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HOW INCLUSIVITY HAS BLINDED EXCLUSIVITY

Major Angela Hudson

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Major Angela Hudson

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AIM

1. The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) has promoted a particular, gendered leadership style, which requires improvements if the CAF moves toward a more diverse and cohesive military in support of *Strong, Secure, and Engaged* (SSE).¹ This paper will highlight a few of the many institutional choices and ideologies which have led to a propensity for a hegemonic, masculine leadership style and composition to the detriment of the institution. The larger aim is by understanding CAF historical fallacies component-wide, they can implement critical changes to improve the flexibility and adaptability of the CAF. Additional research opportunities exist in this realm, including linguistically, among civil-military relations, and attribution of code of service violations by rank, that are outside this paper's scope but would help provide a greater understanding of the subject.

INTRODUCTION

2. This paper will briefly discuss how the focus on gender inclusivity in the CAF has blinded leadership to the exclusivity of the language used, soldiers' individuality, and criminal attribution. Underlying many of the oversights is the CAF's failure to reflect changing societal views and norms. Changing societal norms over the years have come to embrace the diversity of people and uniqueness of individuals over the more homogenous desires of the military's composition. Specifically, foundations of the CAF's current linguistics as basic as defining 'leadership' retain hegemonic masculine ideals and continue to marginalize people. The divergence in leadership philosophies between the civilian and military environments has grown to a divide in which the guise of homogenous inclusivity has blinded the CAF to the institution's

¹ Canada. *Strong, Secure, and Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy*. National Defence, 2017.

exclusivity. This military-civilian nexus of incongruence is helpful to be examined through a role congruity theory lens. This paper employs the latter as it helps to explain how military leadership has become gendered and how it has stifled the CAF's flexibility and adaptability.

DISCUSSION

3. The differences in definitions of leadership between the business and military realms demonstrate the foundations of divergence in mindsets and set the stage for exclusionary practices and ideologies along gender lines. Bass and Stogdill, researchers of business leadership and authors of the *Handbook of Leadership*, define leadership as “the process (act) of influencing the activities of an organized group in its efforts toward goal setting and goal achievement.”² Canadian Forces Leadership doctrine, on the other hand, defines leadership as “directly or indirectly influencing *others* [emphasis added], by means of formal authority or personal attributes, to act in accordance with *one's* [emphasis added] intent or a shared purpose.”³ Two notable differences emerge from these definitions. First, the civilian definition discusses the subject as “an organized group,” portraying a sense of unity, commonality and inclusiveness. On the other hand, the military definition uses the term “others” to understand a leader as a separate entity. This separation is a sentiment displayed elsewhere in the military, including during conflict when the “enemy” is defined as an “other” and therefore different than oneself and within rank structures. The term is exclusionary against many people, including along gender lines. Second, while the civilian definition focuses on a “group's” shared goals, the military focuses on a goal or intent determined outside the group. It is “one's” intent, for instance, rather than “our” or “leadership's.” Historically the “one” referenced military making decisions has

² Ralph M. Stogdill, “Leadership, Membership and Organization.” *Psychological Bulletin*, 47 (1950), 10.

³ National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Forces: Doctrine* (Canadian Defence Academy – Canadian Forces Leadership Institute, 2005), 3.

been an older, white, heterosexual male. Word choice matters, especially among a population that is more attuned to the historical biases of language. It is partly through the CAF use of gendered and exclusionary language such as this that traditionally masculine notions of leadership have perpetuated. The forced integration of a gendered “other” in the CAF, for example, furthered the civil-military incongruence via a reluctant inclusion of women in the ranks.

4. Federally mandated gender disparities within the CAF following the introduction of women in the forces also have impacted gender tensions today in the institution. Arguably the nexus of civil-military incongruence dates back to women’s acceptance into the CAF. From this point, gender tensions grew within society and where the male-dominated professions of arms felt most threatened. Thus, when women were being afforded the right to vote civilly, their roles in the military continued to be restricted.⁴ The very prevention of women from serving until 1950, then narrowed to specific trades and marital statuses, combined with lingering societal gender norms within the home, all contribute to promoting a gendered leadership style. Senior military leaders feared women entering the military domain and the impact such access would have within the home and military.⁵ The gender tension felt in the CAF as jobs continued to open to women heightened as integration struggles perpetuated. Basic training still mandates integration resulting in a homogenous sense of self and leadership characteristics. This focus away from individuality in subordination to a greater, ideological purpose fails to leverage diversity's many positive attributes. But attempts to assimilate diversity and include genders in

⁴ Karen Davis. *Women and leadership in the Canadian Forces*. (Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 74. Additionally, “by 1971 married women could join the CAF, women who gave birth to a child could continue to serve etc.”

