and the negative portrayal of the military in 2021, addressing issues of the CAF's identity is increasingly important. The lack of diversity in the CAF reflects the competing identities the institution portrays and accepts, whether through its actions in the past or the unconscious actions it takes today.

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<sup>14</sup> Jan Stets and Peter Burke, *Identity Theory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 2.

## **Methodology**

To understand the variance between Canada and CAF demographics, identity theory will be used to examine the ascriptive and non-ascriptive traits of an individual and then establish them into identity types (person, role, group) to assess their importance in specific situations. The social behaviours, emotions, and effects on the environment from these interactions are also addressed. From the field of sociology, identity theory was selected to capture the combined aspects of all DGM groups and other categories not limited to race, gender, or indigeneity compared to race or gender conflict theory. This theory also aligns closely with the concept of intersectionality in consideration of all the various identities in an individual and their overlapping advantages and disadvantages. The use of identity theory is not straightforward to grasp. The consideration of multiple and overlapping identities can make a situation increasingly complex. Therefore, Chapter One spends a substantial portion describing the theory in detail to set up the reader with the tools to interpret subsequent analyses.

This paper adopts a two-tiered methodological approach through the lens of identity theory; first in its application to various case studies to understand alternative reasons for the outcome, and then to explain trends in quantitative demographical data. Cases of discrimination were based on case studies or scholarly research material captured for each DGM type. Gender-based information was taken from reports of sexual harassment in the media and journal articles examining gender issues in the CAF. Race and indigeneity research were conducted similarly. Research was limited to the last two decades to be in line with the beginning of the CAF's requirement to report employment

equity data starting in 2004, apart from studies surrounding the 1993 Somalia Affair. This project will also draw upon recent news reports from 2017 to 2021 to connect discrimination patterns experienced in the past to the challenges of the present day.

Primary sources for qualitative data were used where possible. Quantitative data for past and present race, gender, and indigenous-based demographic data from the CAF was collected using publicly available employment equity reports (2011), OAG reports, annual departmental plans, and Statistics Canada census data. This paper's qualitative data was based on scholarly research articles based on race, gender, and indigeneity in the CAF covered since 2004.

Articles were limited to what could be found publicly through open source or published research. Information based on internal Department of National Defence (DND) reporting was avoided to establish the perspective from Canadian society, to ensure validation of research from third parties, and to emphasize the institution's lack of transparency.

## **Overview**

This paper will cover this topic in seven chapters. Chapter One will lay a foundation of identity theory, forming the concepts throughout this paper. This broad social science will be narrowly focused on the core topics of the makeup of one's identity, including the standard identity model, the types of identities that exist (person, role, group), the interaction and conflict of multiple identities within a person, and how an identity is created and changed. The intent is to understand the factors at play when

discussing the identities of CAF members, the CAF's institutional identity, the identity of diverse recruits, and how they may interact.

Chapter Two will explore the CAF's adherence to the warrior identity and how it was challenged in the most impactful event in the previous generation, the Somalia Affair. The argument is made that the soldiers' actions in Somalia may have been partly due to their need to validate their identity of the prototypical soldier, paired with the lack of alternative identities available to them to resolve complex problems. The CAF's insistence on keeping aspects of that same identity will be investigated.

Chapter Three will briefly examine the public's reaction to the Somalia Affair and how it attempted to change aspects of the CAF's identity. The need for an armed force to reflect the values and composition of the society it serves will be studied while examining the current CAF doctrine to tease out the aspects of legitimacy, self-governance, and exclusivity from society. The repercussions of failing to change the CAF identity, such as the loss of autonomy and ever-increasing legislation, are discussed.

Chapter Four will bring the paper to the present day, describing how aspects of the current CAF identity are a potential deterrent to CAF recruiting. The competing interests of the CAF and diverse members are juxtaposed against each other and the changing demographic landscape of Canada. The implicit barriers of entry created by the CAF's institutional identity are presented as a driver for the lack of diverse members in the force.

Chapter Five will discuss why diversity initiatives in the CAF fail to produce results through its customary practices. Examination will include how discrimination and harassment are made the responsibility of individuals versus the organization, how

exclusionary practices against out-group members reinforce the notion of the superiority of in-group members, and how current practices prevent diverse individuals from moving to the upper echelons of the organization.

Chapter Six will describe schemes the institution can take to remedy diversity concerns through identity theory and proven practices. Concepts include accepting and creating multiple identities for CAF soldiers, adapting the warrior identity to include alternative roles of the modern soldier, recognizing the operational advantages diverse members bring through their unique identities, and motivating leaders to become voluntary diversity champions.

Chapter Seven will lay out three over-arching recommendations that the institution can establish to begin to resolve its identity and diversity problems, including the proactive adjustment of the CAF's group identity to social trends, the enforcement and monitoring of diversity initiatives, and the protection of those who are subject to the unfair customary practices of the CAF.

## CHAPTER 1 - IDENTITY THEORY

*“In an important sense there is only one unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, protestant father of college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports. Every American male tends to look out upon the world from this perspective ... Any man who fails to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself – during moments at least – as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior.”*

- Erving Goffman<sup>15</sup>

Images of an ideal in society range from ancient history’s depiction of Greek heroes in statues, to movie stars in today’s popular culture. Goffman’s quote presents a recipe for what is generally considered an ideal American citizen and the drawbacks for those that do not meet this standard. Idealized images of the soldier do the same. Be it historical documentaries of World War II, action films like Rambo, or dramatizations like Band of Brothers; the majority depict white males demonstrating strength, sacrifice, and domination.<sup>16</sup> These provocative images are tied to society’s image of an archetypal soldier and fueled by popular culture. Individuals who do not measure up to the ideal may feel a sense of unworthiness, a lack of belonging, or inferiority. Those sharing differing characteristics than the perceived ideal soldier may not see themselves as belonging to the military and seek membership elsewhere. At the same time, some join the military to achieve the ideal that Goffman and popular culture present. Their drive to achieve this ideal may persuade them to take the steps necessary to achieve the meanings associated

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<sup>15</sup> Sherene Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 9.

<sup>16</sup> Paxton Mayer, “What’s in a Soldier? How to Rebrand the Canadian Armed Forces” (Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2020), 5.

to “soldier”, such as domination, to succeed over those that differ from this norm such as those of other races, religions, or genders. The issues at play here are not transparent nor simple as identities themselves are made up of various components that, unless studied, are not readily apparent.

This chapter will discuss the components of identity, the different types and number of identities a person holds, and how these identities overlap and change. Often, identities are misunderstood or oversimplified. A grasp of identities can present an alternative view of diversity challenges by understanding what identities are, what factors affect them, and how they affect interactions between individuals.

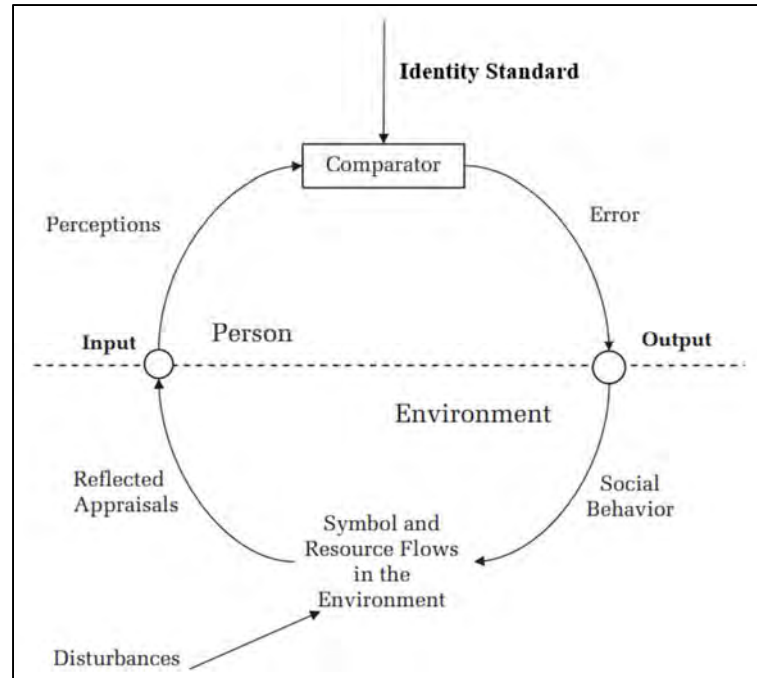
### **The Makeup of an Identity**

An identity can be considered a cyclical process between an individual and their constant assessment of the physical environment and storied context they exist inside of.<sup>17</sup> According to Peter Burke and Jan Stets, an identity consists of four main components: the identity-standard, the comparator, the input, and the output. All can be considered part of a process to determine one’s identity and is known as the *identity model*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 3.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.



**Figure 1. The Single Identity Model**

Source: Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, 62.

Figure 1 depicts the various aspects of the Identity Model. The first component of the model is the *identity standard* depicted at the top of the diagram.<sup>19</sup> The identity standard is a set of meanings and values that an image holds. For example, one might identify a politician as “male,” “wealthy,” and “deceptive.” Another example is an identity as a hockey coach who is “harsh,” “loud,” “well-meaning,” “physically fit,” and “male.” Each individual perceives these standards and meanings differently. The second component is the *input* from the environment.<sup>20</sup> This input creates a *perception* of how

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.



individuals believe others are interpreting their identity. The third component is the *comparator* where the difference between the input and the identity standard is established, known as the *error signal*.<sup>21</sup> The final component is the *output*.<sup>22</sup> With the error signal now received, the individual will create an output to match their perception of themselves with their associated identity standard, resulting in a change of the individual's *social behaviour*. The size of the error signal will determine the magnitude of change in the social behaviour. The individual will attempt to alter their environment through their behaviour, affecting the resource flows and symbols in their world to validate their identity standard.<sup>23</sup> *Resource flows* are anything that supports an individual and their interactions.<sup>24</sup> The suffix "flows" recognizes not only actual objects but also the processes that enable change, such as promotions, selection, and choice. *Symbols* represent signs and meanings in a situation, such as a disapproving frown or the donning of a uniform.<sup>25</sup> Changes to resource flows or symbols translate into a reaction from others in the environment providing *reflected appraisals* that feed the input, giving the individual a perception of the situation, and starting the whole process over again.

This continuous process to maintain one's perceived identity standard to reduce the error signal to zero is known as *identity verification*. According to identity theory, individuals will attempt to adjust their environment to meet the perceptions of their

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 66–67.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 73, 76.

<sup>24</sup> Burke, Peter, "Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 67, no. 1 (2004): 7–8.

<sup>25</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 66–67.

identity standard.<sup>26</sup> Not doing so would result in negative emotions from the individual, resulting in distress and a loss of self-esteem.<sup>27</sup> The model also delineates a barrier between interactions between the individual's mind and the environment. Every event in the environment is interpreted through one input by the individual experiencing them and may not always match what is objectively happening. This model only accounts for one identity from one point of view.

### **Types of Identities**

One's answer to the question "who are you?" could reveal the identity activated at the time and the situation an individual finds themselves in. There are three types of identities: role, group, and person identities.<sup>28</sup> A *role identity* is an identity based on the position one holds in the social structure.<sup>29</sup> Each role is made up of the goals, behaviours, and expectations of a position, all of which are socialized through the individual's environment.<sup>30</sup> Examples of role identities include supervisor, doctor, soldier, parent, and friend. However, the meanings behind these roles are not necessarily socialized evenly across the board.<sup>31</sup> One individual can imagine the role of a soldier as "masculine," "strong," and "unemotional"; another may imagine it as "caring," "protective," and "peaceful."<sup>32</sup> When the role identity is no longer applicable to the

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 68–69.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 77; Jan Stets and Michael Harrod, "Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (2004): 156.

<sup>28</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 112.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Jan Stets and Peter Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory," *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (2000): 225.

<sup>31</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 115.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

individual, they no longer need to validate that identity. They may also struggle to find that the same behaviours no longer achieve the expected results when the identity is not activated. A soldier that retires, a bachelor who becomes a parent, or a teacher who is not in a classroom may fail their identity verification process and will have to adopt another identity lest they face continual negative emotions as their error signal grows.

*A group or social identity is an identity based on membership within a group.*<sup>33</sup>

Being a member of a band, religion, or military is an example of a social identity.

Members of the group view themselves as sharing the same meanings, establishing an ideal identity or a *group prototype*.<sup>34</sup> Here an *in-group* and an *out-group* begin to form.

Perceptions of in-group members become aligned as they look favourably towards other members, establishing a “uniformity of perception.” Traits the in-group may share, like ethnicity, gender, religion, and political leanings, become the norm.<sup>35</sup> Distinctions begin to form between the “we/us” versus the “them/other.” Members view each other positively and, by contrast, how different they are from out-group members.

Predictability provided by the group reinforces an individual’s identity, reducing error signals.<sup>36</sup>

Group identities are not limited to organizations but other socially derived constructs such as race, religion, and gender, such as “Catholic” or “Asian.” Converting physical traits into social markers is typical for both role and group identities. One may

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

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

<sup>35</sup> Volker Franke, “Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper,” *Journal of Conflict Studies* 19, no. 2 (1999): 4–5.

<sup>36</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 121.

identify being a male, female, black, and white as both a role or as part of a larger group.<sup>37</sup> A careful consideration of how these physical features define meaning is essential in discussions concerning an organization's group identity and its relationship with diversity. When an individual attempts to join a group and does not share the same related features or traits, the tension between themselves and the other group members may lead to negative emotions and confrontations. In that same vein, an individual who cannot verify his group identity due to being isolated, becoming an out-group member, or losing membership could experience the same negative tension as they attempt to verify their identity.

*A person identity* is an identity made up of traits that make one unique, defining one person from another.<sup>38</sup> These include beliefs, values, and principles.<sup>39</sup> Meanings include traits such as "trustworthy," "reliable," "dominant," "masculine," or "lazy." Person identities typically persist across situations, unlike role and group identities that depend on the circumstances.<sup>40</sup> Person identities are what differ the "we" from the "me."<sup>41</sup> An individual may choose role and group identities they believe align with their person identity to reduce uncertainty. Someone with an "honest" person identity may seek a role identity of "judge." Another relevant example is someone with perceived person identities of "powerful," "masculine," seeking out the "soldier" role identity. Inconsistencies can occur when an individual's person identity is not verified through

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<sup>37</sup> Tammy George, "Race and Belonging," in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 139.

<sup>38</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 124.

<sup>39</sup> Stets and Harrod, "Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status," 158.

<sup>40</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 125.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 129.

their other identities. A soldier who perceives themselves as “authoritative” or “controlling” may encounter extreme reactions when the situation proves otherwise, leading to social behaviours that compensate for this loss. Putting these three identities into perspective, individuals can activate multiple role, group, and person identities at any time.

