

Military-Civilian Personnel Integration and Collaboration in Defence Organizations: Insights and Recommendations from NATO HFM Research Task Group 226

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ABSTRACT

Objectives/topic: This paper addresses dimensions of defence culture, particularly the military and civilian sub-cultures and the lived experience of military members and defence civilians working together. The paper examines unique aspects of diversity associated with the integration and collaboration of civilian and military workforces in defence organizations, including their distinct histories and traditions, cultures, language and communication styles, and approaches to leadership, as well as the challenges and enablers of military-civilian collaboration, and recommendations for best practices and policies for facilitating effective management of integrated military and civilian workforces. **Introduction/Relevance for the workshop:** Defence organizations consist of military and civilian personnel working in partnership to meet defence mandates. Although military and civilian personnel often work closely across a variety of settings, including headquarters, bases, military educational institutions, and increasingly, on operations, these subgroups are governed by different personnel management systems and reflect distinct cultures. Moreover, many defence civilians are supervised by military managers (and to a lesser degree, vice versa). These factors affect military-civilian collaboration, personnel outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and organizational effectiveness and performance. Although this aspect of diversity – one mostly unique to defence organizations – has largely been ignored, defence establishments are increasingly recognizing the importance of optimizing collaboration between their military and civilian workforces, with many adopting organizational labels signaling that the military and civilian workforces form a cohesive whole: the Defence Team (Canada), the Whole Force Concept (United Kingdom), One Defence Team (Sweden), and Total Defence Workforce (New Zealand), and, accordingly, are considering approaches for the management of these combined workforces. **Rationale:** Understanding and addressing cultural differences and unique lived experiences of military members and defence civilians working in collaboration in defence organizations is an underexplored and evolving area of inquiry. It is a critical one, however, given that it not only affects work culture and relations between military and civilian personnel, but also personnel outcomes and organizational effectiveness. **Methods:** Recognizing the importance of this topic, a NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) Human Factors and Medicine (HFM) Research Task Group (RTG) was formed to examine military-civilian personnel integration and collaboration in defence organizations. This paper will present the findings of this RTG, which examined existing data sources, policy, and strategic documents to understand and compare military and civilian workforces within defence organizations and the policies and directives that guide their management. Moreover, this paper will present the results of the Military–Civilian Personnel Survey (MCPS) that was developed and administered across 11 nations to examine military-civilian personnel work culture and dynamics, which was a first attempt to examine these issues systematically in large samples of military and civilian respondents and from the perspectives of both groups. **Conclusion:** The discussion will focus on understanding the distinct aspects related to military and civilian personnel culture and diversity, including the unique challenges, enablers, and recommendations for facilitating optimal military-civilian personnel integration and collaboration in defence organizations.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Defence organisations are unique in that they comprise military and civilian personnel working in partnership to meet defence mandates. Although military and civilian personnel often work closely across a variety of settings, including headquarters, bases, military educational institutions, and increasingly, on operations, these subgroups are governed by different personnel management systems and reflect distinct cultures, histories and traditions, language and communication styles, and approaches to leadership. Moreover, many defence civilians are supervised by military managers (and to a lesser degree, vice versa). These factors affect military-civilian collaboration, personnel outcomes such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and organizational effectiveness and performance. Although this aspect of diversity – one mostly unique to defence organizations – has remained largely unexplored, defence establishments are increasingly recognizing the importance of optimizing collaboration between their military and civilian workforces, with many adopting organizational labels signaling that the military and civilian workforces form a cohesive whole: the Defence Team (Canada), the Whole Force Concept (United Kingdom), One Defence Team (Sweden), and Total Defence Workforce (New Zealand), and, accordingly, are considering approaches for the management of these combined workforces.

Recognizing the importance of this topic, a NATO Science and Technology Organization (STO) Human Factors and Medicine (HFM) Research Task Group (RTG) was formed to examine military-civilian personnel integration and collaboration in defence organizations. This paper will present the findings of this RTG, which examined existing data sources, policy, and strategic documents to understand and compare military and civilian workforces within defence organizations in terms of the policies and directives that guide their management. Moreover, this paper will present the results of the Military–Civilian Personnel Survey (MCPS) that was developed and administered across 11 nations¹ to examine military-civilian personnel work culture and dynamics, which was a first attempt to examine these issues systematically in large samples of military and civilian respondents and from the perspectives of both groups. As such, this paper addresses dimensions of defence culture, particularly the unique aspects of diversity associated with military and civilian sub-cultures, including enablers and challenges, as reflected in the lived experience of military members and defence civilians working together. The paper will conclude with recommendations for facilitating optimal military-civilian personnel integration and collaboration in defence organizations.²