⁵ Robert L. Dipboye. “Problems and Progress of Women in Management.” In K.S. Koziara, M.H. Moskow, and L.D. Tanner (Eds.) *Working Women: Past, Present, Future*. (Washington, DC: Bureau of National Affairs, 1987).

the CAF have not been successful as anticipated. Specifically, “a focus on gender diversity vs integration has not produced the results demanded by the Employment Equity Act: equal representation in all roles and at all rank levels.”⁶ The reality is enough exclusive remnants remain that they continue to see a lack of senior female leaders and an increase of reported crimes along gender lines.

5. Sexual misconduct within the CAF erodes trust, undermines military values and exacerbates the gender divide within the forces. Most sexual crimes involve male perpetrators and female victims and involve a disproportionate power element.⁷ These crimes are prolific within the Canadian military. “A woman’s odds of being harmed by a fellow soldier dwarf her odds of being harmed by the enemy.”⁸ Actual figures, however, remain unknown because most sexual misconduct crimes go unreported. Considering the conviction rate within the military justice system averaged 23% between 2014 and 2017 compared to 43% in civilian courts in 2014-2015, it is understood why few victims come forward.⁹ There are a variety of rationales for why men commit sexual misconduct crimes against women, poignantly for this paper is a combination of individual belief and social acceptance of such behaviour.¹⁰ This, however, doesn’t adequately explain the last twelve months in the CAF when senior leaders of varying generations and social norms have been accused of terrible gender-based crimes. Arguably the passive historical acceptance of these crimes has stemmed from the aforementioned exclusionary ideology through inclusivity actions and the lack of judicial or military accountability at all

⁶ LCol Heather Mahar. “Homogenous at the Top: Leadership and Gender in the Canadian Armed Forces.” *Canadian Forces College*. (2005). <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/317/305/mahar.pdf>

⁷ Noam Shpancer, “Why do Men Sexually Assault Women?” *Psychology Today*. Posted November 3, 2014.

⁸ *Ibid*.

⁹ Murray Brewster. “DND sex assault conviction rate lower than civilian courts.” *CBC News*. October 23, 2017.

¹⁰ World Health Organization. “Understanding and addressing violence against women.” World Health Organization (2012) The World Health Organization states that sexual violence is rooted in gender inequality at the individual level and is exasperated by social promulgation.

levels. The push for a homogenous force has holistically eliminated the individual. Conveniently for most historical military leaders, the system has long supported their inflexibility and intransigence. “Through ... laws and their accompanying ideology, the military renders the likelihood for internal critics nearly nonexistent, and the possibility for change to occur almost nil.”¹¹ The numerous sexual misconduct cases the CAF is presently facing among its top leaders in many ways demonstrates the gendered nature of CAF leadership more broadly. In these cases, the lack of attribution has become cultural and has allowed antiquated leadership styles to continue. Ironically, military leadership literature pre-dating women’s entry into the military spoke of the cultivation of an ethos very different from the one experienced today.

6. Eagly and Karau developed role congruity theory as a theory of prejudice to explain women’s exclusion in the workforce due to gender bias.¹² They assert that society and organizations generally prescribe roles, leadership or otherwise, a gender from which existing leadership then assigns individuals.¹³ Such gender stereotypes historically tend to hinder women in the workplace and men at home from being as effective as possible.¹⁴ In other words, notions and language that military leadership requires a “warrior” mindset, and someone who is authoritative and commanding naturally tends to exclude women.¹⁵ “In general, prejudice toward female leaders follows from the incongruity that many people perceive between the characteristics of women and the requirements of leadership roles.”¹⁶ Specific to the CAF,

¹¹ Lynn Gouliquer. “Soldiering in the Canadian Forces: How and Why Gender Counts!” *McGill University*, Montreal, 2011. p. 275.

¹² Sharon Roberts and Donna Brown. “How to Manage Gender Bias from Within: Women in Leadership.” *The Journal of Business Diversity*; West Palm Beach Vol 19, Issue 2 (2019): 84.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Roberts and Brown. “How to Manage Gender Bias...” 83.