### **Multiple Identities**

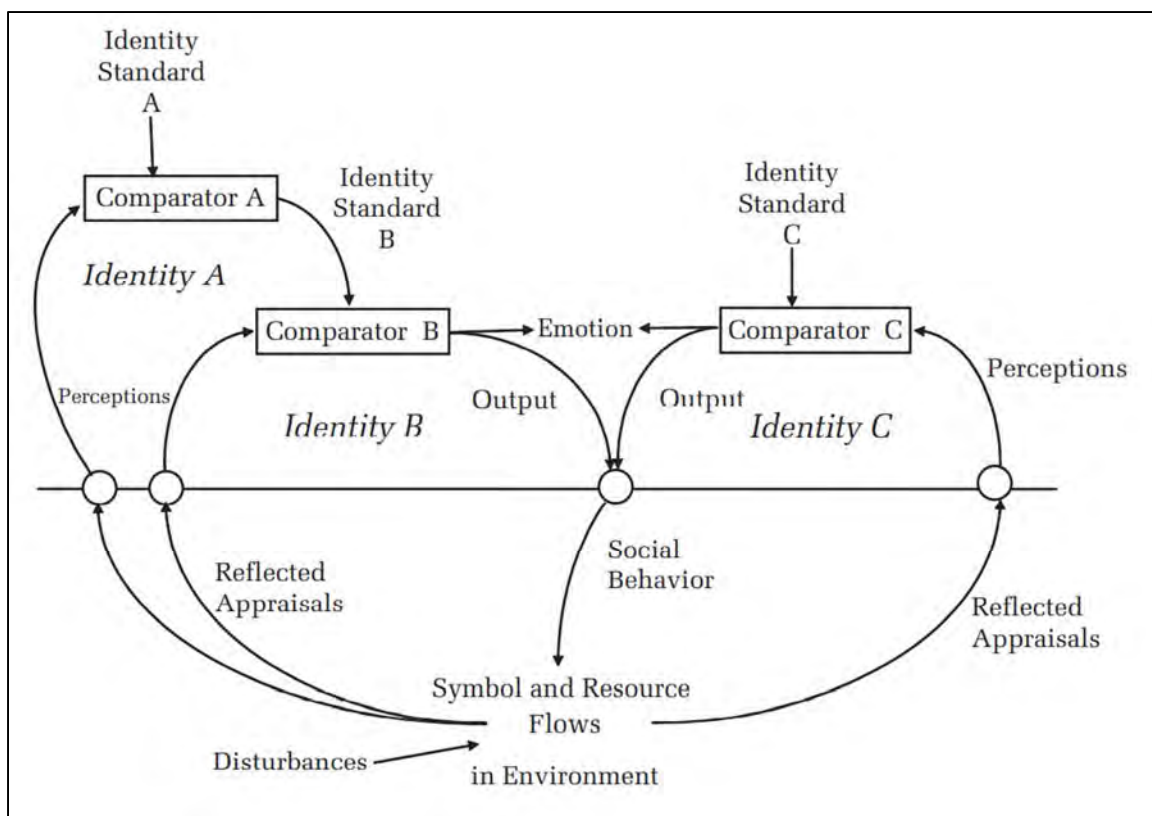
Individuals may occupy multiple identities at the same time. Understanding how they work together may explain various outcomes in a social environment. Identities may operate in isolation but are often activated simultaneously with other identities depending on the situation.<sup>42</sup> An individual may be a “soldier” in one context, a “drug addict” in another, and a “hockey coach” in yet another. Though one may have an identity, it does not need to be activated if the situation does not require it, and some situations require activations of multiple identities.<sup>43</sup> The *hierarchy of identities* identifies the order in which multiple identities shape behavioural outcomes.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 130.

<sup>43</sup> Burke, Peter, “Identities and Social Structure: The 2003 Cooley-Mead Award Address,” 9–10.

<sup>44</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 133–34.



**Figure 2. The Multiple Identity Model**

Source: Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, 132

In Figure 2, the single identity model expands to include other identities. All identities are attempting to self-verify from the perceived meaning of the situation. The input-identity standard-comparator-output process remains the same. The higher identity (Identity A) can be considered a *master identity*. The master identity does not control the output itself but instead influences the identity standards for the lower identities (Identity B).<sup>45</sup> Master identities are common of person identities, which traits affect several subordinate identities. An individual with a person identity of “reliable” may influence

<sup>45</sup> Stets and Burke, “Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory,” 177.

the role identity “mailman” as they execute their duties. The same example could apply to “dominance” over the role identities of “soldier” or “male.”

Regardless of the number of identities activated, the person can only conduct one action or behaviour (output) since all these identities originate from the same individual.<sup>46</sup> Multiple identities attempt to reach consensus while also trying to be satisfied. The error signal produced by one unverified identity could evoke negative emotions should there be conflict.<sup>47</sup> Because of this potential conflict between identities, individuals typically chose identities that are supportive of each other.<sup>48</sup>

### **Identity Interaction with Others**

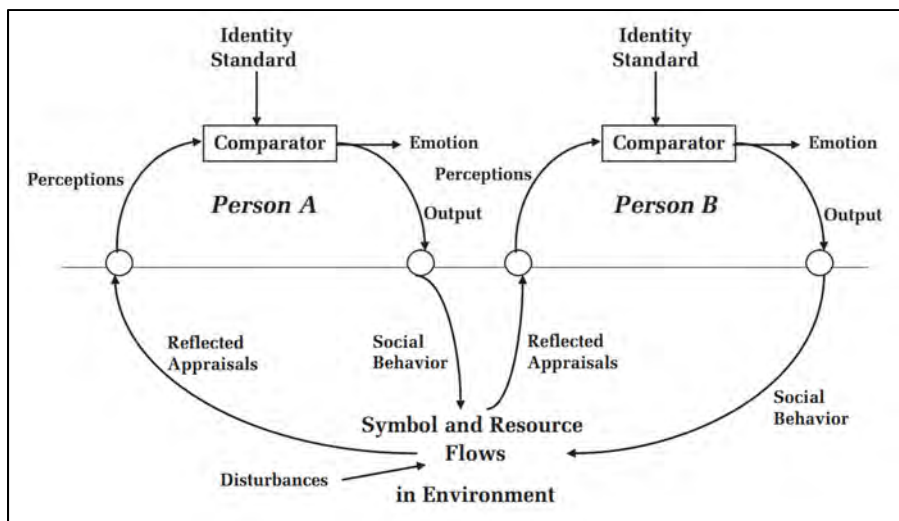
Individuals do not act in isolation. They exist in a world with other people, in other contexts and meanings, with their own unique identities and challenges. As previously mentioned, identities are socialized by an individual’s environment, and expectations are placed on the identities they have developed. When two individuals meet, they are faced with their identity verification processes while also interacting with one another.

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<sup>46</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 134.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 139.

<sup>48</sup> Franke, “Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper,” 10.



**Figure 3. Identity Interactions between Two Individuals**

Source: Burke and Stets, *Identity Theory*, 149

A simplified version of this interaction can be seen in Figure 3. All the components are the same as the previous models, with two caveats. First is that both individuals act *through* their identities, committing to a behaviour and receiving appraisals that form their perceptions.<sup>49</sup> Second, both individuals interact through the symbols and resource flows they can manipulate.<sup>50</sup>

These simple examples could quickly become complex as one adds additional identities, disturbances to the situation, in-groups/out-groups, and more people. The need for identity verification for every person throughout the process is constant and complicated. Should identity verification fail, the negative emotions associated with it would continue to grow as identities are challenged and forced to change.

<sup>49</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 149.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*



## Challenging, Changing, and Creating Identities

In the models presented, identities resist change and try to influence the environment to complete identity verification. Yet, identities change as the identity verification process fails or is not entirely successful. Identity change is known to happen in one of five ways: a change in the situation, conflicts with another identity, behaviour conflicts, negotiation in the presence of others, and the creation of a new identity.

First is a change in the situation. Typically changes to a situation or environment, otherwise known as a *disturbance*, are dealt with using the individual's behaviour to correct the disturbance.<sup>51</sup> However, sometimes this disturbance cannot be rectified. If the individual cannot change the situation, then either the error signal will cause significant emotional distress, or the identity standard will adjust to reduce the error signal as much as possible.<sup>52</sup> This change could be positive or negative. Becoming a parent or having a spouse pass away are examples where the situation changes drastically, and a behaviour change cannot reverse the situation. Another is the act of moving to a new country, where one's racial identity is significantly altered, and meanings change to reduce emotional stress.<sup>53</sup>

The second change is identity conflict. Here, multiple identities within an individual may conflict with another.<sup>54</sup> Volker Franke's study of Canadian soldiers, *Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper*, provides an example of someone who identifies both as a Christian and a soldier.<sup>55</sup> The former values pacifism

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<sup>51</sup> Stets and Burke, "Identity Theory and Social Identity Theory," 233.

<sup>52</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 180–81.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>55</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 1.

and peace, while the other has meanings associated with violence and conflict. The error level from each will be high depending on the scenario, but both will form a compromise to be satisfied. Compromise can be straightforward if both identities are at the same level but difficult if one is above the other in the hierarchy.

The third is conflicts between one's behaviour and one's identity standard, resulting in social dilemmas.<sup>56</sup> Stealing office supplies of low value may change the standard of "honest" to another standard with "honest with conditions." These small decisions can build over time to change one's identity standard to one that is no longer consistent with the original image.

The fourth is the need to negotiate an identity with others.<sup>57</sup> When two or more individuals do not agree with the other's identity in a situation, one individual may receive inputs that do not correlate with their identity. The identity standard may shift to reduce the emotional stress experienced by that individual. For example, the acceptance of one's role as a senior CAF member on a military base may engender respect and acknowledgment; the same would not be the case in a large national headquarters or on a United Nations (UN) deployment where recognition is not acknowledged nor admired. Expectations would shift to deal with others in these new environments.

The last change is the creation of a new identity. This occurs through social learning, direct socialization, and reflected appraisals. *Social learning* is when the environment informs an individual about the different identities available to them.<sup>58</sup> Whether it is children watching their parents, peers watching other peers perform, or

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<sup>56</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 184–85.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 185–86.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 193–94.

learning through media about the behaviours of the prototypical firefighter, nurse, mother, individuals form an initial identity standard for these roles. When the situation changes or an individual attempts to adopt these identities, they create and adjust their identity standard accordingly. *Direct socialization* comes from instruction about how one should perform, behave, and act under a new identity.<sup>59</sup> Socialization is typical of the military during basic training, where recruits take on the identity of a soldier, and their instructors shape them to establish the “correct” behaviour. *Reflected appraisals* form when an individual suddenly take on an identity with no previous identity standard to fall back on.<sup>60</sup> They would take on the meanings of their reflected appraisals in the situation to create that identity. For example, if a person is new at a job and is told they are a poor performer, they will begin to associate “poor performance” with their new identity. Without a basis of a previous identity for comparison, these new meanings will begin to set the identity standard.

## Summary

Identity theory can describe how identities are developed, how multiple identities interact, and how identities can be changed. Understanding this theory allows the scrutiny of diversity issues from another perspective. Acts of discrimination, resistance to change, and barriers to employment may be examined as identity conflicts. The development of the various CAF identities in the past and present may be thought of as identity creation

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<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 194–95.

and identity change. Diversity concerns of gender and race can each be examined through the multiple identities of an individual.<sup>61</sup>

The challenge of the many identities recognized by individuals in 2021 demonstrates the need to understand identity's role in a more explicit context. Today's CAF soldiers not only experience tensions from their role identity of "soldier" but as a collection of their multiple selves.<sup>62</sup> In environments like the CAF, where role and group identities are rigid, and identity tensions are high, understanding how identities function may provide insight to an institution struggling to find its place in the modern world.

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<sup>61</sup> Stets and Harrod, "Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status," 157; George, Tammy, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis*, Special Issue: Gender and the Canadian Armed Forces, 41, no. 2 (2020): 43; Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 295–96; Rupinder Mangat, Bessma Momani, and Alistar Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 18.

<sup>62</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 9.

## CHAPTER 2 – THE SHADOWED PAST OF THE CAF IDENTITY

*“A Canadian today knows herself or himself as someone who comes from the nicest place on earth, as someone from a peacekeeping nation, and as a modest, self-deprecating individual who is able to gently teach Third World Others about civility.”*

- Sherene Razack<sup>63</sup>

On 15 January 1995, the brutal beating and murder of Shidane Abukar Arone on 16 March 1993 was revealed to the Canadian public upon lifting of the publication ban.<sup>64</sup> The incident occurred while members of the Canadian Airborne Regiment were on a UN mission in Somalia that had a peacekeeping mandate to protect the populace. It was not just the killing of a sixteen-year-old boy that shocked the public, but also the looks of pleasure from the men committing the act. Photographs, videos, and testimonies later revealed that this was one of many incidents, including the shooting, humiliation, and torture of other Somali citizens. Public outcry led to a national inquiry of what is now colloquially known as the “Somalia Affair,” revealing several disturbing trends in the military.

Unlike previous UN deployments before 1993, the assignment in Somalia was not a regular combat mission. It was a mission focused on a peacekeeping mandate as the country was engaged in a civil war.<sup>65</sup> Under Operation DELIVERANCE, Canada pledged a small security force from its elite unit, the Canadian Airborne Regiment, to

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<sup>63</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 9.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 121–22.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

bring peace to Somalia. Although violence was occurring elsewhere in Somalia, the Canadians found themselves in a non-warfighting environment. Much of the populace were victims of war and the countryside was experiencing a famine. What Canadian soldiers experienced instead of battle was petty thievery, riots, and crime.<sup>66</sup> For various reasons these CAF members soon escalated their aggression towards the populace, leading up to the murder of Shindane Abukar Arone.

This chapter will examine one of the most extreme events of the institution's recent memory to see how the CAF faced an identity crisis in the past. This event was significant due to the public outrage that followed and the effects that rippled through the CAF years later. Not only did discrimination play a role, but the CAF's own "warrior" culture was potentially the cause. Even though the warrior identity is considered an essential component of armed forces, Somalia was an example of where it failed due to the lack of alternative identities and the breakdown of identity verification, leading to the soldiers' actions in Somalia.

