



Commander Canadian Army and Defence Team Champion for Indigenous People, attaches the Survivor's Flag, during a ceremony commemorating the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation held at Carling Campus in Ottawa, Ontario on September 29, 2022.

Photo: Sailor First Class Anne-Marie Brisson, Directorate Army Public Affairs, Canadian Army

The CAF as an Employer of Choice for Indigenous and Visible Minority Canadians

BY MAJOR FELIX ODARTEY-WELLINGTON

Major Felix Odartey-Wellington PhD is the Senior Reserve Public Affairs Officer at 5th Canadian Division Headquarters, Halifax. He is also an Associate Professor of Communication at Cape Breton University, Sydney, Nova Scotia. Major Odartey-Wellington is currently a student in the Joint Command and Staff Programme at the Canadian Forces College, Toronto.

Introduction

The extent to which Canadian society and institutions reflect and include Indigenous and visible minority¹ demographics is topical.² With the adoption of multiculturalism in Canada as manifested by policy objectives in the *Multiculturalism Act*,³ there is an imperative that state institutions would embrace diversity and inclusivity.⁴ This is made more pressing with the contemporary salience of employment equity and diversity issues, as well as by

demographic shifts resulting from immigration.⁵ The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF), for example, launched a *Diversity Strategy* in 2016⁶ and Operation GENERATION in 2018, to, among other things, make its workforce more diverse and inclusive.⁷ *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* espouses that "the Canadian Armed Forces must reflect the diversity of the country we defend. We need a military that looks like Canada."⁸ It also states that, "The Canadian Armed Forces is committed to demonstrating

leadership in reflecting Canadian ideals of diversity, respect and inclusion.⁹ The most recent *Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to Serve* also communicates CAF aspirations for inclusivity.¹⁰ While the CAF has embraced multiculturalism,¹¹ and “has a rich history with respect to diversity,”¹² studies and recent events contest this image.¹³ In 2022, the Minister of National Defence (MND) Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination issued a report identifying systemic racism in the CAF.¹⁴ As well, recruitment and retention of Indigenous and visible minority Canadians remains a challenge, even while overall recruiting is challenged.¹⁵ The *Diversity Strategy* speaks of an aspiration to position the CAF as “an Employer of Choice”¹⁶ for all Canadians. A thought-provoking essay in the *Canadian Military Journal* asks: “Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Canadian Society?”¹⁷ Writing as a visible minority immigrant who has had a positive experience serving in the CAF since 2010, my paper addresses this question with respect to Indigenous and visible minority Canadians. Drawing on legitimacy theory,¹⁸ leadership theory,¹⁹ and Erving Goffman’s concept of total institutions,²⁰ it is suggested here that the CAF has the potential to position itself as an employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minority Canadians.

Background and Theoretical Context

In 1971, Canada adopted multiculturalism as an official policy (subsequently codified into law in 1985²¹), the first country in the world to do so.²² As public policy, multiculturalism has ramifications for the ordering of Canadian society and its institutions. To the extent that the former must be imaginable as a diverse and inclusive nation community, the latter must reflect diversity and inclusion in employment and leadership practices.²³

Parliament’s Standing Committee on National Defence was sufficiently concerned about diversity in the CAF to initiate a study on the subject in 2018.²⁴ Recognizing diversity in the CAF to be less than adequate *vis-à-vis* institutional targets, the resultant report argues for diversity on normative grounds: it is the right thing to do within the context of Canadian policy, law, and values. It also makes an argument on pragmatic grounds: a diverse military brings “strategic advantage”²⁵ and is a “force enabler.”²⁶ While the report is multifaceted, the focus of this paper is narrower: Indigenous and visible minority Canadians.

In May 2022, the Office of the Ombudsman for the Department of National Defence (DND) and CAF reported that despite institutional efforts, “The Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces have deeply embedded barriers to employment equity representation goals, recruitment, career advancement, retention, and culture, which are all intertwined.”²⁷ Madame Louise Arbour made similar observations in the external review of the DND and CAF in 2022.²⁸

Academic research recognizes the CAF’s lack of diversity and institutional attempts to address this.²⁹ Tammy George’s 2016 doctoral thesis³⁰ notes the same shortfalls with regard to visible

minorities that the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) highlighted when he declared an unprecedented personnel crisis in 2022.³¹ George’s research suggests institutional inability to recruit and retain Indigenous and visible minority Canadians because of the systemic racism flowing from the nation’s origins that impacts Canadian society and its institutions.³² This is consistent with the MND Advisory Panel’s observations.³³