2.0 EMPIRICAL RESULTS OF THE MILITARY-CIVILIAN PERSONNEL SURVEY (MCPS) AND CASE STUDIES

The NATO STO HFM RTG-226 administered the Military–Civilian Personnel Survey (MCPS) in 11 nations to explore a range of issues specific to collaboration between military and civilian personnel working together in defence organisations. This survey was the first systematic examination of large samples of military and civilian respondents and the first to examine military–civilian relations from the perspective of both military and civilian personnel. The survey confirmed a great degree of interaction between military and civilian personnel in defence organisations, with about 90% of civilian personnel indicating that they work beside military personnel and vice versa. Of these, about 80% of military personnel reported interacting with civilian co-workers daily, and an even greater proportion of civilians interacted with military co-workers daily. Across the nations, a third or more of civilians reported that their direct supervisor was military; the proportion of military personnel supervised by civilians varied a great deal, but it was not uncommon.

Overall, military and civilian personnel reported generally positive relations between military and civilian co-workers at the personnel level. For example, civilian personnel were seen as being both necessary and

¹ The 11 nations included Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Estonia, Germany, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

² This paper is based on the final report of NATO STO RTG-226 on Civilian and Military Personnel Integration and Collaboration in Defence Organisations (Goldenberg & Febbraro, 2018a), and more specifically, Chapter 24 of the final report (Goldenberg & Febbraro, 2018b).

important to the success of defence organisations, both from their own perspective and from that of their military counterparts, and both civilian and military personnel indicated high quality relations, good communication, and perceptions of mutual workplace respect. Further, both military and civilian personnel overwhelmingly agreed that civilians are important to mission success (85.5% of military and 96.8% of civilian respondents) and necessary to the success of the mission (79.6% of military and 96.4% of civilian respondents). Likewise, a case study of military-civilian personnel in a multinational operational setting (i.e., the NATO KFOR study) indicated very similar findings. The surveys of KFOR personnel and the interviews with its senior leaders showed that the work culture and relations between the military and civilian personnel at KFOR had good communication, trust, and mutual respect between military and civilian personnel.

Similarly, the Organizational Culture Study at NATO Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE; Goldenberg et al., 2018) demonstrated that both military and civilian personnel were generally satisfied with each other in this strategic-level multinational setting. However, satisfaction with civilian personnel (for both military and civilian personnel) was somewhat lower than satisfaction with military personnel, with only about two thirds of each group being satisfied with SHAPE civilians. This finding should be further explored because military members' satisfaction with civilian personnel at SHAPE influences important outcomes for this workforce.

Despite the generally positive relations between military and civilian co-workers, areas for improvement were observed, especially at the supervisory or organisational levels. These included:

- Many civilians thought that working for defence affected their career progression and training opportunities and that their work was disrupted by the military rotational cycle. As with the national-level findings, the NATO KFOR case study revealed that civilians in a multinational operation were affected by the military rotational cycle, which caused frequent changes in supervisors and the associated changes in goals, approaches, management styles, and even working conditions, or insufficient supervision/disciplinary action and, in some cases, over-dependence on the knowledge and experience of civilians in certain roles.
- The MCPS revealed the concerns of civilians being supervised by military managers (and vice versa, though this occurred much less frequently). Civilian personnel indicated that military managers (and military personnel that have civilian managers) often do not fully understand and follow their conditions of employment or terms of service and their personnel appraisal systems. They also indicated that military supervisors do not always appreciate the roles of civilian personnel or fully capitalize on their skills and abilities. The NATO KFOR case study mirrored the national findings.

A key question is the relationship between these military–civilian collaboration variables and organisational outcomes. Correlational results from the MCPS indicate that military-civilian work relations and interaction are indeed related to important employee and organisational outcomes. Military and civilian personnel who reported more positive military–civilian collaboration in their defence organisation were more likely to be satisfied with their jobs, engaged in their work, and committed to the organisation than those who reported less positive military-civilian collaboration. It is important to note that these correlations were consistently stronger for civilian personnel. This is not particularly surprising given that civilian personnel are minorities in these defence organisations³ and that the role of civilian personnel is often understood as *supporting* the military. Moreover, a much greater proportion of civilian personnel are directly supervised by military personnel than vice versa, which may also increase the importance of positive military–civilian work culture and relations for the civilian group. This supports the general recommendation that military-civilian personnel relations are important to organisational outcomes and thus should be examined and addressed within defence organisations.