¹⁵ Notions of a “warrior culture” are abundant in CAF literature. A few examples are the Canadian Army Integrated Performance Strategy. Appendix 2 Annex A (Nov 15) and Major Aaron Corey. “The Canadian Army: Warrior Culture and Combatives.” Canadian Forces College. (2021) <https://www.cfc.forces.gc.ca/259/290/23/286/Corey.pdf>

¹⁶ Alice Eagly & Steven Karau, “Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders.” *Psychological Review*, Vol 109 No. 3 p. 574.

“perceptions of the appropriate roles for the two genders may conflict with expectations regarding leadership roles, especially when an occupation is held predominantly by one sex.”¹⁷ As of July 4, 2021, in the history of the CAF, only 33 women have risen to the rank of General or Flag Officer.¹⁸ It takes approximately 30 years to make a general, which means that in the number of years since women have been eligible to serve, minus a 30-year block for the making, less than one woman a year in the entire CAF has made the flag officer rank.¹⁹ As role congruity theory suggests, without having more women in senior leadership roles, the CAF cannot see the role as other than male. Senior military leaders must become female to no longer be ‘the other’ in the vernacular. So, it is the masculine military hegemony at senior leadership ranks that has reinforced itself to the organization's detriment. Whether conscious or not, the façade of gendered inclusivity is experienced as historical discrimination.

7. The preponderance of a primarily masculine, authoritarian, distinct leadership style has not always been the case. Military leadership handbooks from before 1950 included many ideals, including modern-day emotional intelligence.²⁰ It is almost as if the introduction of women in the ranks propelled an unconscious hardening of leadership expectations favouring traditional male figures. Even the vernacular around the military as a ‘career’ vs ‘job’ changed, which perhaps subconsciously led to the exclusion of women. With women primarily responsible for childrearing, this shift thus pushed them away from pursuing life-long career commitments like the military. A post-WWII U.S. military leadership publication focused on the soldier's whole well-being, which included a recognition of the military as a mere subset of an individual's other

¹⁷ Davis, Karen D. *Women and leadership in the Canadian Forces*. (Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007) 94.

¹⁸ Blatherwick, Capt John. “Female General and Flag Officers in the Canadian Armed Forces.” 4 Jul 21.

¹⁹ *Ibid*. Women have been serving for 71 years. After factoring in the 30-year creation period, women have been eligible for the general rank for 41 years and yet only 33 have reached that rank.

²⁰ US Air Force Manual 35-15. Air Force Chaplain Corps. (1948) as cited in Brene Brown. *Daring Greatly*. (Random House: New York, 2018) 65. The Manual spoke of leadership embodying “a sense of belonging, feeling, fear, compassion, confidence, kindness, friendliness, and mercy.”

career endeavours and their existence within civilian society.²¹ In other words, there was an understanding that the military was not and perhaps should not be a person's only job or career in life and that they would most likely leave at some point to pursue other civilian jobs/endeavours.²² The U.S. military during this time had a desire for a leadership style with a distinct emotional focus over a more rigid, less emotional persona.²³ In a letter published by the Commanding General of the U.S. Army, H.H. Arnold, dated September 19, 1945, he stated that "I expect my commanders to send each soldier back to civil life – at least as good as and, if possible, a better man than he was before he entered service."²⁴ Post-WWII in Canada, nearly a million veterans left the military and began getting married and having families.²⁵ The US Manual discusses the importance of seeing every soldier as an individual, recognizing the need for emotional development (now commonly referred to as emotional intelligence) as a means to be a better soldier.²⁶ This leadership focus was arguably necessitated following significant periods of war and death due to changing public ideals. Still, it also arguably left male-dominated leadership roles threatened when women entered the service. Women's emotional intelligence (E.Q.) is generally higher than men's; thus, they would naturally fulfill the desired leadership qualities of the time.²⁷ The current CAF leadership doctrine, therefore, not only favours traditional existing male entities through diction and adversity, but it also continues to

²¹ AAF Letter 35-280, dated 19 September 1945, signed by H.H. Arnold, commanding general, Army Air Forces. As published in US Air Force. "US Air Force Manual v.35:15" Chapter 3 Mission. (1948) p.9.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ US Air Force Manual 35-15... p.65 "...a discussion of feeling – how men would feel – was referred to 147 times." Additionally, "love – what it means as a leader to love your men – was brought up 13 times." p. 65.