### **The Need for the Warrior Identity**

The warrior identity is considered an essential component of armed forces. As with most Western militaries during the post-Cold War era, soldiers in the CAF had adopted the role identity of "warrior." Like other role identities, the essence of a warrior derives its meanings from its parent society. It took on meanings such as rigid, hardy, masculine, physically strong, loyal, righteous, dedicated, aggressive, selfless, emotionally

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

muted, and a willingness to kill.<sup>67</sup> At its extremes, the military socialization process encouraged standards that were not acceptable for most people, including unilaterally following directions and killing other human beings.<sup>68</sup> These traits were determined essential for combat-ready forces, and leadership saw changes as a deterrent to operational effectiveness. While the CAF took pride in its socialization process to this warrior standard, it did not emphasize socialization in other non-combat roles.<sup>69</sup> This stance was reflected in the Chief of Defence Staff's (CDS) address four years before the Somalia Affair. Military members on peacekeeping missions were "Soldiers First," alluding to their ability to react to a wide of peace support roles *through* their soldiering skills.<sup>70</sup> This mindset also came from previous UN deployments during the Suez Crisis and in the Congo, where dangerous engagements were the norm.<sup>71</sup>

Here emerges the ideal warrior prototype, one who is part of a social in-group who stands in opposition of others as one would in combat.<sup>72</sup> The self-reinforcing nature of this group identity would assist all members in their identity verification process, as their peers and the institution would validate each other in their goal to reach the prototype of the ideal man and soldier.<sup>73</sup> Throughout the post-Cold War period, the belief was that the more one veered off this identity standard, such as incorporating the

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<sup>67</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>70</sup> Howard Coombs, "Soldiers First: Preparing the Canadian Army for Twenty-First Century Peace Operations," *International Journal* 73, no. 2 (2018): 211.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 210–11.

<sup>72</sup> Nancy Taber, "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military," *Atlantis* 34, no. 1 (2009): 28.

<sup>73</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 90.

“peacekeeper” identity, the less of a warrior one became.<sup>74</sup> This mindset would persist even as nations began taking on peacekeeping roles that differed from conventional combat.<sup>75</sup>

The group identity also tended to find similarities between in-group members, such as being white, English-speaking and male.<sup>76</sup> Sherene Razack’s work “*Dark Threats and White Knights*” argues that the warrior identity eventually morphed to have meanings of masculinity, racial superiority, and dominance over those perceived to be inferior to them, including both visible minorities and women.<sup>77</sup> To verify these identities, soldiers required validation from their environment in their need for dominance as they attempted to achieve the prototype. Though the institution saw the warrior identity as an essential tool to becoming a combat-ready force, behaviours would develop to shape the warrior’s role in Somalia as requiring aggressive treatment against the populace.<sup>78</sup>

### **Lack of Multiple Identities**

Even though the warrior identity is considered an essential component of armed forces, Somalia was an example where this belief failed due to the lack of alternative identities available to the soldiers, making them unprepared for a role different than their

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<sup>74</sup> Tessa op den Buijs et al., “Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior,” *Journal of Military Studies* 8, no. 2019 (2019): 3–4.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>76</sup> Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros, “Dancing around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada’s Post-Deschamps Military,” in *Culture and the Soldier: Identities, Values, and Norms in Military Engagements* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019), 46.

<sup>77</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 90.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.



own. The institution heavily relied on the warrior identity to produce their ideal soldier, to the exclusion of all others.

Unlike the soldiers dedicated to support like logisticians, frontline soldiers like the Canadian Airborne Regiment identified closely with the warrior role identity.<sup>79</sup> Their domestic environment continually reinforced this ideal, rejecting candidates early in the recruitment process, displaying others as failures who did not possess the “right” characteristics, and reinforcing desired characteristics through promotions and acknowledgement. This environment would regard those with opposing traits and identities as out-group members.<sup>80</sup> This process emphasized norms of the in-group while demonizing the negative meanings associated with out-group members.

The lack of diverse members in the CAF and the Regiment at the time was evident as well. The regimental group identity positively associated traits aligned with the group prototype; white, straight, English-speaking males with military training.<sup>81</sup> Rejecting others based on features that detract from qualities of the established in-group is particular to group identities. Later investigations found that discriminatory activities were not limited to Somalia but also back home in Canada. The lack of diversity in the CAF also meant that before Somalia, there was little experience with diverse individuals before the Regiment’s deployment overseas, leading to few alternative identities available to the group. Experience with diversity was limited to racist assumptions from

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<sup>79</sup> Bujis et al., “Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior,” 9.

<sup>80</sup> Stets and Harrod, “Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status,” 160.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

societal culture or accepted discrimination directed towards the few black and indigenous members within their ranks.<sup>82</sup>

Diverse members themselves faced an uphill battle in becoming “warriors” in the military environment. Institutions like the CAF aimed to socialize members by subsuming their other identities into having one primary role identity. Diverse members attempting to be part of the CAF or the Canadian Airborne Regiment would have had their multiple identities chipped away, spending emotional energy on suppressing or satisfying their lack of identity verification.<sup>83</sup> The more identities an individual possessed, the more vulnerable they were to this lack of verification.<sup>84</sup> Diverse individuals who could not verify their identities would have begun to experience progressively negative self-esteem issues, compounded with the negative behaviours directed at them from in-group members.

Contrary to diverse members, one mutually supporting identity of the “warrior” was that of “hate group member.” The Canadian Airborne Regiment had several known card-carrying members of the Ku Klux Klan and other related neo-Nazi movements.<sup>85</sup> The identity of several hate groups shared many of the exact meanings of the military at the time: the rejection of others, feelings of superiority, exclusivity in nationhood, and aggressive dominance over others. These individuals found a mutually supporting

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<sup>82</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 122, 155.

<sup>83</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, “Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion,” 17.

<sup>84</sup> Stets and Harrod, “Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status,” 169.

<sup>85</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 125.

identity in the CAF in 1993.<sup>86</sup> The acceptance of white supremacists by the institution was known and tolerated as long as they did not incite riots, a shockingly low threshold.<sup>87</sup> The regimental socialization process reinforced this narrative by accepting discriminatory practices against their own diverse members through selective hazing and outright abuse, making this an acceptable practice elsewhere.

### **Lack of Identity Verification**

The lack of self-verification of the warrior identity itself was the most prominent factor that led to the soldiers' disturbing actions in Somalia. The CAF members deployed to Somalia viewed themselves highly, and their consistently reinforced identity of a warrior being dominant, strong, and righteous informed them as much. The Somali populace did not share this same point of view as these soldiers appeared relatively homogenous, showed a complete lack of knowledge of the situation, and the Somalis themselves did not reciprocate meanings of submissiveness.<sup>88</sup> Understanding their place as "saviours," CAF members were personally offended by the lack of respect, thievery, and riots directed against them.<sup>89</sup> Feeling that *they* were being mistreated, their response was to capture and bound offenders, placing hoods over their heads and painting their

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<sup>86</sup> Stets and Burke, *Identity Theory*, 115.

<sup>87</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 127.

<sup>88</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 38.

<sup>89</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 85.

hands white as a sign of their misdeeds against their benevolent protectors.<sup>90</sup> Actions such as these were accepted and built upon until the murder of Sihdane Arone.

The soldier's lack of self-verification of the warrior identity may have led to their actions in Somalia. As Tessa op den Buijs and her team's research on *Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities*, combat soldiers suffer from "role strain" when faced with non-warrior type assignments.<sup>91</sup> The Canadian Airborne Regiment was a contingent of combat soldiers whose specialty was hostile warfighting. These soldiers tended to conduct the identity-verification process to validate the notions of who they thought they were, avoiding behaving in any manner that did not meet their identity standard.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless, in Somalia, their identity was that of peacekeepers. These men viewed peacekeeping roles as irrelevant to their jobs as a soldier which, as Buijs found in 2019, applies to many frontline military units today.<sup>93</sup> They would reason that the meanings not associated with "warrior" would detract from this identity.

The lack of alternative identities available to the soldiers-meant that the identity verification process would continually try and lend itself to the meanings associated with the warrior identity.<sup>94</sup> This situation would have created feelings of inconsistency when applied to various scenarios that were not combat-related, especially to frontline combat units such as the Canadian Airborne Regiment, whose primary role was warfighting.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 92.

<sup>91</sup> Buijs et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 4.

<sup>92</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 4.

<sup>93</sup> Buijs et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 11.

<sup>94</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 12–13.

<sup>95</sup> Buijs et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 9.

Individuals who rely on a small set of identities tend to view choices in black-and-white, engaging in extreme denial or bolstering of these beliefs if that identity standard is at risk. When these same soldiers faced an environment that produced appraisals inconsistent with their identity standard, they lacked the understanding and experience in resolving these incongruent perceptions of themselves. Their most robust identity as a soldier was under threat, and their reaction was to either bolster that identity or deny claims against it.<sup>96</sup> Their lack of multiple identities ensured they used simple strategies to affect the meanings behind the situation.<sup>97</sup> Paired with a soldier's identity that claims both self-sacrifice and the justification to kill another when required, these soldiers may have viewed this new world as a dangerous place that justified their need for violence.<sup>98</sup> As Abraham Maslow famously said, "when the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."<sup>99</sup>

## Summary

Although the warrior identity is considered an essential component of armed forces, Somalia was an example of where the warrior identity failed for two main reasons. First, the lack of multiple identities available to the soldiers made them unprepared for a different role than the one reinforced by the CAF. More importantly, the lack of self-verification of the warrior identity led the soldiers to commit heinous crimes.

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<sup>96</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 13.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>98</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 139.

<sup>99</sup> Coombs, "Soldiers First: Preparing the Canadian Army for Twenty-First Century Peace Operations," 213.

The Canadian public's reaction to the soldiers' actions was not just met with shock and disgust, but as an attack on their own Canadian identity. Razack's quotation at the beginning of this chapter described the public's need to understand themselves as benevolent and mentors on the world stage; the actions of its protectors jarred this notion. The need to resolve this inconsistency led to the public inquiry that followed.

The warnings from the Somalia Affair still reverberate in the CAF today. The warrior identity is still considered essential and necessary, codified in institutional texts like *Duty with Honour* as critical to the cohesion of the force and the nation's defence. The exclusion of out-groups persists as the CAF's composition lacks diverse members, only legislated to include them by law. The integration of women has been met with continual resistance and sexual harassment. Members with extremist views are continually being discovered throughout the force. Making the room to discuss the CAF's warrior identity and culture is necessary to avoid relearning the lessons already taught in Somalia.

### CHAPTER 3 - REFLECTING SOCIETY

*“The very existence of armed forces creates two fundamental imperatives...a societal imperative that the military remain subordinate to civil authority and that it reflects, to an appropriate degree, societal values and norms. The functional imperative...demands that the military maintain its professional effectiveness for applying military force in the defence of the nation. To achieve the first, the military must be well integrated into its parent society. To achieve the second, the military is distinguished from this society by its unique function.”*

- Duty with Honour<sup>100</sup>

The public inquiry that followed the Somalia Affair titled the *Commission of Inquiry into the Deployment of the CF to Somalia* led to a multi-year investigation into the causes of the incident and related events.<sup>101</sup> The Commission presented various recommendations, including for the force to be trained to accomplish non-combat tasks and higher education throughout the ranks. This result demonstrated that when the military loses trust with the public it serves, policymakers will force the CAF to make changes to aspects of its identity. In this case, the CAF would not accept alternative identities until the public forced them to be in line with society’s expectations. Yet, some in the military viewed the government intervention as detrimental to the warrior identity, weakening the overall force.<sup>102</sup> As the quote from *Duty with Honour* attests, balancing both desires is the goal. Though the CAF should self-regulate its affairs to apply military force effectively, it should also reflect society. It will lose public trust the more

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<sup>100</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2009), 42.

<sup>101</sup> Coombs, “Soldiers First: Preparing the Canadian Army for Twenty-First Century Peace Operations,” 213.

<sup>102</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 70.

unconnected it becomes with its citizens and resisting societal changes will eventually cause a loss of the institution's autonomy.

### **Self Governance**

The CAF should be able to self-regulate its affairs to apply military force effectively. *Duty with Honour*, the organization's seminal work on its professional ethos, focuses on how the military has a unique and distinct role in society.<sup>103</sup> It builds upon how the military draws strength from its traditions and cultures that form its identity. The text emphasizes the military as an essential service to society, required when "force" is needed to resolve a political problem, correlating the military identity as essential to Canada's defence.<sup>104</sup> The warrior identity makes sense when the concern for rules, personal sacrifice, and explicit social norms are required for the diligent application of violence.<sup>105</sup>

Because of this drive to maintain a warrior culture, in-group members of the CAF are concerned with altering the institution's identity, seeing change as a threat to its cohesion. The notion is that keeping the same identity will ensure that the CAF remains effective and that changing that identity will make the CAF equally ineffective.<sup>106</sup> If the CAF as an institution requires cohesion to maintain a standardized identity, it may also mean that only acceptable members are able to reflect its standardized image.<sup>107</sup> The

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<sup>103</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 41–44.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>105</sup> Brown and Okros, "Dancing around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada's Post-Deschamps Military," 48.

<sup>106</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 32.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*



CAF's *Universality of Service* policy presents this standardized image, describing the minimum standard that all members need to achieve. At its basic level, it excludes those with physical and mental disabilities from service. Combined with the meanings of "warrior" and the exclusivity of service as emphasized in *Duty with Honour* in its descriptions of uniqueness and strength, the bar to membership is much higher than what society might expect.

As noted in Canada's present defence policy, conventional warfighting will need to adapt to more technical and complex domains.<sup>108</sup> Though the CAF mandate feeds into the warrior identity when "force" is required, the CAF in 2021 has many other tasks, including domestic operations, disaster assistance, and humanitarian response. Contrary to the inflated importance of the institution listed in *Duty with Honour*, the CAF is only one part of the nation's security apparatus. Public Safety Canada has the mandate to "protect the safety and security of Canadians both at home and abroad" requiring the CAF to integrate with other agencies in the nation's defence.<sup>109</sup> The need for the CAF to adopt different mindsets to deal with non-combat situations and work with other agencies may be required in order to maintain operational effectiveness.

### **Connecting with Society**

Even though the CAF should self-regulate its affairs to apply military force effectively, it should also reflect Canadian society in its composition. It may lose public

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<sup>108</sup> Department of National Defence, "Strong Secure Engaged" (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2017), 52–57.

<sup>109</sup> Public Safety Canada, "National Security," Government of Canada, March 3, 2021, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/ntnl-scrt/index-en.aspx>.

trust the more disconnected it becomes with its citizens. To be considered a “professional” institution, the CAF must prove it can self-regulate its affairs.<sup>110</sup> Connected to the idea of trust, the CAF must provide confidence that it can do its job in an acceptable way to the public. Suppose the nation’s institutions themselves do not demonstrate the values of the society it serves. In that case, a government cannot portray themselves as representing their interests or own values on the world stage.<sup>111</sup> Democracies generally support the idea of an all-inclusive military.<sup>112</sup> Those public institutions that fail to represent the nation’s various group and person identities put the institution at odds with the public.<sup>113</sup> These societal concerns change over the years and are sometimes in conflict with the CAF’s insistence to maintain its warrior identity.