³ Civilians are the minority across defence organisations overall. However, they are sometimes the majority group within specific units or sub-organisations within defence organisations.

Lived experience research generally utilizes qualitative methods to gain an understanding of the first-person accounts, perspectives, and experiences of individuals within particular contexts. Three open-ended questions were included in the MCPS to complement the quantitative information and to allow personnel to express their attitudes, perceptions, and experiences of military–civilian collaboration and integration using their own words. The questions asked respondents to identify the most important factors for establishing and maintaining positive military–civilian work culture and relations, the challenges they had experienced working in a military–civilian environment, and what they saw as the main advantages of working in a military–civilian environment.

These results demonstrated that mixed military–civilian work environments present both unique challenges and advantages. Both military and civilian personnel frequently cited challenges associated with fair treatment and lack of understanding of each other’s roles, personnel management systems, cultures, and perspectives, and civilians often reported that the military rotational cycle affected the stability of their work environment. In light of these issues, both military and civilian personnel across the nations indicated that the most important factors for establishing and maintaining positive military–civilian relations included respect, increasing understanding and familiarity with the other’s roles, cultures, and personnel management systems, enhancing communication and information exchange between personnel within the two workforces, ensuring fairness and equality, and increasing opportunities for collaboration and integration.

The open-ended responses to the MCPS also noted many positive aspects of working in military–civilian contexts, including the complementary knowledge and expertise of co-workers, filling complementary roles, providing diverse perspectives, offering support to one another’s objectives, and the stability and continuity provided by civilians in light of military rotation (Goldenberg et al., 2018). Similar benefits of military–civilian personnel integration were identified by the KFOR personnel. Many thought that the continuity in knowledge and procedures provided by civilians who are not part of the rotational cycle and who tend to remain in their positions much longer than military personnel was a significant advantage of complementary roles. Other benefits mirrored those in the national surveys: different perspectives, views, experiences, and skills that complement one another and that together contribute to mission success; civilian employees can make up for personnel shortages in some areas; as well as access to local sources, knowledge, people, and institutions, which civilians can sometimes provide more readily than military personnel (Goldenberg et al., 2018).

3.0 KEY CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Several observations, considerations, and recommendations emerged from this research, which may enhance military–civilian personnel collaboration and integration by helping to harmonize these different systems operating inside defence organisations.

3.1 Recognizing and Bridging Military-Civilian Cultural Differences by Increasing Intergroup Interaction and Familiarity

In addition to different functions and personnel management systems, military and civilian personnel working within defence establishments also have different cultures, stemming from their different histories, values, roles, and personnel policies. These cultural differences—expressed in divergent attitudes, perceptions, and behaviours—can have a significant impact on the working relations between these two groups of personnel (Goldenberg, Febbraro, & Dean, 2015).

The effect of cultural differences on relations between military and civilian personnel (and thus on organisational functioning) has been a frequent theme in other studies in this domain. For instance, an examination of organisational effectiveness within the Australian Defence Headquarters (ADHQ) showed that a lack of knowledge about the public service culture and administration (e.g., the hierarchical structure

of the military versus the negotiation-based culture of the public servants) resulted in management and leadership problems in ADHQ (Jans & Schmidtchen, 2003). Similarly, in a study of military professionals and civilian executives in the United States Department of Defense (DoD), Stupak (1981) observed that military members belong to a single unified profession, while defence civilian executives were a diverse group belonging to many different professions (e.g., engineer, lawyer, analyst). Stupak (1981) argued that civilian and military personnel are ignorant of each other's personnel, promotion, and pay systems and base their perceptions of each other on myths, prejudices, and folklore. Civilians in this study tended to think that military executives did things too quickly to achieve short-term goals, whereas military personnel believed that civilians dragged their feet and were unwilling to work overtime.

Our MCPS findings confirm that cultural differences and intergroup familiarity and understanding are particularly important. When survey respondents across the nations were asked to indicate, in their own words, the main challenges they experienced in working in a mixed military–civilian work environment, the most common theme from military personnel (an average of 19.6% of all theme responses across nations in response to this question) and the fourth most common theme from civilian respondents (10.0%) was lack of intergroup understanding, including knowledge or understanding of each other's roles, cultures, or perspectives, as well as understanding of organisational policies and procedures. Similarly, the fieldwork at KFOR (a multinational operational setting) revealed the importance of the military and civilian dynamic in the KFOR culture, such as the salience of the military culture and department, chain of command, and differing leadership styles, and that civilians working in a military organisation would benefit from a greater appreciation of the military system, chain of command, and style of communication (Goldenberg et al., 2018).