In addition to articles authored by academics and CAF leaders in the *Canadian Military Journal*, highlighting the value of diversity and proposing diversity strategies,³⁴ and studies conducted for the DND’s research institution, Defence Research and Development Canada (DRDC),³⁵ the subject of diversity in the CAF has animated research in the Joint Command Staff Program, which develops CAF senior leadership. For example, Major Chris MacDonald proposes recognizing that visible minority demographics are not homogenous when designing recruitment strategies, involving visible minority communities in recruitment, using social media to connect with these demographics, and increasing visible minority representation in institutional leadership.³⁶ Major Patrick Horsman proposes opening recruitment to eligible permanent residents awaiting citizenship, with appropriate caveats to manage risk.³⁷ For Major Daniel Gregoire, “Changing policies, educating personnel on diversity, inclusion, and applying gender-based analysis methods contribute to changing the military culture to a culture more attractive to a diverse Canada.”³⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Leslie Rediger’s work, which focuses on the female experience within the CAF, explores how the CAF can become an employer of choice (EOC) for employment equity groups.³⁹ Defining an EOC as “an organization that employees consciously aspire to work for, given more than one option, and one that they would recommend to others ... an organization that is also able to retain its employees long-term,”⁴⁰ Rediger argues that “the CAF needs to fundamentally change its organizational culture and its members’ attitudes towards diversity and social change in order to attract, retain and

“ The CAF needs to fundamentally change its organizational culture and its members’ attitudes towards diversity and social change in order to attract, retain and support a diverse workforce that serves Canadian interests.”

support a diverse workforce that serves Canadian interests.⁴¹ And the CAF clearly wants to be an EOC, as evidenced not only by policy aspirations and institutional initiatives, but also by the academic and market research it routinely commissions to understand recruitment audience dynamics.⁴²

The ideas presented in the relevant reports, policies, and research publications are best understood using legitimacy theory. Mark Suchman defines legitimacy as "a general perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions."⁴³ Hence, legitimization is a process by which an organization positions its culture within the societal normative framework to justify its existence or operations. According to Suchman, institutional self-interest is in the realm of pragmatic legitimacy. Public perception of institutional adherence to the social normative system is in the realm of moral legitimacy.

Pragmatic and moral legitimacy account for self-interest-driven legitimization and legitimization informed by "the right thing to do,"⁴⁴ respectively. This understanding captures the rationalizations given for diversity in the CAF. For example, Trusted to Serve, says: "As a national institution that needs to be credible and trustworthy, the CAF must be representative of the diversity of people, history and traditions of Canada."⁴⁵ Similarly, "Inclusion within an equitable professional culture is essential to creating a sense of belonging and cohesion. Within the CAF, inclusion makes our military teams stronger."⁴⁶ Also, the Diversity Strategy states that:

Maximizing the potential of a diverse workforce is not only a social imperative, but is also an operational advantage which was reinforced by our recent overseas experiences where diversity made significant contributions to CAF operations.⁴⁷

The reports, policies, and literature suggest that culture change within the CAF is needed to facilitate legitimization. While definitions of culture are diverse across academic disciplines and professions, for the purposes of this paper, culture can be defined as "the learned beliefs, values, rules, norms, symbols, and traditions that are common to a group of people"⁴⁸ and "... the set of artefacts, values and assumptions that emerge from interactions of organizational members."⁴⁹ This translates into "the way things are done around here"⁵⁰ through institutional socialization. For example, what are the worldviews, perspectives, and lenses mainstreamed within the CAF? Are the organizational environment and practices welcoming and supportive of Indigenous and visible minority Canadians, given Canada's (and the CAF's) historical origins?

The CAF defines leadership as, "The process of directly or indirectly influencing others, by means of formal authority or personal attributes, to act in accordance with one's intent or a shared purpose."⁵¹ The goal is achieving "situational

favourability."⁵² In this case, within a contemporary multicultural context, how can the CAF achieve situational favourability to attract and retain Indigenous and visible minority members?⁵³ Within CAF doctrine, transformational leadership, defined as "a pattern of leader influence intended to alter the characteristics of individuals, organizations, or societies in a fairly dramatic or substantial way,"⁵⁴ is "rooted in the value systems of the Canadian military ethos and may refer either to the transformation of people or to organizational transformation."⁵⁵ Further:

Transformational leadership may be exercised by a talented individual with a compelling idea and the skill to communicate it to others, or by a leadership team united by conviction in its transformational aims ... the professional socialization of new CAF members into the military ethos and its values represents the institutionalized transformation of people... Similarly, the adoption of CAF-wide practices that enable organizational learning and promote continuous improvement represents institutionalized transformation of the organization.⁵⁶

It is useful to understand the CAF as what Erving Goffman calls a "total institution"⁵⁷ or a unique organization bracketed outside the mainstream, and in which member conduct is regulated, all with the aim of achieving common organizational goals. This is not a novel conceptualization.⁵⁸ The CAF as an institution is relatively bracketed out of the mainstream, and member cognition/worldview is shaped to uniquely reflect institutional values. Members develop capabilities and perspectives that they would not have had but for their complete immersion within the total institution. The total institution is conducive to transformational leadership in this regard; it provides the incubation to keep members focused, and thus a "captive audience" for transformational leadership influence. It also possesses unique symbolic and cultural levers through which member behaviour and worldview are shaped.⁵⁹ Divergences from appropriate behaviour can be quickly identified and corrected, or, when necessary, sources of negative influence can be expelled. The military total institution exists to engender public spiritedness, discipline, unlimited liability, courage, integrity, and other warrior attributes in the civilian recruit, and to sustain those attributes. Leadership inspires the cohesion and esprit de corps necessary for the military total institution to channel these warrior attributes for "militant mission"⁶⁰ success, whether in traditional warfighting or in any other endeavour it undertakes. Similarly, through transformational leadership, an inclusive culture conducive to Indigenous and visible minority members can be fostered within the total institution in ways that would not be feasible in the mainstream.⁶¹ Therefore, though the total institution has been linked to problems of inappropriate behaviour and exclusion within the Canadian military, it is also recognized that this is not always the case⁶² and, as is argued in

this paper, the positive attributes of the total institution can be harnessed for culture change through leadership.