The CAF’s need for cohesion has not helped the degradation of trust with the public. The concept that warriors are necessary for society, and by imbuing exclusivity through policies like the *Universality of Service* and socialization to exclude those who do not meet the traits embodied by the CAF, the organization’s in-group tendencies moved beyond just ensuring soldiers are fit to perform service. In-group members tend to support discriminatory tendencies that followed the logic of the larger institutional identity. One example was the integration of women in the 1970s. The Canadian public was vocal about the inclusion of women in all aspects of the workforce, including the military.<sup>114</sup> Yet, the CAF was highly resistant to change and levied the impossibility of

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<sup>110</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 60.

<sup>111</sup> Leuprecht, “Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion,” 36, 46.

<sup>112</sup> Franklin Pinch, “Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military,” in *Challenge and Change in the Military: Gender and Diversity Issues* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2004), 179.

<sup>113</sup> Leuprecht, “Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion,” 30.

<sup>114</sup> Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2007), 8–10.

women to accomplish the job. It was only after government intervention and direction that after 24 years, an entire generation of soldiers, did the CAF fully accept this change. In the interim, the CAF lost much legitimacy with the public. Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros' study of the dialogue found that CAF arguments amounted to the notion that "all men could leap a tall building in a single bound and that no women could climb a flight of stairs."<sup>115</sup> Razack's research found that many soldiers attributed government intervention as a detriment of the warrior identity and a weakening of the overall force, pointing to the CAF's institutional resistance towards the legislation of human rights, women, visible minorities, and other sexual orientations.<sup>116</sup> Nevertheless, even with examples such as the Somalia Affair and the integration of women, *Duty with Honour* only mentions the inclusion of diverse members, indigenous peoples, and multiculturalism as an afterthought in a few sentences.<sup>117</sup> Viewing the identity issue as being caused by accepting unqualified candidates into the force versus how the institution deals with alternative, diverse identities is still a problem.

### **Losing Autonomy**

The most crucial reason the CAF should aim to reflect Canadian society in its composition is that resisting societal changes will eventually cause a loss of the institution's autonomy. Franklin Pinch's examination of diversity policies shows that

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<sup>115</sup> Brown and Okros, "Dancing around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada's Post-Deschamps Military," 35.

<sup>116</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 70.

<sup>117</sup> Department of National Defence, *Duty with Honour: The Profession of Arms in Canada*, 26.

they generally fall into two categories: those that force inclusion through legislation and others that encourage inclusion.<sup>118</sup> As stipulated, the CAF has generally failed to adapt to societal changes. The public's expectations usually force it to adapt through the former, more legal means due to the failure of self-regulation.<sup>119</sup>

The changing of identity was not only a CAF concern but a Canadian one. Along with the inclusion of women, the 1970s saw the beginning of a series of policies that attempted to resolve diversity, language, race, and other meanings associated with identities. The *Canadian Human Rights Act* was enacted in 1977, followed by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* enacted in 1982. Both serve as the basis of protecting equity rights, i.e. the rights of individuals for respect, dignity and consideration without discrimination for various personal traits (race, ethnicity, religion, sex, age, etc.).<sup>120</sup> The purpose of this Charter was to ensure that people's differences were taken into account when applying the law or shaping policy, including historical discrimination against minority groups. The interpretation of this Charter includes affirmative action programs where required, i.e. programs that mandate the hiring of underrepresented groups.<sup>121</sup> From here, the *Employment Equity Act*, enacted in 1995, gave teeth and practical guidance as to how to establish equity among the four DGMs; visible minorities, indigenous peoples, women, and those with disabilities.<sup>122</sup> Through these acts, Canada

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<sup>118</sup> Pinch, "Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military," 179.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>120</sup> Department of Justice, "The Rights and Freedoms the Charter Protects," Government of Canada, September 13, 2018, <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/rfcp-cdpl.html>; Department of Justice, "Learn about the Charter," Government of Canada, December 13, 2019, <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/rfc-dlc/ccrf-ccdl/learn-apprend.html>.

<sup>121</sup> Department of Justice, "The Rights and Freedoms the Charter Protects."

<sup>122</sup> *Employment Equity Act*, c. 44, 1.

would ensure that its public institutions were reflective of society, following the objectives of many rights movements during that time period.<sup>123</sup>

Again, the argument in the CAF was that outside influence would affect the effectiveness of the force to do its job.<sup>124</sup> The CAF avoided coverage under the Employment Equity act until 2002, and even then, it came with clauses.<sup>125</sup> Both the RCMP and the CAF were offered exemptions under the guise of an undefined “operational effectiveness,” allowing these organizations to make changes to the necessary provisions to suit their needs.<sup>126</sup> Internally, the CAF produced its various versions of employment equity plans and reports throughout the years. As Carol Agocs notes in her study of systemic indigenous discrimination in the CAF, few of these reports are made available to the public under the guise of protected information or document classification.<sup>127</sup> The result was an organization that avoided employment equity targets. Three OAG reports related to CAF personnel in 2002, 2006, and 2016 demonstrated the failure to attract women, indigenous, and visible minorities to the ranks and mandated the CAF to develop better solutions.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> George, Tammy, “Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women’s Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 46.

<sup>124</sup> Pinch, “Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military,” 172–73.

<sup>125</sup> Agocs, “Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?,” 273.

<sup>126</sup> Employment Equity Act, c. 44, 29–30.

<sup>127</sup> Agocs, “Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?,” 283.

<sup>128</sup> Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence - Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel,” 11; Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence—Military Recruiting and Retention,” 55–56; Auditor General of Canada, “Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence,” 10.

The 2016 *CAF Diversity Strategy* is a marked departure from previous CAF policies. This document stipulates the multiple aspects of identity directly and indirectly. From women, ethnicity, race, gender identities, and religions, this publication aims to encompass the identity issues the CAF is facing.<sup>129</sup> It also recognizes that the CAF identity can be a problem in personnel management and aims to address these concerns through its action plan.<sup>130</sup> Though it differentiates itself from HR strategies, the plan includes measures that are important to address the multiple aspects of an individual's identity through the lens of diversity, such as career management, culture, norms, traditions, families, and messaging. These have meanings associated with group, person, and role identities that have different meanings than the warrior identity. It also aims to use the annual employment equity reports as a measure of its effectiveness. The only concern with this plan is the unknown level of implementation or success in the CAF today, as this is not publicly available information.

Transparency with the public was improved when the Department of National Defence (DND) started to publish diversity targets in its publication of its annual departmental plan, beginning in 2017 with a written commitment to diversity followed by actual targets and results in 2018.<sup>131</sup> However, the final responsibility for all these plans and targets remains distant. The continual failure of the institution to meet employment

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<sup>129</sup> Department of National Defence, "Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy" (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2016), 1.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, B-6, B-7.

<sup>131</sup> Department of National Defence, "Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces 2017-18 Departmental Plan" (DND Canada, 2017), 33–34; Department of National Defence, "Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces 2018-19 Departmental Plan" (DND Canada, 2018), 23.

equity targets has not changed the institution's direction nor culture, as CAF responses to equity failures all look remarkably similar over the last two decades.<sup>132</sup> As per the CAF's own leadership doctrine, institutional leaders' are responsible for ensuring that the organization remains relevant to society and adapts to the public's changing requirements.<sup>133</sup> Lacking this, direct intervention from the government due to the CAF's inability or resistance would demonstrate a loss of faith in the institution's ability to adapt.

### Summary

Although the CAF should self-regulate its affairs to apply military force effectively, it should reflect society's composition for two reasons. First, it will lose public trust the more unconnected it becomes with its citizens. More importantly, resisting societal changes will eventually cause a loss of the institution's autonomy through ever-increasing scrutiny and legislation. *Duty with Honour's* statement of the military needing to be "distinguished from society" should not be taken to the extreme without balancing the public's need for its military to share its values. The institution should be proactive in its approach to societal changes. As *Leading the Institution* explains, change, if not supported by the military, takes time, and may demonstrate that the organization cannot self-regulate and perform its function of being a representative of Canada and its people at home and abroad.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup> Agoos, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 303–4.

<sup>133</sup> Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Leading the Institution*, 10.

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





## CHAPTER 4 – RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES

*“Attraction and diversity activities are starting and will need to be sustained, but it is too early to tell whether efforts are reaching minority audiences. The limited data available, however, indicate that more work is needed.”*

- 2002 OAG Report<sup>135</sup>

Unlike other public and private institutions, the CAF cannot accept new hires laterally into the organization.<sup>136</sup> In this system, the recruitment process plays a vital role in ensuring the organization has the required personnel to accomplish the government’s defence mandate both in the present and future. Auditor General Reports from 2002, 2006, and 2016 detail the organization’s failure in having enough people to conduct its operational mandate.<sup>137</sup> They cite the lack of women, visible minorities, and indigenous members at various points. The department’s responses to these reports have been repetitive and lacking detail, all while failing to meet self-established targets. In 2021, as in the past, the CAF has struggled to recruit and accept diverse members into its ranks. As it stands today, institutional success in diversity is a numbers game, where leadership sees meeting personnel numbers in the correct categories as an accomplishment. The role the institutional group identity plays on current, and prospective CAF members provide another perspective to this problem. Even though the CAF has no publicized barriers to entry, the CAF needs to focus on diverse recruitment because the demographics of

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<sup>135</sup> Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence - Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel,” 11.

<sup>136</sup> The exception in this case is hires from other militaries after an extensive assessment process, and not always at the previously granted rank.

<sup>137</sup> Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence - Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel,” 11; Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence—Military Recruiting and Retention,” 55–56; Auditor General of Canada, “Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence,” 52.

Canada will continue to disadvantage the organization. In contrast, the advertised identity of the CAF continues to diverge from the identity of potential recruits.

### **Shifting Demographics**

For much of its history, typical recruits in the CAF have been white males in their late teens to early twenties originating from rural Canada.<sup>138</sup> Almost all the soldiers involved in the Somalia Affair in 1993 shared these ascriptive features. The difference between then and 2021 is that this typical recruitment base has been diminishing for decades, yet the CAF's demographics have barely changed.<sup>139</sup> Canada has one of the lowest fertility rates among developed nations, with UN World Fertility reports over the past two decades noting Canada having a "rapid decline" in births.<sup>140</sup> The declining birthrate makes recruiting from the CAF's traditional base progressively harder.<sup>141</sup> The competition for talent will increase as the availability of skilled labour becomes smaller each year.<sup>142</sup>

The demographics of Canada have also changed significantly. The populations of visible minorities and indigenous peoples since 2006 have risen from 16.2% to 23.3 % and 3.8% to 4.9%, respectively.<sup>143</sup> Women are now in all aspects of the modern

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<sup>138</sup> Hans Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?," *Canadian Military Journal* 8, no. 3 (2007): 28.

<sup>139</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 40.

<sup>140</sup> United Nations, "World Fertility Report: 2003," Economic & Social Affairs (New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2004), 59; United Nations, "World Fertility 2019" (New York: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 2020), 5.

<sup>141</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 15.

<sup>142</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 45.

<sup>143</sup> Statistics Canada, "2006 Census: Ethnic Origin, Visible Minorities, Place of Work and Mode of Transportation - The Daily," accessed April 27, 2021, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily->

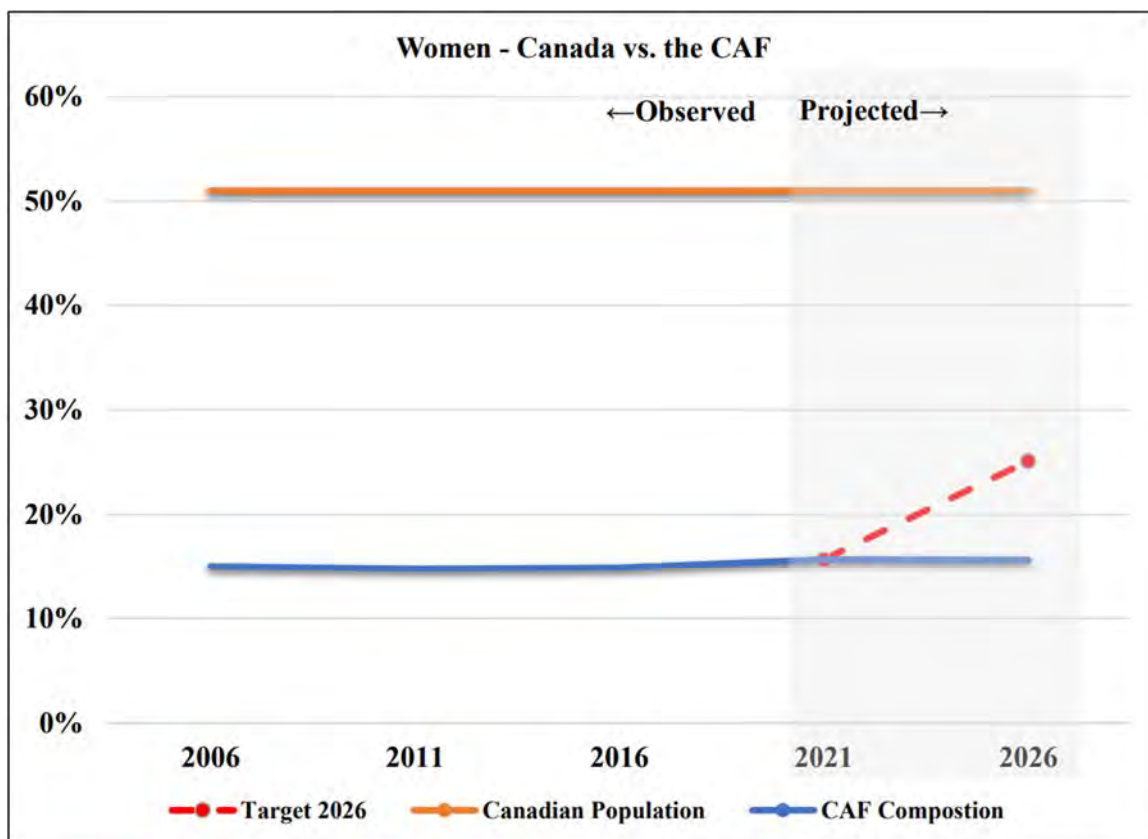
workforce, and indigenous members are the youngest and fastest-growing demographic in Canada.<sup>144</sup> Collating the various texts on this subject, Figures 4, 5 and 6 compare the DGM population in Canada against the DGM population in the CAF over the last two decades. Simple linear regression analysis, including data from the CAF's 2019 DGM data, was used to model the simulated trends past 2021.<sup>145</sup>

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quotidien/080402/dq080402a-eng.htm; Statistics Canada, "Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity: Key Results from the 2016 Census," *The Daily*, October 25, 2017, 6; Statistics Canada, "Aboriginal Peoples in Canada in 2006: Inuit, Métis and First Nations, 2006 Census - The Daily," January 15, 2018, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/daily-quotidien/080115/dq080115a-eng.htm>; Statistics Canada, "The Daily — Aboriginal Peoples in Canada," 1.