As one element that can help to bridge the cultural divide, many defence organisations provide guidance on values and ethics that apply to military and civilian personnel alike. The Swedish Armed Forces is guided by a set of core values, such as openness, results, and responsibility, which, according to the Chief of Defence, apply to military and civilian personnel and explicitly support the One Defence Force concept (Österberg & Johansson, 2018). Similarly, the *Code of Values and Ethics for the Canadian Armed Forces and Department of National Defence* (Goldenberg, Arseneau, & Febbraro, 2018) and the United States DoD single source Standards of Conduct Office (Peck & Mastroianni, 2018) harmonize the values and ethics of military members and civilians. Although common codes of values and ethics are important for aligning military-civilian cultures, other more concrete practices are required to realize military-civilian integration more fully.

Participants across the research studies presented here frequently asserted that enhancing military and civilian personnel's understanding of one another's cultures and roles was fundamental to enhancing their partnership. When MCPS respondents were asked to describe, in their own words, the most important factors for establishing and maintaining positive military-civilian collaboration, the most common theme was understanding and familiarity between military and civilian personnel (21.5% of all theme responses for military respondents and 13.8% for civilian respondents). More specifically, the survey respondents discussed a need for greater intergroup understanding of the kind of work military and civilian personnel perform with respect to roles, tasks, and occupations, divergent work cultures, understanding of each other's perspectives and experiences, conditions of employment, and cultures, and generally getting to know one another. Several mechanisms for increasing intergroup understanding are discussed below.

A common recommendation from the MCPS open-ended comments for promoting military-civilian familiarity and understanding was intergroup contact, such as through joint work and training opportunities, as well as joint social and organisational activities. Most interviewees in the KFOR study also suggested that social activities, joint social functions, and “off camp” initiatives would enhance military and civilian familiarization. Kelty's (2018) study of sailors on U.S. Naval ships and civilian mariners (CIVMARs) found that sailors' greater contact with CIVMARs and increased knowledge of their contributions had beneficial effects on social comparisons with civilians and led to greater perceptions of fairness. Shaw and James-Yates (2018) point out, however, that these activities should be tailored to suit all groups, otherwise they can be

counterproductive and divisive and serve to exacerbate differences. For example, activities that are geared toward the outdoors or physical activities may be more suited to active and fit military members and may thus make some civilians feel excluded. In Estonia, civilian familiarization with the military is facilitated by the mobilization-based defence model, wherein some civilian officials have a background as conscripts and subsequently serve as reservists or become voluntary members of the Estonian Defence League, and therefore spend part of their time in the military or on military exercises. The benefits of intergroup contact and socialization are supported by the extensive theoretical and empirical literature on intergroup contact theory, which suggests that positive contact between diverse groups can lead to reduced intergroup prejudices and conflict and to enhanced intergroup relations, as well as enhanced performance (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006).

One formal way to increase intergroup contact and establish common goals and approaches is through common professional education opportunities. Many defence organisations already offer this type of joint training. The Command and Staff training program in the United Kingdom trains future commanders and staff officers in all three of its armed services as well as among its defence civil servants (Defence Academy of the United Kingdom, 2016). Similarly, in Estonia, the Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL), a joint multinational staff and war college run together with Latvia and Lithuania, offers the Civil Servants Course for members of the MOD (as well as civilians from other ministries and civilian agencies), but is integrated with the military Joint Command and General Staff Course. Likewise, the Higher Command Studies Course at the war college is attended by both senior civilian officials and military officers (Jermalavičius, 2018). The Canadian Forces College also offers professional development opportunities, such as the year-long National Security Program attended by senior civilian and military leaders, and the Canadian Security Studies Program attended by mid-level civilian and military leaders (Goldenberg, Arseneau, & Febbraro, 2018).

Directly educating military and civilian workforces about each other's roles, functions, cultures and unique management systems was also highlighted as important for fostering understanding and familiarity between military and civilian personnel. The *Canadian Armed Forces 101 for Civilians*, a course offered in the Canadian Department of National Defence (DND), provides civilian personnel with basic knowledge of the military culture and environment (Assistant Deputy Minister – Human Resources-Civilian, 2009, p. 2). Other structures for facilitating military–civilian understanding at all levels would also be useful, such as forums focused on military–civilian work culture and relations. In a review of military professionals and civilian executives, Stupak (1981) proposed developing a forum and intergroup meetings to provide military and civilian executives an opportunity to discuss similarities and differences in their leadership approaches, ways to enhance their working relations and address stereotypes and misperceptions. Although this review was conducted a number of years ago, the findings in this report suggest the recommendation still has value.