Points for Consideration

As mentioned in the introduction, the CAF has the potential to be the employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minority members. Suggestions are proposed below, all consistent with *Trusted to Serve*.⁶³

1. Transformational Leadership for Culture Change

The CAF identifies leadership as critical for "the implementation of the strategy and the overall diversity climate within their organizations."⁶⁴ Thus, "active engagement of CAF leadership to accomplish culture change in favour of a diverse CAF that is representative of Canada's population is paramount."⁶⁵ The CAF has been a learning organization,⁶⁶ taking steps to increase Indigenous recruitment. However, as the MND Advisory Panel heard from Indigenous members: ... Defence Team efforts seem concentrated on influencing individual Indigenous People to consider a career in the Canadian Armed Forces without subsequently offering them a culture that welcomes their unique perspectives or respects their traditions. Once these Indigenous recruits enter the military, ongoing initiatives to maintain or integrate Indigenous culture as advertised in the summer programs are not prevalent.⁶⁷

Similarly, the CAF has expanded its outreach towards visible minorities, but:

Black people are not adequately represented at the senior leadership level. Their representation at mid-management level, such as director or senior officer, is also lower than that of other visible minority groups. The absence of Black representation and the failure of the organization to make meaningful strides in this regard at the leadership level have eroded trust in the DND/CAF among Black Defence Team members.⁶⁸

In other words, more work needs to be done. The way forward, therefore, requires institutional acknowledgement of cultural deficiencies and culture change through transformational leadership (both arguably reflected in ongoing institutional initiatives⁶⁹). While Goffman conceptualizes the total institution as a modernist disciplinary enterprise, it could be seen as a space where multicultural normative values can be nurtured, and where leaders socialize organizational members in a manner not feasible outside this disciplinary space. Leadership will have to continue addressing latent systems, structures, and (sub) cultures that reproduce a status quo that works against attracting and retaining Indigenous and visible minority members. In this regard,

“ The way forward, therefore, requires institutional acknowledgement of cultural deficiencies and culture change through transformational leadership (both arguably reflected in ongoing institutional initiatives).”

the MND Advisory Panel report is a useful source of direction because it consolidates previous studies as well as work done by Defence Advisory Groups (DAGs), such as the Defence Indigenous Advisory Group, the Defence Women's Advisory Organization, the Defence Visible Minorities Advisory Group, the Defence Advisory Group for Persons with Disabilities, the Defence Team Pride Advisory Organization, and Defence Team Black Employee Network. The Panel bemoans the fact that previous findings are merely gathering dust. However, transformational leadership has the potential to harness norms grounded in the institutional ethos⁷⁰ to shape member behaviour within the institution. This recalls that "dignity of all persons" is the highest principle in the pantheon of the CAF's ethical regime which speaks to "diversity, equity and inclusion."⁷¹ The total institutional cultural, administrative, and disciplinary levers give leadership unique capabilities to shape the organizational space by denying cultural terrain to, or disrupting/interdicting, elements such as White supremacy groups that challenge an inclusive environment.⁷²

It is important that members understand the need for change, and not merely pay lip service just for the sake of political correctness. As has been argued in reaction to the MND Advisory Panel's report, "Historically, responses to racism and discrimination in the CAF have been superficial and reactionary in nature, for example, focusing on providing courses or modules, with a lack of buy-in and continued internal resistance."⁷³ The socialization process within a total institution must be understood as negotiated rather than being strictly top-down. Grassroot adoption is necessary because passive or active member resistance are always possible within the total institution.⁷⁴ As Rediger notes, given the size of the CAF, its dispersed nature, and its deep traditions, member friction resulting from culture change must be anticipated and pre-empted through communication and education; "instant obedience and uniformity"⁷⁵ are not guaranteed. Thus, transformational leadership requires role modelling,

constant feedback, and measurable culture change.⁷⁶ As Alan Okros observes,⁷⁷ it is not unusual for dominant institutional elements to define benchmarks for success when "accommodating" minorities. Thus, feedback from Indigenous and visible minority members on their institutional experiences is important if they are to have agency in the diversity and inclusion process.⁷⁸ It is in this spirit that Brian Selmeski's study proposes a path of negotiation between leadership and Indigenous communities on cultural elements that will make them "feel like full members of the profession"⁷⁹ while ensuring institutional viability is maintained. Naturally, as a profession of arms, "individual values and beliefs must align with CAF values and be balanced against the constraints of operational effectiveness and the principle of universality of service."⁸⁰ In this regard, Rediger observes:

Balancing diversity and culture change initiatives with the critical needs of the organization is a delicate process. Critical needs should not be confused with established practices, procedures, culture and traditions. The needs of an organization for operational readiness, or critical capabilities need to be identified, validated and screened for bias in order to really understand what the CAF needs to be successful rather than what it has used to be successful in the past.⁸¹

A classic illustration of the transformational leadership referenced in this section is the initiative taken by the commanding officer of the Princess Louise Fusiliers in Halifax, Nova Scotia, to launch the Diversity Soldier Experience Program (DSEP) in 2020.⁸² This program creates internal awareness about societal diversity as well as historical Indigenous, racialized, and gendered realities. This not only ensures that the unit is able to engage in community outreach to obtain recruits, but also eliminates potential sources of othering that might militate against meaningful participation by Indigenous and visible minority members once they join.



His Majesty's Canadian Ship (HMCS) Vancouver participates in a re-enactment of the Incheon Landing Operation and a Fleet Review with Republic of Korea Navy Ships and United States Ship (USS) America on September 15, 2023 in Incheon, South Korea.

Photo: Corporal Alisa Strelley, Canadian Armed Forces Photo

“ Thus, transformational leadership requires role modelling, constant feedback, and measurable culture change.”

Indigenous and visible minority members must be integrated into CAF leadership by means of a succession plan. This will help signal inclusivity at the highest levels, help ensure that diverse realities are reflected in decision-making, and reduce unconscious bias and privilege.⁸³

In addition, the CAF's diversity and inclusion space has a multiplicity of groups. These produce discourses, that, in the "Sense" operational function,⁸⁴ will need to be consolidated and communicated for action by leadership and sharing as best practices among groups. This requires dedicated vehicles within higher headquarters to manage this function. And where changes are not possible, leadership must be able to communicate this candidly.

2. Public Communication

The CAF sets out the following diversity strategic communication objective:

To remain relevant in an increasingly changing Canadian society, the CAF must strive to effectively communicate how it values and promotes diversity not only to build the reputation as an employer of choice, but to foster deeper more respectful relationships with all of Canada.⁸⁵

Drawing on EOC literature, Rediger suggests that:

Awareness of initiatives, cultures, values and work content is key in becoming an EOC, as a choice can only be made if the information is available, communicated and accessible. It is about attracting people but also about selling the organization. However, the messages need to be authentic and backed up by honest testimonials.⁸⁶

As previously mentioned, the CAF is a learning organization and has evolved institutional norms and practices to be more supportive of Indigenous and visible minority members. For example, the CAF has established the following programs for Indigenous recruitment:⁸⁷

- Indigenous Leadership Opportunities Year;
- Canadian Forces Indigenous Entry Program; and,
- Summer training programs such as
 - Bold Eagle;
 - Raven;
 - Black Bear;
 - Carcajou; and,
 - Grey Wolf.

Research suggests that these programs resonate with Indigenous communities as gateways for entry into the CAF⁸⁸ and thus must be sustained. The CAF also employs diverse members in recruitment, "and has addressed concerns that minorities sometimes have regarding the military."⁸⁹ However, without an informed, active, strategic public communication of opportunities for service in the CAF, Indigenous and visible minority Canadians would not be attracted to join.⁹⁰ It has been said that, "the under-representation of visible minorities may in part reflect the fact that in some countries of origin (e.g., in Africa, the Middle East, Asia and South America—increasingly the countries of origin of immigrants to Canada) the military is not seen as a career of choice or the defender of a nation, but as a machine of oppression."⁹¹ This may discount the agency exercised by immigrants who make a conscious choice to make Canada their home based on the distinction between Canada and their native countries. Certainly, there is evidence that some immigrants conflate the CAF with militaries in their countries of origin and this might be a barrier to recruitment.⁹² But, as Christian Leuprecht puts it, "immigrants to Canada readily distinguish between armed forces in their home country and the CAF."⁹³ Yet, the issue of community awareness of CAF career options is a live one, as Justin Wright and Felix Fonséca found in their 2016 focus group studies among CAF members from immigrant communities.⁹⁴ Indeed, Ipsos Reid surveys of visible minority demographics for the CAF in 2011, 2012, and 2014, corroborated by Wright and Fonséca's research, indicate nuanced attitudes towards employment in the CAF, informed by pragmatic concerns and comparisons with other professional opportunities, similar to attitudes found within the general public.⁹⁵ The 2012 Ipsos Reid survey found that:

Compared to general public youth respondents, Asian and Arab-Canadian youth were more likely to see joining the Canadian Forces "as a good way to help others" (78% v. 69%), as a way to gain "experience that is valuable experience outside of the military" (72% v. 64%), and "as a good way to serve the country" (72% v. 58%).⁹⁶