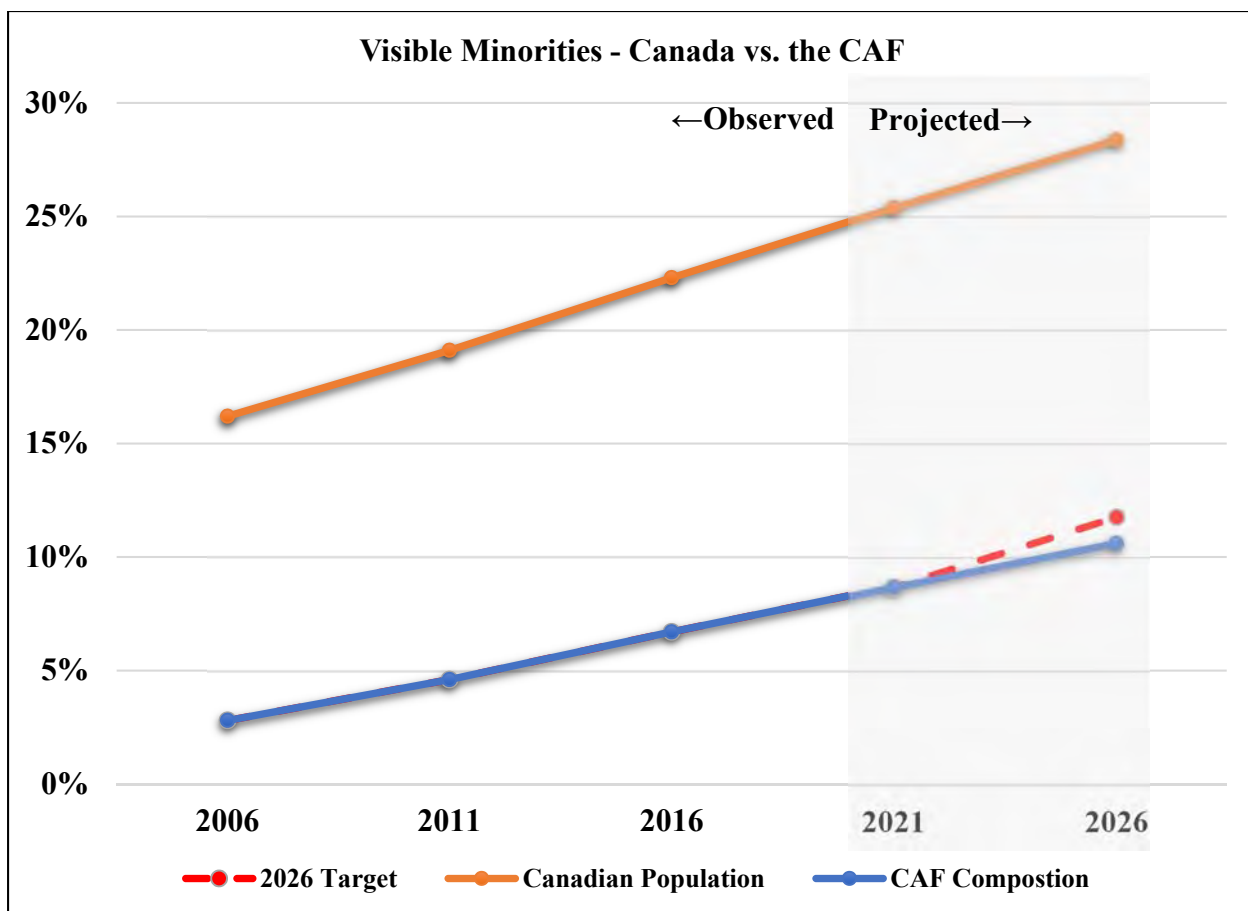
<sup>144</sup> Statistics Canada, "The Daily — Aboriginal Peoples in Canada," 1; Statistics Canada, "Canadians in the Workforce, 2016 Census of Population."

<sup>145</sup> Department of National Defence, "Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces 2020-21 Departmental Plan," 37.



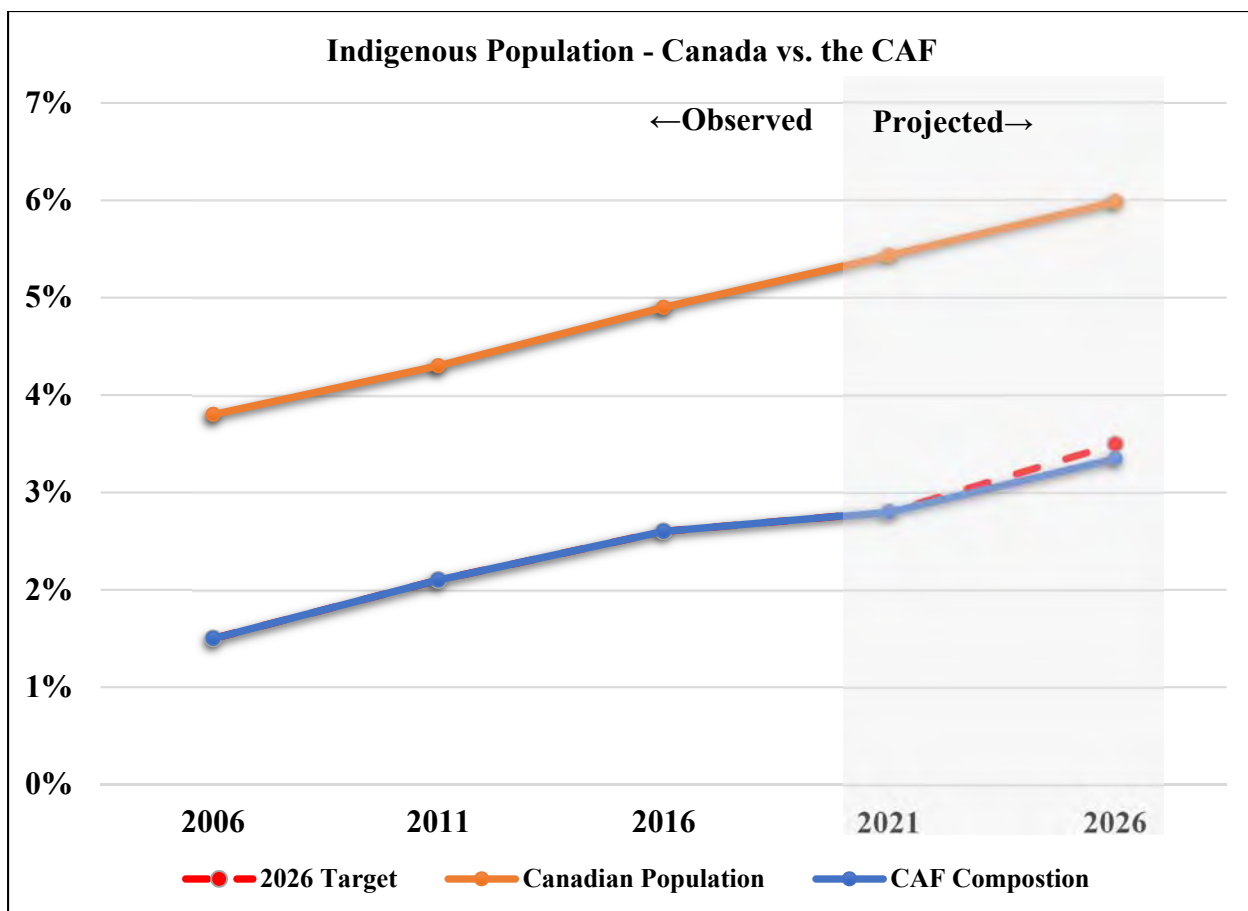
**Figure 4. Percentage of Women in Canada vs. the CAF**

Sources: Statistics Canada, *2006 Census*; Statistics Canada, *2011 Census*; Statistics Canada, *2016 Census*; Jung, *Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?*, 28; DND, *Canadian Forces Employment Equity Report 2010-2011*, 4; Fuhr, *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces*, 9; DND, *Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces 2020-21 Departmental Plan*, 37.



**Figure 5. Percentage of Visible Minorities in Canada vs. the CAF**

Sources: Statistics Canada, *2006 Census*; Statistics Canada, *2011 Census*; Statistics Canada, *2016 Census*; Statistics Canada, *Number and proportion of visible minority population in Canada, 1981 to 2036*; Jung, *Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?*, 28; DND, *Canadian Forces Employment Equity Report 2010-2011*, 4; Fuhr, *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces*, 9; DND, *Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces 2020-21 Departmental Plan*, 37.



**Figure 6. Percentage of Indigenous members in Canada vs. the CAF**

Sources: Statistics Canada, *2006 Census*; Statistics Canada, *2011 Census*; Statistics Canada, *2016 Census*; Jung, *Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?*, 28; DND, *Canadian Forces Employment Equity Report 2010-2011*, 4; Fuhr, *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces*, 9; DND, *Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces 2020-21 Departmental Plan*, 37.

Examining these graphs are three key points. First, though the composition of DGMs in the CAF is growing year after year, there is a significant divide in composition between the CAF and the Canadian population. This variance marks an inability of the CAF to reflect Canadian society in its composition. Second, to achieve the established 2026 target for women, recruitment would need to increase significantly in the next four years. Finally, is the lack of *publicly* available and collated data on the subject. Several reports

and targets had to be scoured and verified, with no open source readily having all of this information in one place.

Another factor affecting recruitment is that most CAF workplaces are located in rural areas of Canada. The location of most Canadians has changed, with 85% of the population now residing in urban centres with the majority centralized near major Canadian cities.<sup>146</sup> However, the typical CAF recruits come from small rural communities in Canada with populations less than 100,000.<sup>147</sup> Recruitment, in general, has been stylized by the “rural versus urban” divide in Canada. In a recent development, economic downturns, usually a driver for employment for the CAF, no longer produce as many candidates.<sup>148</sup> A Statistics Canada report on labour mobility finds jobless individuals consider moving and relocation a hindrance even in times of unemployment.<sup>149</sup> Technically skilled candidates are also focused in urban centres near technology hubs.

In Canada, the diminishing population and labour market are curbed largely by immigration and the integration of women into non-traditional roles. If the CAF does not support DGM integration on its principles, it should support it by its realism.<sup>150</sup> Yet, this viewpoint is a reactive one and a low bar ethically, forcing the CAF to change, if reluctantly. Should the current trends persist, the CAF will continue to deviate from an honest reflection of society, missing out on the untapped resource of diverse citizens.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Leuprecht, “Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion,” 39–40.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 142.

<sup>148</sup> Agocs, “Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?,” 291.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 135–36.

## The Socialized Group Identity

As described in identity theory, an individual's environment socializes most meanings behind role and group identities. The popular perception of a soldier is of a young, physically fit, Caucasian male who is always carrying a weapon.<sup>152</sup> This image is emphasized in war films, toting the meanings of sacrifice and hardship.<sup>153</sup> Canada defines heroes through examples like Romeo Dallaire, who forfeited his mental health to do what is right in Rwanda or the soldiers who went to fight terror in Afghanistan only to come back with injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder. These heroic stories make the ordinary Canadian proud.<sup>154</sup> However, this only accounts for a tiny portion of the Canadian soldier's possible identities and is not in line with what most soldiers accomplish on a daily basis. These images account for most unsolicited applications the CAF receives, i.e. those it spent no effort acquiring.<sup>155</sup> An active approach requires resources, targeting, and consistency, potentially difficult for a publicly run organization with a limited budget to accomplish.

One of the more prominent detractors of military service is the implied need to sacrifice one's meaning in most aspects of life: location, familial obligations, and identity.<sup>156</sup> The insistent organizational needs of "service before self" and being subject

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<sup>152</sup> Mayer, "What's in a Soldier? How to Rebrand the Canadian Armed Forces," 4.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>154</sup> Taber, "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military," 32.

<sup>155</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 45.

<sup>156</sup> Taber, "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military," 28.



to organization requirements may conflict with other identity meanings, such as supporting family, be available for one's children, and remaining near one's hometown. The military socialization process itself also changes people.<sup>157</sup> It invokes isolation, stress, and shared experiences to develop the soldier role identity. Potential recruits not wanting to put themselves at a social disadvantage may not want to make this leap.

The *CAF Diversity Strategy* itself notes its need to “value and embrace” the unique identity of diverse members to become “an employer of choice.”<sup>158</sup> It also references the need for a broad array of skills to be attracted to be successful in operations.<sup>159</sup> The same strategy emphasizes the need for incoming recruits to align their values with that of the institution. Christian Leuprecht noted that those wishing to join the CAF should not expect the organization to abandon the entirety of its identity to make it more palatable to potential newcomers.<sup>160</sup> So while one must reject or change one's identity to join the CAF, the institution must accept the same people with their unique identities. This balancing act is a careful one and possibly self-defeating without clear guidelines.

### **Diverse Identities**

The rise of identity politics is becoming more prevalent among society today.<sup>161</sup> Movements such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (2008), Me Too (2017), and Black Lives Matter (2020) reflect a society that is changing and becoming more

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<sup>157</sup> Franke, “Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper,” 6.

<sup>158</sup> Department of National Defence, “Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy,” i–ii.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>160</sup> Leuprecht, “Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion,” 31.

<sup>161</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, “Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion,” 14–15.

inclusive of human rights, especially among DGMs. Like the Aboriginal Leadership Opportunity Year (ALOY) and the inclusion of women in all military occupations, CAF inclusion initiatives have been part of the recruitment program for decades. Nevertheless, the barriers surrounding the entrance of DGMs seems implicit in some form.

One common excuse is that immigrants, and by extension visible minorities, do not want to join the CAF for various unvalidated causes. Reasons range from comparing the CAF to the military of their homeland to their parents' extreme control over their life choices.<sup>162</sup> Though these may be true in some circumstances, these excuses could hardly account for the lack of recruitment across all visible minorities. These beliefs harken back to the discriminatory 1990s Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit reports where an individual's ethnicity was to blame for their lack of military participation instead of institutional barriers.<sup>163</sup> Affinity towards the military is actually exceptionally high among some visible minority groups. Melissa Finn and Bessma Momani's study on Muslim communities demonstrated that this groups exhibits great pride in their nation, and 42% of those surveyed would be willing to join the armed forces.<sup>164</sup> Leuprecht found similar trends, noting that both indigenous and visible minorities as a whole show an

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<sup>162</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 33.