The optimal time to begin fostering military-civilian familiarity and understanding among personnel in defence organisations is at the start of employment, as induction and socialization can play a key role in intergroup understanding. In their study of an army logistics unit in the United Kingdom, where military personnel were the minority, Shaw and James-Yates (2018) showed that induction promoted better cultural understanding, dispelled initial stereotypes, and enhanced cohesion and feelings of inclusion. Several military interviewees at KFOR recommended orientation or on-boarding experiences to teach incoming civilians about the military organisational culture, systems, chain of command, and communication styles (Goldenberg et al., 2018). As noted above, the Canadian DND provides such an orientation course and guide to all new civilian employees, which includes information about the military culture and the distinct organisational dynamics of employment in a mixed military–civilian setting and explains military terminology, rank structure, and chain of command.

3.2 Shared Identity as an Enabler of Military-Civilian Personnel Collaboration

Research on group and organizational identity indicates that diverse workforces require a common *superordinate identity* (e.g., One Defence Team) that also incorporates strong *unique subgroup identities* (e.g., as

military personnel or defence civilians) to foster feelings of equality, identity, and organisational commitment (Adams, Flear, Brown, Thomson, & McPhail, 2012). Some defence organisations have introduced concepts meant to foster super-ordinate military–civilian identities, such as *Whole Force Concept* (UK) and *One Defence Team* (Sweden). Clearly communicating super-ordinate goals that both groups can share (e.g., the Canadian motto “One vision, one mission, one team”) are also likely to contribute to the formation of a super-ordinate identity.

Creating a sense of shared identity between military and civilian co-workers in defence organisations can be challenging. Military personnel tend to have a strong, salient, and visible collective identity that is clearly distinct from their nonprofessional identities in the civilian world and at the same time is closely aligned with the primary purpose of the defence establishment. Civilians, on the other hand, have less clearly defined and more diffuse identities as defence civilians, and their functions within defence are often characterized as supportive or secondary to military functions. According to social identity theory, the weaker social identity of civilians, especially when operating alongside the stronger and more distinctive identity of their military counterparts, can lead to in-group and out-group stereotypes and conflict. It may therefore be important for defence organisations to foster defence civilian identities that match their military co-workers’ in addition to a super-ordinate organisational identity shared by both. Promoting concepts such as *One Defence Team* is an initial step. Consistently supporting this shared sense of identity through organisational communications that emphasize this common identity and highlight common values and shared objectives will help to support cultural transformation in this regard (Goldenberg, Dean, & Adams, 2015).

3.3 Importance of Leadership Emphasis on Effective Military-Civilian Collaboration

It is important for senior leaders to play an active role in emphasizing the value and importance of both military and civilian workforces and explicitly endorsing military-civilian collaboration within defence organisations. As discussed above, this includes organisational communications, but should be extended to other mechanisms for integrating this mindset into the organisational culture. One such set of integrating mechanisms may include leadership approaches and styles. Research and theory on diversity in work groups and organisation demonstrates that leaders provide the social cues, norms, and meanings that shape the organisational culture and its behaviour. Different leadership approaches and styles can enhance or minimize the effects of diversity, and diversity is more likely to lead to positive outcomes when the organisational culture emphasizes integration and inclusion (Ely & Thomas, 2001; John, 2006). The role of leaders is recognized as fundamental to creating an organisational culture of inclusion. Research on diversity and leadership highlights the importance of considering the different approaches and styles of leadership among diverse workgroups and how these different ways of leading affect the degree to which personnel feel valued and included in the organisation (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Cheung & Halpern, 2010;). Thus, leaders should take proactive steps to build a bridge between team members of various backgrounds, foster inclusivity, and actively ensure a cooperative and supportive environment for all members, which will facilitate positive workplace dynamics that result in better job satisfaction, performance, and retention (Nishii & Mayer, 2008).