²⁴ AAF Letter 35-280...

²⁵ Britannica. "Early postwar developments: Canada."

²⁶ US Air Force Manual 35-15... Chp 3, 8 and 11.

²⁷ Esther Lopex-Zafra, Rocio Garcia-Retamero and Pilar Berrios Martos. "The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Emotional Intelligence from a Gendered Approach." *The Psychological Record* 62, (2012): 98.

promulgate military service as a life-long commitment, both of which no longer reflect societal values.

CONCLUSION

8. CAF's desire for inclusivity has fostered a certain leadership style at the institution's expense. Gender has been targeted systemically and ideologically, resulting in the CAF's continued struggle for female representation in general but also specifically among female ranks. Exclusivity of language, failure to recognize a soldier's individuality and disproportionate legal penalties along gender divides perpetuate gendered ideals of military leadership. Federal mandates that ideological barriers to success replaced restricted female participation. This paper does not suggest a single solution that will resolve a rich history of exclusionary tendencies. However, it does assert that while research continues to be done to understand the problem better, several tangible efforts can be taken at the strategic and operational levels of the CAF that will begin to make the pivot toward progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

9. First, acknowledgment and understanding of the past is critical. To ignore the influences of the past is to ignore the foundations and sentiments that created the institution in the first place. CAF leadership style was premised and then purposefully derived around a male-centred, war-fighting mentality to exclude the 'other.' The inclusive nature of the CAF as desired has been illustrated by exclusionary language and defensive self-preservation. Antiquated gendered leadership notions as discussed by role congruity theory have negatively contributed to staggering sexual misconduct cases, the immense legal costs of investigating and prosecuting these types of crimes, retention struggles across the force and the media coverage and public perception of a CAF leadership crisis far beyond the scope of this paper. Institutionalized gender

disparities have and continue to contribute negatively to the CAF composition. The CAF needs to commit to reckoning the past fallacies surrounding inclusivity before asserting change mandates and lofty quotas.

10. Secondly, new leadership perspectives are needed that recognize the need for change. Why has it taken so long for CAF leadership to see the need for change? The truth is that “[t]hose who benefit from the status quo don’t have much incentive to change it, and transforming a culture isn’t easy under the best of circumstances,” says Chammorr-Premuzic, who is also Chief Talent Scientist at Manpower Group and a Professor of Business Psychology at University College London and Columbia University.²⁸ Furthermore, the CAF has already witnessed an understandable backlash to a perceived threat to masculinity at senior leadership ranks. Asking individuals to give up their safety among heterogeneous counterparts is uncomfortable. As has historically been, masculinity is directly associated with hierarchy and status. As such, “manhood is threatened more easily than womanhood and through a wider range of transgressions.”²⁹ All this is to say that reluctance to change is not entirely cultivated. There is a definite biological element to it, and it needs to be considered when redefining CAF leadership.

11. Ultimately, both men and women feel harmed by poor leaders. Thus while the problems are poignantly gendered, the solution should not be human-focused. Gender stereotyped leadership styles are incongruent with pursuing leadership traits or individual attributes.³⁰ In other words, it is more about finding the right person for the job than attributing gender to a leadership style or ‘type.’ But at the same time, women need to become common within senior leadership positions. Quite simply, changes to mentalities within those positions will come with

²⁸ Theresa Agovino. “Bridging the Gender Divide.” SHRM. June 22, 2019.

²⁹ Joan Marques. *Exploring Gender at Work: Multiple Perspectives*. (Palgrave: California, 2021) 110.

³⁰ Sarah E. Saint-Michel. “Leader gender stereotypes and transformational leadership: Does leader sex make the difference?” *M@n@gement* Vol 21 Issue 3. p. 944.

increased female perspectives and representation within the roles. Similar to the civilian realm, the CAF “needs leaders who can think critically and who are intelligent, curious and empathetic – in other words, people with high emotional intelligence, or E.Q.”³¹ Inclusivity should not come at the expense of diversity and individuality. Demonstratively, such diversity promotion will also be critical for all military components to remain flexible and adaptable into the future.

³¹ Theresa Agovino. “Bridging the Gender Divide.” SHRM. June 22, 2019.

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