<sup>163</sup> George, "Race and Belonging," 138; Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 31.

<sup>164</sup> Melissa Finn and Bessma Momani, "Canadian Muslim Youth and Military Service," in *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2020), 163–64.

“above-average” interest in a career in the CAF.<sup>165</sup> A willingness to join the military is present in various DGM groups, yet the CAF is not taking advantage of this.

The issue of visible minorities being radically different from an average Caucasian rural Canadian is also not as comprehensive as perceptions would believe. Finn and Momani’s study found that young Muslim Canadians share many of the same world views and beliefs as their European Canadian counterparts.<sup>166</sup> The majority expressed gratitude about Canada’s rights, freedoms, and opportunities, with 94% considering themselves proud of being Canadian.<sup>167</sup> The majority expressed a willingness to defend the country, alluding to a sense of duty, a repayment to society, and a willingness to rise to expectations. Many visible minority groups see an advantage in joining the CAF. Service can form a sense of belonging with their new home, prove their dedication to the nation, help their integration into the population, and invoke a meaningful sense of citizenship.<sup>168</sup> Many DGMs, and most Canadians, are unaware of the potential career options and benefits available in the CAF. In an interview with Global News, Captain Mandy Grewal, a woman of East-Indian descent, the option of being a lawyer while also serving in the CAF was never known to her until later in life.<sup>169</sup> Her comments ring true to one of the CAF’s problems: there may be more interest among

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<sup>165</sup> Christian Leuprecht, “Demographics and Diversity Issues in Canadian Military Participation,” in *Challenge and Change in the Military: Gender and Diversity Issues* (Kingston, Ontario: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2004), 42.

<sup>166</sup> Finn and Momani, “Canadian Muslim Youth and Military Service,” 161.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, 162–66.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>169</sup> “Canada’s Armed Forces, Struggling to Hit Diversity Goals, Turns to New Digital Recruiting Tools,” Global News, accessed January 20, 2021, <https://globalnews.ca/news/4450927/canada-armed-forces-diversity-goals-digital-recruiting/>.

DGMs if they only knew the opportunities available to them in the various career paths.<sup>170</sup>

Geography also matters to all diverse groups, though in different ways. Many are concerned about leaving their social network back home for a life in isolated rural Canada. For visible minorities “ethnic enclaves” or “kin networks” form a sense of social stability that allows individuals to reinforce and satisfy their ethnic and family group identities.<sup>171</sup> Many ethnic groups are located near urbanized centres, far from established military bases. Research on indigenous recruitment brings out other key findings. Unlike visible minorities who typically prefer urban centres, the reverse may be true for some indigenous communities.<sup>172</sup> The “culture shock” experienced when moving from a small community to a completely foreign environment like the CAF plays a role in their avoidance. However, like visible minorities, the leading detractor is the distance from a social support network. This concern is significant for Indigenous women who culturally rely on their social and family network as an essential meaning of their identity.<sup>173</sup> Paired with the perception of systemic racism and tenuous events such as the Oka Crisis, the perceived lack of action from the institution detracts from recruitment efforts aimed at indigenous communities.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup> Leuprecht, “Demographics and Diversity Issues in Canadian Military Participation,” 133; Jung, “Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?,” 32.

<sup>172</sup> Agoos, “Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?,” 291.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 275.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*, 301.

## Summary

Although the CAF has no publicized barriers to entry, the CAF needs to focus on diverse recruitment for two main reasons. First, the demographics of Canada will continue to disadvantage the CAF. More importantly, the advertised identity of the CAF will continue to diverge from the identity of potential recruits. Considering the nature of an all-volunteer military, the organization must attract the right talent.<sup>175</sup> The CAF competes against private sector organizations that can pay higher wages than the CAF.<sup>176</sup> Paired with the institutional rule that all individuals must start at the bottom leads qualified, experienced candidates to look elsewhere.<sup>177</sup> Diverse candidates are resources that the CAF can use to accomplish its operational mandate for generations to come. If the CAF cannot understand and become an equitable employer of choice, then the chances of becoming a competitive employer will continue to be a struggle.<sup>178</sup> Treating diversity like a problem to be managed versus a potential strength to be employed will detract from any proactive steps the institution could take.<sup>179</sup> The lack of recruiting diverse members is, in a sense, a threat to the organization's operational effectiveness.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographics and Diversity Issues in Canadian Military Participation," 122.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>178</sup> Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?," 28.

<sup>179</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 30.

<sup>180</sup> Agoos, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 301.

## CHAPTER 5 – UNDERMINING DIVERSITY

*“When I want a role model, I look for the qualities that people have...I’m sitting here telling you that there are no black people that I can look up to and say I want to be just like him. All the successful black people I know are my friends. And they’re outside of the military. And they make major moves. It’s like I can’t do that here. And you try. And you just can’t get it done. After a while you decide, yeah, it’s time to leave.”*

- Interview with “Alfred”<sup>181</sup>

*“I felt like fresh meat walking down the hangar. I felt objectified. I felt like a streetwalker. I felt like I had 50 pairs of eyes on me. I felt icky and definitely not comfortable in my own skin.”*

- Interview with retired Captain “Charlotte”<sup>182</sup>

The group identity of the CAF and the various units and organizations within it are not consistent across the nation. They are affected by the environment, the type of work, demographics, and many other factors. However, the makeup of an organizational culture consists of the values, beliefs, norms, and behaviours persistent throughout all echelons of a workplace.<sup>183</sup> When looked at from an identity standpoint, this culture influences the social behaviours in the organization that affect fair treatment and inclusion. Exploring the obstacles faced by diverse members in the organization may explain why DGMs fail to remain in the CAF. Even though the CAF has adopted a diversity strategy and established targets for DGM recruitment, the CAF’s customary practices cause resistance to diversity initiatives due to the persistence of discrimination and exclusion, in addition to restricting DGM’s access to power.

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<sup>181</sup> George, “Race and Belonging,” 148.

<sup>182</sup> George, Tammy, “Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women’s Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 49.

<sup>183</sup> Agoos, “Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?,” 285.

## Discrimination

While documents and initiatives like Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) and the CAF Diversity Strategy are good starts, they alone are not enough to challenge the current lack of inertia in the organization.<sup>184</sup> Recall that it was not until the Somalia Affair that the CAF adopted an official policy on racism.<sup>185</sup> In addition, the institution's handling of discrimination limits it to individual cases between two parties versus an organization-wide issue.<sup>186</sup> The burden is placed on DGMs to make an effort to integrate into a system that disadvantages them socially and personally versus having the system change for the better. Tammy George's interview of racialized CAF members scrutinizes the less quantifiable experiences of DGMs in the CAF. Her study examines the feelings of inclusion and commitment from the perspective of racialized members and the difficulty in naming racism and other forms of discrimination in an institution like the CAF.<sup>187</sup> Acts of discrimination and harassment are not typically overt signs of hate or segregation but are instead subtle and challenging to prove. This environment allows issues such as racism and sexism to flourish under the guise of silence. Bringing forth issues such as racism, harassment, and sexual harassment to leadership is reserved only when the situation has moved far past a point of acceptable behaviour. Doing so comes with heavy social consequences for both the accused and accuser. The enormous burden

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<sup>184</sup> George, Tammy, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," 44.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>187</sup> George, "Race and Belonging," 151.

of proof required to assign guilt protects the accused, avoiding any career implications for wrongdoing. The accuser must relive the experiences, be blamed for not being “resilient,” and avoid having the fault redirected back to them. The term “micro-aggressions” can also describe these situations.<sup>188</sup> These are subtle acts that create exclusion, consciously or unconsciously, in an organization. Terms like being “colour-blind” or “treating everyone equally” use the dominant in-group standards to judge those of diverse backgrounds at a disadvantage.<sup>189</sup> It also silences those who could call into question the unfairness of treatment and ultimately blame diverse individuals themselves. In a more flagrant view of discrimination, the reappearance of extremists in the CAF is alarming. From the 2017 interruption of an indigenous ceremony by CAF members of the “Proud Boys” to the 2020 arrest of a known CAF neo-Nazi supporter of “the Base,” reports of soldiers joining racially motivated right-wing groups further distance the institution from its diverse members.<sup>190</sup> With the majority suffering only minor disciplinary actions, the perceived acceptance of organized discrimination is not lost on DGMs in the ranks.<sup>191</sup>

The outlook for gender has not been great either. The External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces in 2015 noted an “underlying sexualized culture in the CAF that is hostile to women and LGBTQ

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<sup>188</sup> Jana, Tiffany and Michael Baran, *Subtle Acts of Exclusion* (Oakland, California: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2020), 29–30.

<sup>189</sup> George, Tammy, “Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women’s Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 51.

<sup>190</sup> Elizabeth McMillan, “Military Personnel in Proud Boys Incident Return to Regular Duty,” CBC News, August 31, 2017, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/military-personnel-proud-boy-s-incident-jobs-1.4269952>; John Paul Tasker, “Canada Labels the Proud Boys, Neo-Nazi Groups as Terrorists,” CBC News, February 3, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-proud-boys-terrorists-1.5899186>.

<sup>191</sup> Berthiaume, “Tackling Extremism Priority for New CDS.”



members, and conducive to more serious incidents of sexual harassment and assault.”<sup>192</sup>

The detailed account of numerous sexual harassment and assault allegations reinforced the image of a tone-deaf institution. The reaction was the launching of Operation HONOUR to change the CAF culture.<sup>193</sup> However, only two of the ten recommendations of the external review were entirely accepted; all others either had caveats or were subject to further study.<sup>194</sup> Soon afterwards, several related class-action lawsuits were launched in 2016 by sexual assault victims, with a multimillion-dollar settlement in 2019.<sup>195</sup> In a matter of complete irony, Operation HONOUR itself came under fire and was closed in 2021 after its very champion, General Jonathan Vance, was himself accused of sexual harassment.<sup>196</sup> As of today, the raft of sexual allegations against general officers has dominated CAF news coverage.<sup>197</sup> The image is that of an institution that places women at risk for the pleasure of their superiors is further tarnishing the CAF image.

Another urgent concern is the discrimination of those with overlapping DGM identities or identities that are not officially recognized. A black, female, married, mother

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<sup>192</sup> Deschamps, “External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces,” i.

<sup>193</sup> Department of National Defence, “About Operation HONOUR,” About Operation HONOUR, March 8, 2021, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/benefits-military/conflict-misconduct/operation-honour/about-operation-honour.html>.

<sup>194</sup> Department of National Defence, “Canadian Armed Forces Action Plan on Inappropriate Sexual Behaviour,” education and awareness (Canadian Armed Forces Strategic Response Team on Sexual Misconduct, April 30, 2015), 4–10, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/reports-publications/sexual-misbehaviour/action-plan.html>.

<sup>195</sup> Epiq Class Action Services Canada Inc., “CAF-DND Sexual Misconduct Class Action Settlement,” CAF-DND Sexual Misconduct Class Action Settlement, accessed April 13, 2021, <https://www.caf-dndsexualmisconductclassaction.ca/>.

<sup>196</sup> Murray Brewster, “Campaign to End Sexual Harassment in Canadian Armed Forces Shut down | CBC News,” CBC News, March 24, 2021, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/operation-honour-closed-down-1.5962978>.

<sup>197</sup> Brewster, “The Military’s Sexual Misconduct Crisis Is Turning into a National Security Problem, Say Experts.”

in the military must contend with a very different set of circumstances than a young, single, white male with no children. George's interviews examine the increased challenges those with multiple diverse identities experience. Her testimonies of black and Asian females in the CAF bring a different perspective of roles placed upon them by their environment and peers.<sup>198</sup> Examples include stereotypes of passivity, objectification of their bodies, and the anxiety placed upon them by the leering gazes of their supposed peers. The multiple identities of these members and the lack of self-verification would undoubtedly cause a constant emotional drain on members unlucky enough to be placed in negative situations precipitated by the CAF, in addition to the eventual mental and physical stresses as well. The active discrimination felt by DGM members in the CAF, from subtle racism to sexual assault, continues to undermine the institution's diversity efforts.

### **Exclusion**

There is a difference between having a diverse workforce and having an inclusive one. Having DGMs in the ranks simply for public relations is not inclusion.<sup>199</sup> Having DGMs fill the ranks does not solve discrimination or poor recruitment if the system only accepts them in specific environments or prevents them from attaining senior rank. Inclusion also does not mean the institution must treat individuals the same. The organizational culture values specific traits and meanings that have continually failed to

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<sup>198</sup> George, Tammy, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," 49–50.

<sup>199</sup> George, "Race and Belonging," 136.

represent DGMs across the board. Though the organization should base assessments on an individual's competency and ability, consideration for differences of cultural, social, and racial backgrounds is also required.<sup>200</sup>

One concern of inclusion is the value of meanings associated with the group identity, such as being male, white, and educated.<sup>201</sup> The prevalence of these traits demonstrates that they carry more weight when considering the "usual association" of the in-group. Other meanings that indicate group membership to opposing identities, like race, ethnicity, or gender, may not be verified to the same extent when recognized by the group and have differences in worth. These members may not be considered valuable to the organization. As George points out, diverse individuals must adhere to the norm lest they suffer the consequences of deviating from the recognized, prominent identity.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> Pinch, "Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military," 181.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

<sup>202</sup> George, "Race and Belonging," 147.



**Figure 7. “Tweet” from the CDS Admiral A. McDonald**

Source: Twitter, @CDS\_Canada\_CEMD, 10 February 2021

Nothing displays the result of exclusion like Figure 8, one of the first messages from the new CDS. Note the dissonance of this image: the highest-ranking leaders of the CAF speak of diversity, even though no diverse members are among them. The only woman involved is present remotely, is not in uniform, and is not sitting at the table with the men.<sup>203</sup> Inclusion means being a part of the system, including official decision-

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<sup>203</sup> The next day the same twitter account would backpedal with admission of the lack of diversity and barriers to career advancement. Merely two months later, two of these individuals would be accused of sexual assault.

making channels like this meeting and unofficial channels like lunchrooms and social events.<sup>204</sup> Stets and Harrod note that the social structure of an environment affects the verification of identities, especially for disadvantaged groups like visible minorities.<sup>205</sup> DGMs should be able and expected to make decisions and contributions for the institution. Acceptance of one's identities leads to positive self-esteem, which relates to feelings of competence.<sup>206</sup> Self-esteem is especially apparent when an individual tries to verify multiple identities, like a soldier and racialized member, and the negative emotions that result when they cannot self verify. When all of one's identities are supported, there is an increase of self-esteem and a sense of "mastery" in one's work identity.<sup>207</sup> Visibly and honestly including DGMs in the various levels of the workplace would increase their commitment to the organization and pursue the diversity initiatives of the CAF.