The Canadian DND and Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) provide a positive example in this regard. The Canada First Defence Strategy, a high-level strategic document aimed at DND/CAF members at all levels, states that a first-class, modern military depends on its members working “in partnership with the knowledgeable and responsive personnel of the Department of National Defence” (National Defence, 2009, p. 3). High-level leaders also emphasize the role and value of both military and civilian personnel in their organisational messages to personnel. In 2012, for example, at the end of a particularly challenging year, the Minister and Associate Minister of National Defence wrote in a holiday message to all personnel, “We wish to extend our gratitude to everyone in the Canadian Army, the Royal Canadian Air Force, the Royal Canadian Navy and the DND. Each and every member of the Defence family embraced this challenging year with the continued strength and passion that Canadians have come to expect from this outstanding team.” Similarly, the Chief of Defence Staff and Chief Warrant Officer wrote in a note to all DND/CAF personnel that “together, the members of the Defence Team have continued to uphold the finest traditions of service

before self and delivering excellence in operations.” Further, they explicitly reached out to say, “To our civilian colleagues, we express our deepest admiration for your tremendous contributions to the successes of the Defence Team. 2012 has been a year marked by uncertainty and change, and through it all you have relentlessly continued the critical work needed for mission success” (Goldenberg & Islam, 2012).

3.4 Organizational Fairness and Equality

Despite the high degree of integration and interaction among many military and civilian personnel, they are governed by separate personnel management systems, and thus have distinct terms of employment, performance appraisal systems, pay structures, and retirement plans. The differences in military and civilian management and rewards can lead to perceptions of organisational unfairness, which according to our research can stem from at least two sources: (a) inequality in terms of treatment and rewards between military and civilian co-workers or, (b) for civilians, the disparity between the benefits and rewards available in defence organisations and those available in non-military contexts or other government departments (e.g., effects on career development and training opportunities).

One of the five most common issues reported in response to the MCPS open-ended survey question regarding the main challenges of working in a mixed military-civilian environment was unfairness or inequality, particularly for civilian respondents across the nations. Issues discussed under this theme included perceived lack of fairness in terms of working hours, pay, procedures, professional development and career advancement, as well as other policy-related issues. Moreover, when survey respondents were asked to indicate the most important factors for establishing and maintaining positive military-civilian work relations, both military and civilian personnel across the nations frequently emphasized the importance of ensuring fairness and equality, including fairness regarding workload, pay, training opportunities, and recognition.

Similarly, Kelty (2018) noted that United States military personnel’s social comparisons with civilian co-workers regarding benefits and costs of employment had significant, albeit indirect, negative effects on retention attitudes (despite service members’ overall positive perceptions regarding the professionalism and abilities of the civilians with whom they worked). Mastroianni (2018) discussed the significant disadvantages of civilian scholars working within the military educational system when compared with the civilian academy. Similar issues, with respect to unfairness or inequality regarding retirement, compensation, health care, or other workplace benefits, were also identified for several countries in this report, including Belgium (Resteigne, 2018), the Netherlands (Andres & Soeters, 2018), and the United States (Peck & Mastroianni, 2018).

The MCPS confirmed that a large proportion of civilians across the nations indicated that working in a military context has negative effects on their career development. About half of civilian survey respondents indicated that career opportunities are affected by working in an organisation with military personnel and three-fifths indicated that career progression is limited because the best positions tend to go to military personnel and that the defence organisation offers fewer advancement opportunities as compared to other government departments. With respect to training, most civilian personnel across the nations indicated that the training and professional development opportunities provided to military personnel make sense given their roles. However, about half of civilians indicated that civilian employees receive fewer training opportunities than their military counterparts and a third indicated that training for military members decreases the training available to civilian employees.

3.4.1 Explicit Focus on Fairness and Transparency

Military and civilian personnel fall under different human resource policies, but in working closely together they observe each other’s benefits and rewards. Further, many civilian employees across nations indicated that they believe that working in a military context may have negative effects on their career progression and training opportunities. Much research indicates that perceptions of organisational fairness may affect

employees' actions and reactions within organisations. Higher perceptions of organisational fairness are related to higher organisational citizenship behaviours, task performance, job satisfaction, commitment and trust in leaders (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Kim & Leung, 2007), whereas low perceptions of organisational fairness are related to higher turnover intentions, organisational deviance, withdrawal, psychological strain and depression (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009; Suurd, 2009), which is consistent with analyses of the MCPS data.

Ensuring equitable treatment, to the degree possible considering different personnel systems and operational requirements, is important for defence organisations and for managers of both civilian and military personnel. One particularly noteworthy example that focuses explicitly on organisational fairness is the Estonian Defence Force Strategy covering the period of 2013-2017, one of the key tenets of which is value-based management emphasizing cooperation, equal treatment, and fair compensation. For example, with respect to remuneration, this strategy calls for equal treatment, transparency and comparability, enabling military and civilian personnel to compare their remuneration within their categories, between different personnel categories in the EDF, and between the EDF personnel and those in other government departments and private sector (Jermalavičius, 2018). Strategies that place primacy on fairness and equitable treatment may be useful not only for improving military-civilian personnel fairness perceptions, also but for improving such perceptions of organizational fairness in general.