Similarly, 82% of parents within the immigrant demographic surveyed indicated that, "joining the Canadian Forces is a good way to serve the country," with a comparable percentage agreeing that "joining the Canadian Forces is a good way to help others."⁹⁷ It is also observed that "legitimacy, integration, membership, and formal citizenship status"⁹⁸ are benefits that visible minority Canadians who choose to serve derive. Military service is a means for Indigenous and visible minorities, especially new Canadians, to assert their agency, identity, citizenship, and sense of belonging in society.⁹⁹ All three Ipsos Reid surveys, however, indicate limited familiarity with the CAF among visible minority communities.¹⁰⁰ Anecdotally, most new Canadians I speak to as a visible minority immigrant are astonished to find out that they are welcome in the CAF. New Canadians might be oblivious to the fact that barriers to service in their countries of origin (e.g., age,

gender, sexual orientation) do not exist in Canada. Therefore, public communications focusing on new Canadians across multiple media platforms is important. The choice of channels must be strategic, as should the choice of messaging. Messaging and imagery must highlight professional opportunities in the CAF, some of which might not be as accessible in the civilian space.¹⁰¹ For example, it is noted that:

... recent immigrants to Canada face high rates of both underemployment and unemployment. Statistics Canada reported that between 1991 and 2006, "the proportion of immigrants with a university degree in jobs with low educational requirements (such as clerks, truck drivers, salespersons, cashiers, and taxi drivers) increased." Even after being in Canada for fifteen years, "immigrants with a university degree are still more likely than the native-born to be in low-skilled jobs."¹⁰²

However, visible minority new Canadians who, interested in a military career, enter the CAF and complete their training are guaranteed fulfilling positions. Whether serving in the Regular Force or as a Reservist, they are eligible for financial support to complete post-secondary education and skills training, and to obtain valuable career training and experience that they can leverage in the mainstream economy. Thus, the practice of conducting recruiting outreach during citizenship ceremonies in urban areas¹⁰³ must be sustained and expanded to non-urban areas as well. Indigenous and visible minority members must also have a role in recruiting and instructing to provide candid perspectives to prospective or new recruits.¹⁰⁴

It is important that the historical military service of Indigenous and visible minority Canadians is woven into the institutional narrative. The recent recognition of the efforts of Indigenous Peoples like Tommy Prince¹⁰⁵ and Black soldiers in the

“ Whether serving in the Regular Force or as a Reservist, they are eligible for financial support to complete post-secondary education and skills training, and to obtain valuable career training and experience that they can leverage in the mainstream economy.”

No. 2 Construction Battalion,¹⁰⁶ in the face of institutional prejudice and rejection during the First World War, are examples of that kind of inclusive narrative. Such narratives would build trust with audiences in demonstrating that the organization acknowledges its wrongs, and values/reflects people like them. For example, Felix Fonséca and Jason Dunn's study found that many Indigenous members joined because of family histories tied to CAF service.¹⁰⁷ But the narratives are also "culture embedding mechanisms"¹⁰⁸ for institutional members. This is important as leaders are expected to socialize and reinforce the institutional ethos,¹⁰⁹ e.g., by being "good teachers of unit and CAF heritage and history"¹¹⁰ to "create the conditions that will foster acceptance and internalization of the ethos."¹¹¹

Based on audience research, leadership can direct recruiting advertisements with rhetorical/semiotic appeals directly focusing on immigrant communities and in media that cater to these communities.¹¹² It is also important that CAF leadership build dialogic relationships with relevant community representatives, such as Indigenous and immigrant community stakeholder group leadership. These representatives are gatekeepers or "influencers"¹¹³ who can provide access to their communities once they understand what the CAF has to offer. They can articulate community concerns with regard to the CAF and advise on shaping the CAF workplace into a more inclusive one. This should be the kind of respectful, dialogic relationship that Selmeski suggests¹¹⁴ and which has been enacted in programs such as the DSEP. The preceding points are consistent with the "targeted attraction and recruitment" strategy for underrepresented groups in the CAF's Employment Equity Plan¹¹⁵ and suggestions made by respondents to the Ipsos Reid surveys.¹¹⁶ Feedback gathered from the 2012 survey (and reflected in the 2011 and 2014 surveys) is noteworthy:

... personal involvement of Canadian Armed Forces members—at cultural events, in the mosque, in community centres and in schools—could go a long way towards addressing their communities' lack of familiarity with the Forces and in making the CAF a real, rather than remote or abstract, career option. Putting members of their community who wear the CAF uniform at the front and centre of efforts in their communities would help to alleviate some of the conflicted feelings they have about military service in Canada. It would also impress upon them that the CAF is serious about becoming diverse and can truly include them, while enabling them to retain their cultural identities and values.¹¹⁷

In addition, with regard to engagement approaches, respondents recommended:

involving members from their ethnic community in recruitment efforts, showcasing former CAF members from within their community who had gone on to become successful outside the CAF, and involving Asian and Arab-Canadians who are highly ranked members of the Canadian Forces.¹¹⁸

Interviewees in the 2014 survey stressed, "the importance of going beyond the 'tokenism' in which visible minorities simply appear in advertisements and brochures, towards a more personal engagement."¹¹⁹

Conclusion

The CAF can certainly reflect Canadian society within its ranks, and is making efforts at achieving this. Drawing on legitimacy theory, leadership theory, and Goffman's concept of total institutions, the argument is advanced that the CAF can be made an employer of choice for Indigenous and visible minorities through 1) transformational leadership for enduring culture change, and 2) robust public communication of what the CAF has to offer Indigenous and visible minority communities.

