

CONTESTED MILITARY IDENTITIES

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Understanding of Military Culture to Support Organizational Change:
Systems Approaches, Critical Analyses, and Innovative Research Methods

Assumed Knowledge

- Connell masculinities
- Militarized masculinities
- Crenshaw intersectionality
- Hegemonic systems
- Social construction
- Social hierarchies

CHANGES TO CAF CULTURE PILLARS

Table 1: Cultural pillar analysis and evolution

Cultural Pillar	Strength	Limiting Mindsets	Required Evolution
Service Before Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher purpose • Sense of mission • Willingness to sacrifice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-sacrifice to serve • Focus on outputs not outcomes • Mission first, people last 	Evolve from all service requires self-sacrifice' to the best service requires the best self
Warrior Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bravery • Professional Excellence • Tradition of heroism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrow view of the ideal warrior • All others in service to the warrior • Promotes toxic and aggressive behaviours 	Recognize that warriors should be both physically fit and emotionally adaptable
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisive • Knowledgeable • Trusted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership means direct and command • No place to ask questions or propose ideas 	Great leaders must combine decisiveness and emotional intelligence
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared values • Mutual respect and trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasis on conformity, loyalty • Exclusion of those who don't "fit the mold" 	High-performing teams can be built through trust and authenticity

WAIT A MINUTE!

- Vocalized: slippery slopes, unintended consequences, who did they talk to?, let's wait for the formal documentation, fine for 'them' but none of us are going to...
- Implied: not what 'we' have always believed in, not what got me to success so far, not what I'm going to be rewarded for, nobody else wants to make this shift, I don't know how to do this
- Underlying concerns: combat motivation, mission accomplishment, discipline, cohesion, professional image/status, my perceived effectiveness as a leader
- Reinforced by: oral history, professional socialization, what I learned as a junior member, what I see demonstrated, customs/traditions, artifacts, boss texts, Hollywood

PROFESSIONAL FRAMEWORK



Four Threads or Weak Signals

- Force of last resort
- Backlash to Gender Equality
- The rise of prevention
- AI, cyber & robotics

Four Threads or Weak Signals

- Force of last resort
 - Driven by: increased domestic roles including long term care homes, supporting provincial emergency management personnel & refugee resettlement (but popping balloons is OK)
 - Elsewhere: discussions of national resilience and Total Defence strategies
 - Key issue: military exceptionalism
 - expanded roles do not align with the traditionally constructed warrior
- Backlash to Gender Equality
- The rise of prevention
- AI, cyber & robotics

Four Threads or Weak Signals

- Force of last resort
- Backlash to Gender Equality
 - Driven by: the patriarchy pushing back - increased narratives esp on social media; hatred and threatening actions towards women in public life; political dog whistles
 - Elsewhere: violence against women's human rights organization; legislation enacted to erode women's rights
 - Key issue: receptive audiences within the military
 - Combined with some organizations targeting the military
- The rise of prevention
- AI, cyber & robotics

Four Threads or Weak Signals

- Force of last resort
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- The rise of prevention
 - Driven by: increased attention under UN missions on preventing a host of human rights violations including CRSV, SEA, human trafficking, child soldiers and cultural heritage exploitation
 - Elsewhere: being incorporated in related NATO policy including evolving approaches to human security
 - Key issue: military control – resistance to having to coordinate actions with other actors; esp when the military is in a supporting role following somebody else's plan
- AI, cyber & robotics

Four Threads or Weak Signals

- Force of last resort
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- AI, cyber & robotics
 - Driven by: increased use of automated devices and AI which is shifting what the military does but, more importantly, who performs these new tasks and where they do them (part of the kill chain but not in the kill zone)
 - Elsewhere: debates over drone operators (flight suits, mental health issues)
 - Key issue: challenge to construction of 'operator' and 'warrior'

Implications

- Janowitz was correct: military has porous boundaries
- Drucker: culture eats strategy for breakfast but when top-down initiatives are to change culture: for lunch, dinner and midnight snack
- Part of professional functioning creates the spaces and places for internal debate over identity (esp social activities)
- How aspects of identity, social hierarchies and allocated privilege will shift will be under constant negotiations
- Organizational change initiatives will mainly shift where and how subgroup tensions will become visible to senior leadership