In some cases, perceived unfairness is based on partial observations and erroneous assumptions or poor understanding of the different personnel systems and operational requirements of military and civilian members. Research on organisational fairness shows that *procedural fairness* (the perceived fairness of the *processes* used to allocate outcomes and resources) is generally more influential than *distributive fairness* (perceived fairness of the *distribution* of outcomes and resources themselves) on employee and organisational outcomes (Cohen-Charash & Spector, 2001), emphasizing that clear communication and transparency is beneficial for dispelling misperceptions and enhancing perceptions of organizational fairness.

3.5 The Military Rotational Cycle and Optimizing Continuity

The military rotational cycle—postings and deployments—is an operational requirement that can have unintended and often negative effects on civilian personnel who are likely to remain in the same positions for longer durations, as shown across a range of settings in our research. Issues related to the military rotational cycle were frequently reported as a challenge associated with working in a military organisation, according to the MCPS. On average, across nations, almost 65% of civilian survey respondents indicated that the posting cycle disrupted productivity in their workplace, and over half indicated that the rotational cycle of military managers and supervisors had disrupted their work. Civilians also frequently noted this issue in the MCPS's open-ended question asking them to identify the main challenges associated with working in a mixed military-civilian context, noting problems related to frequent turnover of co-workers due to postings, frequent absences, changes in supervisors and styles of supervision, and poor timing of postings. On average, across nations, this issue represented 16.4% of all comments in response to this question for civilians, though only 3.1% of all comments from military personnel.

On the contrary, military personnel frequently noted that one of the main benefits of working in a military-civilian work environment was the stability, continuity, and maintenance of corporate knowledge provided by civilian personnel. In fact, 20.7% of all comments made by military participants in response to the MCPS question asking them to identify the most positive aspects of working in a military-civilian environment was stability and work continuity provided by their civilian co-workers. Conversely, only 3.8% of civilian survey respondents' comments related to this theme.

At the strategic level, the Organizational Culture Study at NATO SHAPE indicated that relatively large minorities of both military (27%) and civilian (43%) respondents believed that military and civilian rotational cycles reduce performance (Goldenberg et al., 2018). Similarly, about a quarter of military

personnel (28%) and a third of civilian personnel (34%) believed that the different rotation cycles of military and civilians need to be aligned. As such, it is recommended that alignment of rotational cycles be afforded greater consideration in the context of organisational planning. As in national and multinational operational settings, civilians at SHAPE reported serving for a much longer period (an average of almost 9 years) than their military counterparts (who served an average of almost 1.5 years). Interestingly, civilian personnel at SHAPE were also more likely than their military counterparts to indicate having received appropriate training to accomplish their taskings and responsibilities at SHAPE and being well prepared for performing their roles at SHAPE, possibly stemming from their relatively longer tenures in the organisation.

Taken together, various effects related to the military rotational cycle and the associated continuity provided by civilian personnel were salient findings. Of course, postings and deployments are an operational requirement for military personnel and are not likely to change in the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, some additional efforts might ameliorate the unintended consequences of rotational cycles: Efforts should be made to enhance workplace continuity and knowledge management, optimal handover of tasks/roles, and consistency in management practices (when it is a supervisor that is rotated). In certain instances, it may also be beneficial to “civilianize” some key positions where continuity and longer tenure is particularly important.

3.6 Tools and Policies for Supervisors

It is necessary for senior leaders to emphasize the importance and value of military-civilian collaboration, but the work of RTG-226 indicates that the importance of such collaboration must be emphasized at all levels, including by those in direct supervisory roles. Indeed, the MCPS as well as case study results highlighted concerns about civilian personnel supervised by military managers (and vice versa, although this occurs much less frequently), including understanding and application of appropriate conditions of employment or terms of service and personnel appraisal systems, and full appreciation of roles, skills, and abilities. Further, the different leadership styles of military and civilian managers are well recognized, especially the more command-centric style of military leadership predicated on the expectation of compliance to the chain of command versus the more consensual and participative leadership approach of civilian managers (e.g., Hill, 2007; Van Vainen, 2007). Recognizing these issues, some defence organisations provide important resources to facilitate the optimal management of civilian personnel by military managers, and vice-versa.