While this could be seen as an attempt to instrumentalize certain demographics, it is important to recognize that the CAF is a societal resource or "an important national program"¹²⁰ that must be equally and equitably available as a service opportunity. Without appropriate communications strategies, Indigenous and visible minorities would be oblivious to this opportunity. As well, ensuring that the CAF is welcoming of these demographics is already part of the institutional ethos.

However, a diverse CAF is not necessarily an inclusive CAF¹²¹ one in which diversity is not merely approached to meet regulatory imperatives but rather, one in which members have relative agency to participate meaningfully. This is consistent with the CAF's aspiration for "an inclusive environment where everyone feels empowered to contribute their full potential in the execution of their military duties."¹²² It is also consistent with the CAF's understanding that, "Inclusion means producing a work environment in which all employees have a sense of belonging, are valued for their unique capabilities, are encouraged to be their authentic selves and are supported in achieving their full potential."¹²³ Thus, transformational leadership must start with culture change that mainstreams multiculturalism as a non-negotiable value and eschews ethnocentrism. In this regard, transformational leadership must be conscious of the fact that while overt racism and discrimination may be untenable in contemporary times and "may have all but disappeared" in the CAF,¹²⁴ inferential or subliminal racism exists,¹²⁵ especially when rendered as institutional "common sense."¹²⁶