### **Access to Power**

From an identity standpoint, eligibility for promotion is another concern. There is a relation between an individual's status and their control over resource flows in their environment.<sup>208</sup> Certain positions within the institution have more influence over resources, such as promotions and opportunities. Senior leaders, by their nature, manage access to these positions. The same control is not available to the common soldier and, in the CAF's case, the vast majority of DGMs.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 17.

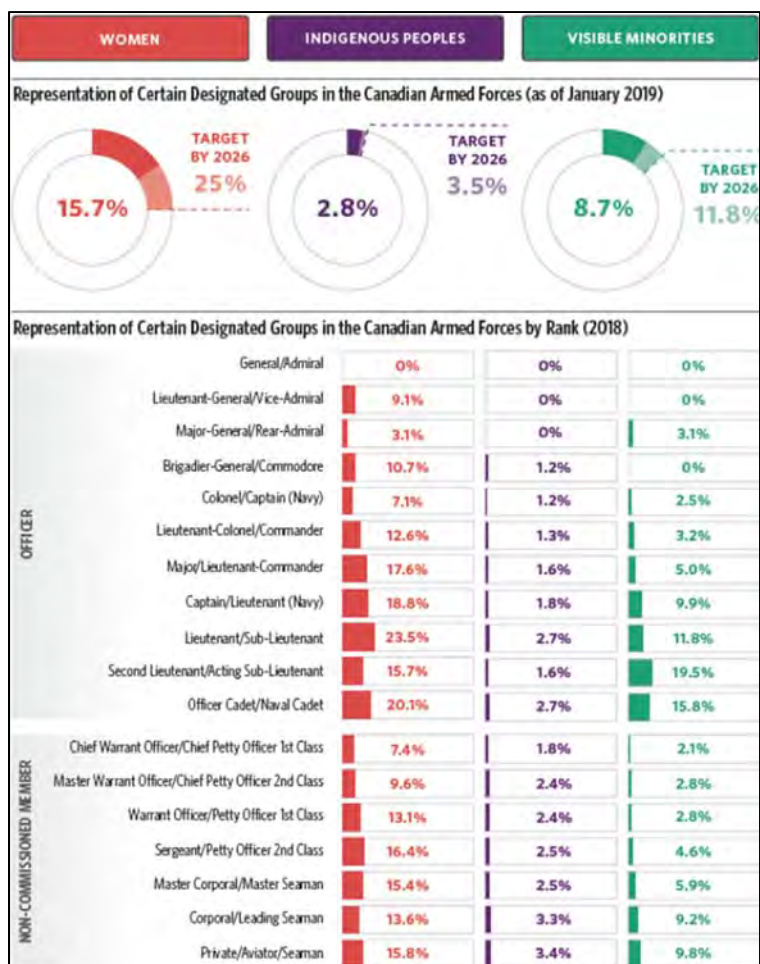
<sup>205</sup> Stets and Harrod, "Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status," 160–61.

<sup>206</sup> Bujis et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 5.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 166.

<sup>208</sup> Stets and Harrod, "Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status," 155–56.

<sup>209</sup> George, "Race and Belonging," 141.



**Figure 8. Percentage of DGMs in the CAF by Rank**

Source: Fuhr, *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces*,

65.

As shown in Figure 9, there is an extreme dearth of DGMs at the upper echelons of the military. As Pinch noted in his 2004 paper, DGMs at the senior ranks are rare due to the development and internal selection processes in the CAF. The system leans towards the current prototype: the masculine, white, Canadian-born male.<sup>210</sup> Stets and

<sup>210</sup> Pinch, "Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military," 191.

Harrod may be able to provide some insight. As previously noted, in-group members form a group ideal, the prototype, and attribute meanings of the ideal with that prototype. However, there are also “high-status” and “low-status” individuals in complex social structures. As the name implies, those considered high-status generally have more influence and control over their environment than those of low-status. This same control allows them to manipulate their environment and complete self-verification regularly. Low-status individuals, on the other hand, have a much more difficult time self-verifying. In addition, this very same process manipulates the resource flows to maintain the positions of power for the selected high-status group.<sup>211</sup> Stet and Harrod’s paper employs examples of race, but in the CAF context, that may easily extend to the other DGMs. The structural processes created by such actors become self-reinforcing and are not entirely under their control. The benefits of high-status include positive self-esteem and having more influence on the evaluation of low-status members. Everyone in the environment perceives the performance of low-status members as second-rate when they cannot as quickly meet the same success.<sup>212</sup> This self-verification supports the meanings of the related role and person identities in both directions. High-status individuals meeting success wherever they go, being viewed as competent in other roles. Low-status individuals suffer identity verification failures that affect their activated and non-activated identities, leading to negative emotions and outcomes.<sup>213</sup>

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<sup>211</sup> Stets and Harrod, “Verification Across Multiple Identities: The Role of Status,” 155.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

However, if low-status individuals want to receive the same benefits, they must work even harder.<sup>214</sup> They could secure the same or greater resources to make up the difference of control in the situation. They could also try to elicit the same reflected appraisals of the high-status groups by achieving the same meanings through performance, yet to a higher degree due to a potential lack of available resources. The key is to move the low-status individuals from “self-protection” to a “self-enhancement” outlook that high-status individuals themselves enjoy.<sup>215</sup> The need for DGMs to have fair access to power while also recognizing that they must also get there by merit is needed if the CAF desires to be diverse and inclusive.

### **Summary**

Although the CAF has adopted a diversity strategy and established targets for DGM recruitment, the CAF’s customary practices cause resistance to diversity initiatives for two main reasons. First, discrimination and exclusion are allowed to continue. Second, access to power is restricted from DGMs. The organization’s celebration of the various diversity days, like Black History Month and International Women’s Day, is often celebrated with recycled messages every year. The lack of depth in these communications leaves them with a sense of being tokenistic and shallow from the perspective of diverse CAF members.<sup>216</sup> Paired with subtle racism, sexism, and other acts of discrimination, the pressure placed on DGMs trying to fit in can be overwhelming. This situation occurs under an organization with a diversity policy, an employment equity

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<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 161–62.

<sup>216</sup> George, “Race and Belonging,” 144.



plan, codes of ethics, and leadership doctrine to prevent these very concerns. These issues, and the messaging currently being promulgated by senior officials in the CAF, show the limit of current diversity and inclusion policies.<sup>217</sup> The current institutional structures have an embedded norm of what soldiers should look like; seeing that image as a barrier may be difficult for institutional leadership.<sup>218</sup> A potential examination of how current diversity, harassment, and anti-discrimination programs work to strengthen the current power imbalances in the institution could be a topic of future research.<sup>219</sup>

Military leadership has been dealing with diversity issues for the last two decades. The CAF Diversity Strategy was produced 14 years after the OAG report in 2002 stated that the lack of data and poor retention initiatives for DGMs was a concern.<sup>220</sup> This interval could mean that future change may take years, if not generations, to occur. The new diversity strategy does provide a promising way ahead. Under “Responsive Career Management,” it cites a more “diverse approach” for career management, such as diversity training for those conducting the promotion evaluations and as a requirement for the promotion itself, retention plans for DGMs, and accounting for the differences between members.<sup>221</sup> The implementation of the diversity strategy is ongoing. If the current system to compensate for the lack of DGMs is not changed, the CAF’s separation from society will continue to grow.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> George, Tammy, “Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women’s Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 43.

<sup>218</sup> Taber, “The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military,” 29.

<sup>219</sup> George, Tammy, “Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women’s Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 43.

<sup>220</sup> Auditor General of Canada, “National Defence - Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel,” 14.

<sup>221</sup> Department of National Defence, “Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy,” 11.

<sup>222</sup> George, Tammy, “Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women’s Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces,” 42.



## CHAPTER 6 - INSTITUTIONAL LEARNING

*“Diversity in the armed forces is the ultimate litmus test of just how free, equal, and fair a democratic society really is. If the armed forces have as their purpose to defend democratic values in the form of a free, equal, and just way of life, then all members of society have a stake in securing their defence.”*

- Christian Leuprecht<sup>223</sup>

There are times where the CAF has failed to respond to societal trends until there was some form of national crisis or external political pressure. In each instance of failure or change, there was a lesson to be learned. As noted throughout this paper, the challenges of identities, specifically for diverse CAF members, are continuous learning opportunities for the institution. The examination of the warrior image, accepting other identities, recognizing the advantages of diversity, and accountability are all needed to create an inclusive CAF. This chapter will examine how the institution is learning to manage each.

### **Recognition of Multiple Identities**

Much of the research and documentation regarding diversity in the CAF places identities into distinct, separate categories such as race and gender. However, this method limits how other related identities and traits may interact with specific DGM identities and create additional difficulties in the CAF environment. The idea of multiple,

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<sup>223</sup> Leuprecht, “Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion,” 47.

overlapping identities has not been recognized as a potential concern until recently. In 1989, the American lawyer Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” in her quest for justice for racialized women in the United States.<sup>224</sup> Her investigation noted that the combination of race and gender made problems complex and invisible. Discussions of discrimination only ever considered one of these identities, dismissing the compounded and varied nature of problems when multiple identities were present.<sup>225</sup>



**Figure 9. Model of Intersectionality**

Source: Government of Canada, *Introduction to GBA+*, n.p.

Figure 5 shows a visual representation of intersectionality as it is recognized today. Intersectionality, or its equivalent in identity theory – multiple identities – is not

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<sup>224</sup> Government of Canada, “Introduction to Intersectionality,” *Introduction to GBA+*, April 14, 2021, [https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod02/mod02\\_03\\_01a.html](https://women-gender-equality.canada.ca/gbaplus-course-cours-acsplus/eng/mod02/mod02_03_01a.html).

<sup>225</sup> Kimberlé Crenshaw, *The Urgency of Intersectionality*, Video, TEDWomen 2016 (TED, 2016), [https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality/transcript).

well understood nor documented in CAF literature.<sup>226</sup> The Deschamps report mentions concerns about gender and race, but those affected by both were absent.<sup>227</sup> All the OAG reports emphasize issues with each DGM but never about overlapping concerns.<sup>228</sup> The same metric the CAF uses to judge its diversity, the EEA, is structured in this very siloed manner.<sup>229</sup> This conventional understanding of identities inadequately represents other meanings of an identity, such as age, gender, income, education, experiences, etc.<sup>230</sup> Intersectionality is considered in today's defence environment using Gender Based Analysis (GBA+).<sup>231</sup> This method encourages practitioners to consider the multiple aspects of one's identity in operations. Recently the adoption of GBA+ into practical applications, such as the new *Integrating Gender Perspectives in Operations* manual, provides a much-needed boost to CAF members in adopting the intersectionality principles to real-world applications.<sup>232</sup>

The simplified DGM model also encourages diverse members to reject their unique circumstances and place themselves into a defined "diversity role."<sup>233</sup> This model requires members to adapt to one demographic versus the various identities to which they

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<sup>226</sup> George, Tammy, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," 43; Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 295–96.

<sup>227</sup> Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 295–96.

<sup>228</sup> Auditor General of Canada, "National Defence - Recruitment and Retention of Military Personnel," 11; Auditor General of Canada, "National Defence—Military Recruiting and Retention," 55–56; Auditor General of Canada, "Canadian Armed Forces Recruitment and Retention—National Defence," 15–17.

<sup>229</sup> Employment Equity Act, c. 44, 1–2.

<sup>230</sup> Anne Irwin, "Diversity in the Canadian Forces: Lessons from Afghanistan," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, no. 4 (2009): 494–95.

<sup>231</sup> Government of Canada, "Introduction to Intersectionality."

<sup>232</sup> Department of National Defence, *Integrating Gender Perspectives in Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2019), 15–33.

<sup>233</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 18.

may belong. This narrow view in the CAF today reinforces the notion that diversity is a linear spectrum from “white male” to “other,” differentiating those as usual with those who are not.<sup>234</sup> This environment creates a recipe for non-identity verification. Shifting away from pure ascriptive demographics to define diversity helps dispel these notions. Placing diverse CAF members into one of three rigid categories impedes leadership’s ability to recognize the full spectrum of these members’ barriers given their unique circumstances.

### **The Identity of the Canadian Warrior**

The warrior identity has its purpose in the military, but it has accumulated several meanings that are not consistent with the occupation’s requirements in a post-Cold War era.<sup>235</sup> In Somalia, the narrow view of a warrior left these soldiers with simple ways of looking at the world and themselves. In today’s complex operational environment, a soldier will be taking on many roles and placed in many non-linear situations, such as dealing with natural disasters, encountering child soldiers, interacting with women and girls, and medical response. There is a need to equip soldiers in 2021 with better tools to help them understand and deal with inconsistencies with the warrior identity. Stressing the importance of non-combat roles also reflects a new ideal warrior compatible with today’s society.

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<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>235</sup> Franke, “Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper,” 13.

Nations identify the warrior as a uniform concept necessary to ensure preparation for the various operational requirements of war.<sup>236</sup> Bujis et al. (2019) measured this old identity against the role of peacekeepers through the *Warrior/Peacekeeper Role Identity Scale*.<sup>237</sup> Her team intended to see how soldiers handle dealing with both identities simultaneously. This identity conflict harkens back to the time of Somalia, where Canadian soldiers also had to handle both simultaneously and failed. Her team's study of soldiers across various NATO nations showed that the peacekeeping role identity was verified consistently across situations. In contrast, the warrior identity was more dependant on the situation and the nature of the task at hand.<sup>238</sup> The meanings associated with peacekeeping roles, such as reconstruction, diplomacy, and population support positively affected the members in various ways, such as increased self-esteem and commitment to the organization, more than the warrior identity. While the research was limited in scale, this demonstrates how enhancing alternative roles like the peacekeeper may benefit soldiers and the institution on operations and its effectiveness at home.<sup>239</sup>

Diversity through hiring DGMs should not be the only aim of the CAF. Considering all identities that provide meaningful contributions leads to a healthier end state.<sup>240</sup> There is an advantage to having multiple identities available to those in the organization. The additional effort to understand differing identities will allow a soldier

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<sup>236</sup> Bujis et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 11.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, 8–11.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>240</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 17.

to rely on different ideologies, behavioural choices and resolution strategies when facing new and unique challenges.<sup>241</sup> An emphasis on creating alternate identities, like the peacekeeper identity, may be beneficial to today's warriors in this regard.<sup>242</sup> Leaders may learn to guide their troops while emphasizing the need for them to hold the identities of warrior, peacekeeper and others at the same time, all while ensuring each is satisfied.<sup>243</sup> Developing these alternatives during military socialization, training, and pre-deployment activities may be valuable to the institution.