Some nations provide training courses and materials developed for civilian managers who supervise civilian personnel and vice versa. Civilian supervisors are helped to understand environmental factors pertaining to managing military personnel, issues related to chain of command, the management implications of the military career management cycle and procedures, as well as military terminology. Similarly, some nations offer or mandate that military supervisors of civilians be trained in the range of human resources issues specific to managing civilians (e.g., staffing, classification, labour relations) and a manager’s responsibilities in supervising civilians. The United Kingdom Defence Academy provides a course to support military personnel who have line-management over civilian personnel. The course covers topics such as recruitment, performance management, and development (Defence Academy, 2016). Another course for civilian personnel teaches them to write appraisal reports for military personnel (Defence Academy, 2016). Likewise, the United States has a mandatory class for military members who supervise GS civilians but does not require civilians to take a similar one to supervise military personnel (Peck & Mastroianni, 2018). In Canada, all civilian managers and supervisors of military personnel must take the Managing Military Personnel Course, which helps civilian supervisors understand environmental factors pertaining to military personnel, the roles and responsibilities and issues related to chain of command, the management implications of the CAF career management cycle and procedures, as well as military terminology. Similarly, the Managing Civilian Human Resources Course is mandatory for all military and civilian managers and supervisors of civilian DND employees, and is aimed at familiarizing these supervisors with the human resources requirements related to civilians (Goldenberg & Islam, 2012).

At NATO KFOR, the manual *Civilian Staff Rules (CSRs) for HQ Balkans* was developed to assist military personnel deployed to KFOR to manage civilians under their command. How common such tools are in other multinational operational settings is unknown and the field study at NATO KFOR revealed that this manual was rarely consulted, and usually only once a problem has already occurred. Interviewees at KFOR emphasized that in multinational contexts such tools and training may be especially important for military personnel from defence organisations with few civilians or who are new to civilian human resource management (Goldenberg et al., 2018). In Estonia, legal advisors of the EDF units, whose main role is to advise military commanders on the Law of Armed Conflict, are also responsible for advising them on civilian workforce regulations (Jermalavičius, 2018).

Some nations have also created policies and directives aimed at military managers of civilians and vice versa. The CAF has issued Defence Administrative Orders and Directives (DAODs) that apply to both military and civilian managers of civilian employees. In particular, DAOD 5005-0, *Civilian Human Resources Management* (Department of National Defence, 2003a) applies to all DND and CAF personnel who manage DND employees and must ensure the following: the alignment of civilian human resources management plans, policies and programs with departmental priorities and operational needs; a governance structure that defines civilian human resources management roles, responsibilities and accountabilities in DND and the CAF; functional direction that informs senior managers in the execution of their civilian human resources management responsibilities; coordination mechanisms to ensure appropriate planning and execution of policies and programs; communication mechanisms to promote full consultation on a wide range of civilian human resources management issues to be responsive to the requirements of senior managers and maintain positive labour–management and employee relations; and the measurement of DND and CAF performance in civilian human resources management. The creation of these resources recognizes the potential complexity of managing civilians in a defence organisation. Preliminary results of this RTG support the conclusion that it is beneficial for supervisors and managers to be aware of, and to make use of, these important resources to facilitate the management of civilian (or military) personnel under their supervision.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Civilian and military personnel work side by side in most defence organisations, creating a unique group dynamic that allows defence organisations to draw on the expertise of both military and civilian personnel. Nonetheless, military–civilian integration in defence organisations presents a very unique type of diversity: although they often work closely together, military and civilian personnel differ from one another in ways that may affect collaboration between them. The findings of NATO STO HFM RTG-226 revealed that most nations simply do not focus on this key issue of human resources, and those that do, often do so in piecemeal ways. With that said, taken together across the nations and contexts examined, there are a wide variety of tools and some initiatives undertaken to enhance military-civilian personnel integration and collaboration. Collectively, these initiatives align with the findings presented here in supporting intergroup familiarity and understanding, common goal and identity formation, effective intergroup management and supervision, equitable treatment, and workplace continuity. Appropriately combined, these strategies and practices could be developed into a comprehensive approach to managing military-civilian personnel integration in national and even multinational defence organisations. The work of this RTG indicates that such an approach is vital and that its development and implementation would improve personnel outcomes, such as organisational commitment, cohesion, and retention, as well as organisational outcomes. Indeed, these findings suggest that military-civilian personnel management should be considered in the formulation of general personnel strategies in defence establishments and missions (e.g., personnel retention strategies and diversity strategies).

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