Notes

- 1 The *Employment Equity Act* (S.C. 1995, c. 44) defines *visible minorities* as "persons, other than Aboriginal [Indigenous] peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour."
- 2 Tammy George, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture & Social Justice* 41, no. 2 (December 21, 2020): 42.
- 3 See, Preamble and Section 3 of the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, R.S.C., 1985 c. 24 (4th Supp.).
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 Phyllis Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment and the Canadian Armed Forces*, DRDC Scientific Report (Ottawa: DRDC, 2018).
- 6 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy* (Ottawa: DND, 2016).
- 7 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity and Inclusion in the Canadian Armed Forces: Report of the Standing Committee on National Defence* (Ottawa: Parliament of Canada, June 2019).
- 8 Department of National Defence, *Strong, Secure, Engaged: Canada's Defence Policy* (Ottawa: DND, 2017), 21.
- 9 *Ibid.* 23.
- 10 Department of National Defence, A-PA-005-000/AP-138, *Trusted to Serve: The Canadian Armed Forces Ethos* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2022).
- 11 Donna Winslow, Phyllis Browne, and Angela Febbraro, "Diversity in the Canadian Forces," In *Cultural Diversity in the Armed Forces: An International Comparison* (Florence, United States: Taylor & Francis Group, 2007).
- 12 Chantal Fraser, "Diversity Recruiting: It's Time to Tip the Balance," *Canadian Military Journal* 13, no. 4 (Autumn 2013): 25-35, 25.
- 13 Trevor Knight, "Systemic Racism in the Canadian Armed Forces" (ALP Paper, Osside Institute, December 2021). https://www.cmrsj-rmcjs.forces.gc.ca/lo-oi/pub/2021/pub_2021-eng.asp.
- 14 Department of National Defence, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel on Systemic Racism and Discrimination: Final Report* (Ottawa: DND, January 2022).
- 15 See, e.g., Ashley Burke, "Canadian Military Reports Sagging Recruitment as NATO Ramps up Deployment in Eastern Europe," *CBC*, 23 March 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canadian-armed-forces-staff-shortfall-1.6395131>.
- 16 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 10.
- 17 Hans Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Canadian Society?" *Canadian Military Journal* (Autumn 2007): 28.
- 18 Mark C. Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches," *Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3 (July 1995): 571.
- 19 Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Sage Publications, 2019).
- 20 Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017).
- 21 *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.
- 22 Yasmeen Abu-Laban and Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: Immigration Multiculturalism, Employment Equity, and Globalization* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015).
- 23 See, e.g., *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*, Sections 3(1) (c); 3(2)(a); and, 3(2)(b).
- 24 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*.
- 25 *Ibid.* 8.
- 26 *Ibid.* 12.
- 27 Office of the Ombudsman, *Employment Equity and Diversity in the Department of National Defence and Canadian Armed Forces - Report to the Minister of National Defence* (Ottawa, ON: DND, May 2022), 6.
- 28 The Honourable Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa, ON: DND, May 20, 2022).
- 29 See, e.g., Rupinder Mangat, Bessma Momani, and Alistair Edgar, "Unpacking Diversity and Inclusion," In *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, edited by Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani, 3-18 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).
- 30 Tammy George, "Be All You Can Be or Longing to Be: Racialized Soldiers, the Canadian Military Experience and the Im/Possibility of Belonging to the Nation" (doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 2016).
- 31 Lee Berthiaume, "Military's Chief Orders Halt to Non-Essential Activities, Focus on Personnel Crisis," CTV News, 6 October 2022, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/military-s-chief-orders-halt-to-non-essential-activities-focus-on-personnel-crisis-1.6099314>.
- 32 George, "Be All You Can Be"; George, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion," 42.
- 33 DND, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*.
- 34 See, e.g., Jung, "Can the Canadian Forces Reflect Canadian Society?"; Fraser, "Diversity Recruiting: It's Time to Tip the Balance," Grazia Scoppio, "Diversity Best Practices in Military Organizations in Canada, Australia, The United Kingdom, and the United States," *Canadian Military Journal* 9, no. 3 (2009): 17-30; Michelle Seaman, "Gender Inclusivity in the Canadian Armed Forces: The Role of the Chief Petty Officer Second Class/Master Warrant Officer," *Canadian Military Journal* 22, no. 2 (Spring 2022): 45-53; Guy Chapdelaine, "Working Towards Greater Diversity: A Blessing or a Curse? The Experience of the Canadian Military Chaplaincy," *Canadian Military Journal* 15, no. 1 (2014): 34-43; Necole Belanger, "Inclusive Leadership' If We Build It Will They Come?," *Canadian Military Journal* 19, no. 1 (Winter 2019): 32-39; and, Lisa Bourgon, "The CAF Path Towards Its 25.1% Employment Equity Objective: A Look Through the Lenses of Attraction and Recruitment," *Canadian Military Journal* 22, no. 1 (Winter 2021): 5-13.
- 35 See, e.g., Félix Fonséca and Jason Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*, DGMPSA Technical Memorandum (Ottawa ON: DRDC/DGMPSA, 2012); Justin Wright and Felix Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members on Recruitment and Inclusion in the CAF*, DGMPSA Scientific Report (Ottawa ON: DRDC, 2016).
- 36 Chris MacDonald, "Visible Minorities: Breaking Down the Numbers in Order to Build Them Up" (Service Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2019).
- 37 Patrick A. Horsman, 'Old Stock' Continues to Yield Poor Returns: Is it Time for the CAF to Invest in Global Talent Market? (Service Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2022).
- 38 Daniel Grégoire, "Diversity in the CAF: A Critical Review of the Past and Present" (Service Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2020), 58.
- 39 Leslie J. Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap: How the Canadian Armed Forces Can Become an Employer of Choice" (Master of Defence Studies Paper, Canadian Forces College, 2020-2021).
- 40 *Ibid.* 11.
- 41 *Ibid.* 104.
- 42 Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment*.
- 43 Suchman, "Managing Legitimacy," 574.
- 44 *Ibid.* 579.
- 45 DND, *Trusted to Serve*, 28.
- 46 *Ibid.*
- 47 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 1.
- 48 Northouse, *Leadership*, 428.
- 49 Joann Keyton, *Communication and Organizational Culture: A Key to Understanding Work Experiences* (Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE, 2005), 1.
- 50 Robert W. Walker, "A Professional Development Framework to Address Strategic Leadership in the Canadian Forces," In *Strategic Leadership Development: International Perspectives* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2007), 15.
- 51 DND, *Leadership*, 130.
- 52 *Ibid.* 109.
- 53 A caveat is important: this must not be driven by an aim to tokenize or instrumentalize diverse members. In other words, it must be driven not just by pragmatic legitimacy but also a moral legitimacy imperative.
- 54 Department of National Defence, *Leadership in the Canadian Armed Forces: Conceptual Foundations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2005), 67.
- 55 *Ibid.* 70.
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 Goffman, *Asylums*.
- 58 See, e.g., 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.
- 59 Karen Davis, "Cultural Foundations," In *Cultural Intelligence and Leadership: An Introduction for Canadian Forces Leaders* (Kingston, ON: Canadian Defence Academy Press, 2009), 43.
- 60 Goffman, *Asylums*, 120.
- 61 Arguably, to ensure meaningful member buy-in, this would need to be negotiated rather than imposed (within a strict, "tight culture" construct typical of the military). See a discussion on loose versus tight cultures as theorized in relation to the CAF here: Vanessa Brown and Alan Okros, "Dancing around Gender: Changing Identity in Canada's Post-Deshamps Military," In *Culture and the Soldier: Identities, Values, and Norms in Military Engagements*, edited by H. Christian Breede, 32-56 (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2019).
- 62 Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces* (Ottawa: DND, 2015), [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/ndn-dnd/D2-506-2015-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/site/archive-archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2015/ndn-dnd/D2-506-2015-eng.pdf).

63 DND, *Trusted to Serve*.

64 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 4.

65 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy-Action Plan* (Ottawa: DND, 2017), Foreword.

66 For a detailed account of evolution of the CAF's diversity policies, see Alan Okros, "Introspection on Diversity in the Canadian Armed Forces," In *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, edited by Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani, 153-67 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019).

67 DND, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 31.

68 *Ibid*, 37.

69 See, Department of National Defence/Canadian Armed Forces, *CDS/DM Initiating Directive for Professional Conduct and Culture* (April 2021) <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/corporate/policies-standards/dm-cds-directives/cds-dm-initiating-directive-professional-conduct-culture.html>. For ongoing DND/CAF conduct and culture change initiatives, activities, programs, services and events, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/services/conduct-and-culture.html>.