### **Advantages of Alternative Identities**

As the CAF continues to operate internationally, having members with a broad range of experiences, nationalities, and skills can provide a foundation for integration into a complex foreign environment.<sup>244</sup> Diverse members, especially those from other cultures, bring strengths to the CAF's operational forefront. Language and interpretation are examples, as Pakistani CAF members displayed in Afghanistan.<sup>245</sup> Their ability to verify translations and understand the populace was invaluable in sensitive operations like counterinsurgency.<sup>246</sup> Similar examples exist across operational theatres.<sup>247</sup>

Ensuring diverse members are part of the operational planning process at higher operational and strategic levels can also be advantageous. Engaging diverse personnel

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<sup>241</sup> Franke, "Resolving Identity Tensions: The Case of the Peacekeeper," 12–14.

<sup>242</sup> Bujis et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 12.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>244</sup> Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Society?," 27.

<sup>245</sup> Irwin, "Diversity in the Canadian Forces: Lessons from Afghanistan," 498.

<sup>246</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 14.

<sup>247</sup> Irwin, "Diversity in the Canadian Forces: Lessons from Afghanistan," 504.



may provide additional perspectives similar to the use of GBA+.<sup>248</sup> Understanding culture through a realistic and empathetic lens may allow the CAF to effectively predict and influence the various parties involved in an operational theatre. This consideration may reduce previously unnoticed risks in a mission, potentially saving lives.

Visibly displaying the acceptance of other cultures can also help soften Canada's entrance into a new area of operations.<sup>249</sup> Having an identity-balanced force, especially observable ones in the form of women and visible minorities, provides many advantages on operations. The homogeneity of a force harkens back to the negative imperialistic past of many countries; a gender-balanced, diverse force may dispel these concerns.<sup>250</sup> Diversity also confronts adversarial disinformation campaigns of foreign invasion while reflecting upon Canada's inclusivity.<sup>251</sup> Diverse members may potentially ease integration with foreign organizations in the battlespace, including the host nation, NGOs, and other potential allies. Working with and understanding the perspective of others in operations such as this may improve cohesion and cooperation with this larger international team.<sup>252</sup> Canada typically works a member of a coalition and needs to interact with multiple actors from across the world continuously. Diversity in operations improves Canada's image while also achieving its strategic objectives.

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<sup>248</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 16.

<sup>249</sup> Leuprecht, "Demographic Imperatives for Diversity and Inclusion," 38.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>251</sup> Finn and Momani, "Canadian Muslim Youth and Military Service," 156.

<sup>252</sup> Bujis et al., "Warrior and Peacekeeper Role Identities: Associations with Self-Esteem, Organizational Commitment and Organizational Citizenship Behavior," 3.

## Accountability and Empowerment

Diversity initiatives in the CAF may benefit from accountable leadership. In Pinch's 2004 paper on improving diversity in the CAF, his most vital point was in having CAF leadership champion and enforce identified diversity initiatives.<sup>253</sup> The concern, however, was the belief from various levels that it was not their responsibility to make inclusion work. A *distributed leadership* model where leaders throughout the organization are both enabled and responsible for promoting positive diversity change may be beneficial.<sup>254</sup> However, many leaders in 2021 only rely on mandatory training to spread messages through the ranks. Many of these measures come off as ritualistic and lacking real structural change.<sup>255</sup> Mandated changes of behaviour were found ineffective, and some even made situations worse.<sup>256</sup> The "do as your told" model was subjected to mockery or entrenched harmful issues even further. Mandatory training has its place, as it allows all members to know a standard.<sup>257</sup> However, CAF members may also benefit from in-depth, interactive, and ongoing practical skills training to address diversity concerns, such as bystander training.<sup>258</sup>

Initiatives in the US Army can provide insight into successful military models.<sup>259</sup> First is the encouragement of *voluntary training*, especially for leadership. Challenging leaders to become champions for diversity allowed advocates to be naturally developed in

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<sup>253</sup> Pinch, "Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military," 182–83.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>255</sup> George, Tammy, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," 53.

<sup>256</sup> Agocs, "Canadian Dilemma: Is There a Path from Systemic Racism Toward Employment Equity for Indigenous People in the Canadian Forces?," 299.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, 298–99.

<sup>258</sup> Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 27–28.

<sup>259</sup> Carlisle Barracks, "Organizational Change and Adaptation in the US Army," *Parameters* 46, no. 3 (2016): 25.

the organization. Second, having these same leaders take part in mentoring diverse members proved successful and increased the organizational commitment of everyone involved. Finally, normalizing diverse members across the organization was vital and was accomplished by fostering the cross-training of diverse members in multiple roles. These individuals were then able to be employed throughout the organization, where they challenged norms by exposing themselves and others to the idea of diversity. Proving themselves as equals among their peers ensured they were viewed as such. Enabling leaders to promote similar initiatives in the CAF may lead to successful identity change.

### **Summary**

Instances of extremism, sexual harassment, and other forms of discrimination are reminders of the issues the CAF still must come to terms with. By allowing soldiers to accept other possible identities in themselves and others, they may learn the advantages of each. Adopting mindsets and measures to identify intersectionality and other similar approaches provides alternative viewpoints and considerations previously not detected. Learning how the CAF's warrior identity can integrate with these alternative identities is the next challenge in this process.

Accountability and support from all levels of leadership are essential to these proposals. Consistent, practical training throughout the organization may provide a foundation to support these plans. However, accountability is essential if initiatives like these are to survive. If not enforced, the institution will likely revert to its usual mindset. Diversity champions will be vital for these initiatives to flourish.

## CHAPTER 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

*“...we could not be so complacent, so confident, of our ability to tell wrong from right.”*

- Sherene Razack<sup>260</sup>

Considering the past, present, and potential issues discussed in this study, the CAF can take several steps to increase the diversity of the CAF and to restore public trust in the institution. The themes presented in the project have been summarized into three primary recommendations, with a series of action items for each. Investigating the following suggestions may further assist the CAF in creating an inclusive environment:

### **Recommendation 1 – Adjust the CAF’s social identity:**

- 1.1 Change the internal and external perception of the “warrior” identity. Conduct a controlled identity management program to change the meanings of the Canadian soldier. The output may point in two directions: externally towards the public and internally towards members of the CAF.
- 1.2 Be proactive with the changing reflections of society. Recognize that Canadian society changes over time and that CAF leadership may benefit by reflecting these changes. It is no longer acceptable to wait until a generation of soldiers ages out of the military to introduce policies that are in line with societal change. The institution will continue to suffer a crisis of confidence every decade if those leading the CAF do not reflect the changing values of Canada.
- 1.3 Understand the importance of intersectionality and acknowledge the existence of multiple identities. The multiple identities of individuals in the CAF need to be recognized and studied. Studies should not be limited to DGMS, but also other role and group identities, such as parent,

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<sup>260</sup> Razack, *Dark Threats and White Knights: The Somalia Affair, Peacekeeping, and the New Imperialism*, 155.

caregiver, etc. The principles of intersectionality should include more practical applications throughout all CAF processes.

- 1.4 Recognize situations that may cause identity conflict. Examine the potential identity conflicts that may arise in specific situations, with a focus on operations. It is important to avoid identity conflicts as they occurred in Somalia. Matching role identities to the specific operational mission may be beneficial, but establishing alternative role identities throughout the recruitment and training processes is also required. These alternative identities will allow flexibility when facing uncertain scenarios.

### **Recommendation 2 – Diversify the composition of the CAF:**

- 2.1 Enforce accountability and transparency of the EEA. The CAF should aim to establish full compliance with the EEA. Annual reporting data should be made available to Statistics Canada, and the reports should be transparent and available to the public. This is especially important when the public has lost confidence in the military, as demonstrated in the 2021 raft of sexual allegations. It demonstrates an effort to change the organization's attitude and actions.
- 2.2 Spend resources on the active side of recruitment, specifically in the targeting of DGMs and their communities. Unsolicited, passive applications to the CAF already account for the current cohort of recruits. Directing resources and personnel to target DGMs would increase overall recruitment rates. Possibilities include assigning DGMs themselves to the cause, active solicitation, and adapting modern HR practices with third-party support.
- 2.3 Consider geographic location when thinking about DGMs. DGM recruitment and employment should adapt, focusing on accommodating the loss of social networks. Investigating the allocation of DGMs to similar communities should assist in verifying their ethnic group identities. Directing effort towards moving or creating CAF establishments near urban centres where most DGM populations reside should be considered.
- 2.4 Develop mentoring programs for DGMs throughout the ranks. Create voluntary diversity programs that allow leaders with power in the CAF to implement real change. Ensure this training adds merit to the promotion criteria for both completion and results.

- 2.5 Promotions that target diverse members. It is essential to recognize both the merit and differences faced by DGMs in the promotion process. Recognition should begin with an understanding that current senior leadership is far from reflecting the demographics of society. Potential imbalances of power, such as the control of resource flows, should be examined and, if required, removed.
- 2.6 Collect data on various aspects of identities in the CAF. Demographic statistics should be made widely available for research. Statistics should not be limited to the ascriptive features of DGMs but also other identities, such as caregiver, parent, and others. This information will aid both future diversity research and related studies on families, retention, etc.
- 2.7 Enable practical applications of inclusion. In 2021, available intersectionality training is limited to a mandatory online GBA+ course that is highly theoretical. The advent of the *Integrating Gender Perspectives in Operations* aide-memoire introduced highly practicable steps that enabled considerations for gender in military operational planning. It is vital to address other topics similarly.

### **Recommendation 3 – Protect and empower diversity**

- 3.1 Identify low-status groups to resolve imbalances. The identification of low-status groups in the workplace should be identified and not limited to DGMs. It is important to identify and remove barriers currently faced by diverse members of all stripes.
- 3.2 Reinforce the study of CAF failures in professional development programs at all levels. Lessons learned from the CAF's failures, like the Somalia Affair, should be taught at all levels of CAF professional development, not just senior leadership. Having the entire force recognize problems of the past may avoid having the same mistakes repeated and bring light to current injustices.
- 3.3 Conduct a continual analysis of the institutional barriers and harmful customary practices that reinforce discrimination. A complete analysis of the institutional barriers and customary practices that limit the integration of DGMs and other low-status groups should be undertaken regularly and be made available to the public. The previous OAG reports and the latest

report to the Standing Committee on National Defence are examples.<sup>261</sup> These reports should go further and integrate the aspects of other identities throughout the forces. These studies should also occur at all levels and locations in the CAF management structure. Reports based in a large urban centre like Ottawa do not always apply to similar remote locations like Shilo. Actions should be taken to either remove barriers or validate their existence.

- 3.4 Revamp the various complaint reporting models. Current complaint and reporting systems are not working considering the issues and reports on sexual harassment, discrimination, and inequality in 2021. Replacement and simplification of the various reporting mechanisms should occur with third-party support from outside the chain of command.
- 3.5 Divert resources to the elimination of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination in the CAF. Eliminating racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination are neither simple nor straightforward, especially in a highly structured environment like the CAF. Increasing additional resources in the form of personnel, funding, academia, and contracted support should produce actionable and realistic recommendations to the CAF. Committing these resources may demonstrate a willingness to change and re-establish legitimacy with the public.

## Conclusion

Over 28 years after the Somalia Affair, the CAF is still challenged by issues tied to identity. The institution has been forced to bear public scrutiny and embarrassment due to its members' actions and inactions. No single factor can explain the diversity challenges the CAF faces, but identity theory can provide one lens to examine and tackle these problems. Challenges with harassment, discrimination, extremism, and sexism can be viewed as the by-products of the current group and role identities at play.

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<sup>261</sup> "Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces," Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence, House of Commons (Ottawa: House of Commons, 2019).

The need for identity verification is a critical factor in an individual's longevity in the CAF. Understanding identity verification is essential whether it recognizes one's unique traits and meanings or the biases against out-group members. People are not simple automatons that listen to direct orders; their behaviours are continually changing. Issues of identity, paired with the discussion of multiple identities and intersectionality, can be used to dissect almost every negative story of the CAF in 2021. The CAF's historical lack of diversity in its ranks echoes the organization's identity challenges.

Identity change takes time.<sup>262</sup> However, waiting for a whole generation to solve these problems is too slow. The pressure from governments, society, and CAF members themselves will not go away, and the CAF could begin using both policy and practice to adapt its culture to reflect society's concerns. Any more talk of an unquantifiable "loss of cohesion" should be met with suspicion about what *kind* of cohesion the organization is trying to protect. If concerns of cohesion link to meanings of racial uniformity, sexual domination, or indigenous injustice, then swift disciplinary action and third-party reporting should follow. Tackling recruiting issues, dealing with all forms of discrimination, and removing barriers will go a long way to improving the institution's identity climate.

There is progress to be made in this field of study. Most research places identities into silos without considering their interactions. Future scholars may use identity theory to establish previously unknown connections between various roles and groups. A thorough analysis of the various identities present in the modern CAF might also

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<sup>262</sup> Pinch, "Diversity: Conditions for an Adaptive, Inclusive Military," 186; Mangat, Momani, and Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," 19.



augment research, highlighting injustices not previously considered. An examination of other western militaries may reveal some light as they face similar challenges regarding demographics and recruiting. Finally, a historical examination using identity theory on successfully inclusive forces, such as Allied forces in the WWII Burma campaign, may recover lessons currently lost.<sup>263</sup>

In 2021, Canada's military is dealing with another identity crisis. The organization struggles to recruit and retain diverse members of society and is becoming disconnected from the population it serves. The lack of diversity in the CAF reflects the competing identities the institution portrays and accepts. As demonstrated in the Somalia Affair in 1993 and the current struggle with sexual harassment allegations in 2021, recognizing inconsistencies in values between Canadian society and the CAF is required for the organization to adapt to the changing social environment.

Changing the meaning and narrative of the CAF identity is a challenge. It will require the institution to understand society's needs, be proactive, accept its own mistakes, demand more from its leaders, and exceed the expectations of those they lead. In an all-volunteer military from a society that accepts people from across the globe, the CAF has an opportunity to be the ultimate reflection of a successful democratic system. Those leading the institution will require true introspection and moral courage to handle resistance in order to embrace these challenges. The military will not be judged by the equipment it drives nor the uniforms it wears; it will ultimately be judged by its character towards those it serves and the actions it takes. Creating space to integrate DGMs and

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<sup>263</sup> William Slim, *Defeat into Victory: Battling Japan in Burma and India, 1942-1945* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1956), 538–39.

their supporting identities into the warrior identity will strengthen operational effectiveness, reflect Canada's values, and create a healthier environment for its diverse members moving forward.

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