70 DND, *Trusted to Serve*.

71 *Ibid*, 18.

72 DND, *Trusted to Serve*, 48.

73 Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic, Maya Eichler, Tammy George, and Nancy Taber, "Responding to the Minister's Advisory Panel Report," *Transforming Military Cultures* (blog), September 8, 2022. <https://www.msvu.ca/research-at-the-mount/centres-and-institutes/transforming-military-cultures-network/blogs>.

74 Goffman, *Asylums*, 53.

75 Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap," 21.

76 Knight, "Systemic Racism."

77 Alan Okros, "Rethinking Diversity and Security," *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47, no. 4 (November 1, 2009).

78 *Ibid*; Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

79 Brian Selmeski, *Aboriginal Soldiers: A Conceptual Framework*. Vol. 3 (Kingston, ON: Royal Military College) 81, 2007.

80 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 2.

81 Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap," 16.

82 Ahmed Elkar and Michael Gray, "The Princess Louise Fusiliers: Diversity Soldier Experience Program (DSEP)." *Canadian Military Journal*, 22 no. 1 (Winter 2021) 49.

83 Belanger, "Inclusive Leadership."

84 Department of National Defence, B-GL-300-001/FP-001, *Land Operations* (Ottawa: DND Canada, 2008), para 414.

85 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 10.

86 Rediger, "Culture Shift to Bridge the Gap," 12.

87 DND, *Minister of National Defence Advisory Panel*, 31.

88 Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

89 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*, 25.

90 Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*; Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

91 Winslow et al. "Diversity in the Canadian Forces," 36.

92 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

93 Christian Leuprecht, "The Demographics of Force Generation: Recruitment, Attrition, and Retention of Citizen Soldiers," in *Canadian Defence Policy in Theory and Practice*, ed. Thomas Juneau, Philippe Lagassé, and Srdjan Vučetić, 179-200 (Cham [Switzerland]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 182.

94 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

95 Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment*.

96 Ipsos Reid Corporation, *Visible Minorities Recruitment and the Canadian Forces: The Asian and Arab-Canadian Populations* (Ottawa: Ipsos Reid Corporation, November 2012), https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/pwgsc-tpsc/po-ef/national_defence/2012/073-11/report.pdf, 54.

97 *Ibid*, 105.

98 Melissa Finn and Bessma Momani, "Canadian Muslim Youth and Military Service," In *Strengthening the Canadian Armed Forces through Diversity and Inclusion*, edited by Alistair Edgar, Rupinder Mangat, and Bessma Momani, 135-52 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 135.

99 Leuprecht, "The Demographics of Force Generation"; Grazia Scoppio, Nancy Otis, and Yan Yan, "The Military as a Path to Citizenship, Integration, and Identity: Visible Minorities and Immigrants' Perspectives about the Military in Canada," in *The Power of Diversity in the Armed Forces: International Perspectives on Immigrant Participation in the Military* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022); Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

100 Browne, *Visible Minority Recruitment*.

101 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*.

102 Ontario Human Rights Commission, *Policy on Removing the "Canadian Experience" Barrier* (Toronto: Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2013), 2.

103 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*.

104 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*; Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

105 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*, 37.

106 Felix Odartey-Wellington and Michelle Noseworthy, "Honouring the Black Battalion - The No. 2 Construction Battalion National Apology Event on July 9 in Truro," *Maple Leaf*, 28 June 2022.

107 Fonséca and Dunn, *Attracting and Recruiting Aboriginal Peoples*.

108 DND, *Leadership*, 116.

109 DND, *Trusted to Serve*.

110 DND, *Leadership*, 31.

111 *Ibid*.

112 Wright and Fonséca, *Perspectives of Visible Minority Members*, 22.

113 *Ibid*.

114 Selmeski, *Aboriginal Soldiers*.

115 Department of National Defence, *Canadian Armed Forces Employment Equity Plan 2021-2026* (Ottawa: DND, 2020) 14.

116 Ipsos Reid Corporation, *Visible Minorities Recruitment and the Canadian Forces: The Chinese-Canadian Population* (Ottawa: Ipsos Reid Corporation, March 2011); Ipsos Reid, *Visible Minorities Recruitment 2012*; Ipsos Reid Corporation, *Visible Minorities Recruitment and the Canadian Forces: The Black-, Filipino- and Latin American-Canadian Populations* (Ottawa: Ipsos Reid Corporation, October 2014).

117 Ipsos Reid, *Visible Minorities Recruitment 2012*, 35.

118 *Ibid*, 10.

119 Ipsos Reid, *Visible Minorities Recruitment 2014*, 38.

120 Standing Committee on National Defence, *Improving Diversity*, 29.

121 Alan Okros, "Introspection on Diversity."

122 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Diversity Strategy*, 2.

123 DND, *Canadian Armed Forces Employment Equity Plan 2021-2026*, 11.

124 Belanger, "Inclusive Leadership," 34.

125 *Ibid*.

126 Felix Odartey-Wellington, "Erasing Race in the Canadian Media: The Case of Suaad Hagi Mohamud," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36, no. 3 (September 13, 2011): 398.