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ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND TURNOVER: UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S EXIT FROM THE CANADIAN FORCES

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ABSTRACT

Women's exit from employment has been explained in relation to their individual characteristics and family status, but little attention has been given to the relationship between women's experience in employment and their decision to leave. Attrition data indicates that women become even more likely to leave the Canadian Forces, relative to their male counterparts, after 10 years of service. A qualitative approach was used to explore the relationship between organizational environment and exit among women who left the Canadian Forces after serving more than 10, but less than 20 years. The analysis, which is based on interviews with 23 women, suggests that although organizational policies and regulations are evolving in attempts to integrate women, the experiences of women *as women* within a male-dominated organization contribute significantly to the attrition of women from that environment.

RÉSUMÉ

On a tenté d'expliquer la sortie des femmes de la vie professionnelle par rapport à leurs caractéristiques et à leur situation familiale, mais on s'est peu intéressé au rapport entre l'expérience des femmes au travail et leur décision de quitter la vie professionnelle. Les données sur le taux d'attrition des effectifs révèlent que les femmes ont encore plus de chances de quitter les Forces canadiennes que leurs homologues masculins après 10 années de services. On a utilisé une méthode qualitative pour étudier le rapport entre le milieu organisationnel et le départ des femmes qui ont quitté les Forces canadiennes après avoir accumulé plus de 10 mais moins de 20 années de services. L'analyse, qui est basée sur des entrevues réalisées auprès de 23 femmes, incite à croire que même si les politiques et règlements organisationnels évoluent dans le sens d'une intégration des femmes, les expériences des femmes en tant *que femmes* dans une organisation dominée par les hommes contribuent de manière appréciable au taux d'attrition des femmes de ce milieu.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: LABOUR FORCE SEGREGATION AND WOMEN'S ATTRITION

The 1985 Canadian Abella Commission report on equality in employment stated that "...despite a decade of equal opportunity programs, 62 percent of women [in the Canadian labour force] are still to be found in only three occupational categories - clerical [33.2 percent], sales [10.0 percent], and service [18.8 percent]. These are the same general categories into which they were segregated in 1901" (Calzavara 1985: 245-6). By 1991 women were "still overwhelmingly slotted into industries and occupations characterized by low pay, low recognized skill requirements, low productivity, and low prospects for advancement" (Armstrong and Armstrong 1994: 15). In 1992 women's wages had risen to 69.6 percent (from 67.6 in 1991) of men's wages (The Globe and Mail, 21 January 1993). It is estimated that occupational segregation by sex accounts for between 10 and 15 percent of this overall wage gap between men and women in Canada (Robb 1987: 446).

Despite the inroads that women have made into male-dominated occupations, they are still predominantly employed in female-dominated areas. Male-dominated is defined as an environment or occupation which is comprised of fewer than 30 percent females or more than 70 percent males (Jacobs 1989; Tancred and Czarnocki 1993; Wenk and Rosenfeld 1992).

If women are increasingly entering new occupational areas, why are the proportions of women in male-dominated areas not increasing accordingly? In a study of sex-segregation and women's careers, Jerry Jacobs refers to the "revolving-door" metaphor and suggests that "gross mobility far exceeds the overall net change in opportunities for women" (1989: 4). That is, his research reveals that for every 11 women who enter male-dominated occupations, 10 leave to pursue employment in another area. Women who leave male-dominated employment are more likely to move into female-dominated or sex-neutral areas rather than move back into male-dominated employment (Jacobs 1989; Wenk and Rosenfeld 1992).

Women have been employed in the Canadian military, a predominantly male domain, on a continuing basis for over 30 years. Their numbers have grown from a fixed ceiling of 1500 in 1965 (Simpson et al 1979), which constituted approximately 1.4 percent of the total force, to over 8000, constituting 10.9 percent of the total force by 1992 (Director Personnel Information Systems, National Defence Headquarters - DPIS). Initially employed primarily in administrative and support services, by 1992 trained women were employed in 127 out of 137 military occupations (DPIS), and were serving in all operational environments and roles, except on board submarines.[1] Although the percentage of

[1]Six of the occupations with no trained women (Naval Electronics Technician, Marine Engineering Artificer, Clearance Diver Technician, Construction and Maintenance

women and the roles which women perform have steadily expanded since the early 1970s, women still comprise only .6 to 30.0 percent of all occupational groupings (Tanner 1991).[2]

Women have consistently demonstrated higher attrition rates than their male counterparts. For example, women and men's overall attrition rates were 23 and 13 percent, respectively, in 1975.[3] These attrition figures represent a Female:Male attrition ratio of 1.78:1 for 1975.[4] A close look at attrition rates into the 1980s indicates that attrition rates have dropped since the 1970s; however, the general gender differences hold even over low attrition periods (Tanner 1992). There is an exception to this

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Technician, Field Engineer Equipment Operator and Flight Engineer (Officer)), require members to qualify in other related occupations before entering that occupation; two occupations have women in training (Armour Officer and Materials Technician); and, Roman Catholic Chaplain will not have women as long as women cannot become priests within the church. Women have not, as yet, participated in the Music Officer occupation (DPIS 1992; Tanner 1991).

[2]See Tables 2 and 3, chapter 3, for percentage data on women in all occupational groupings.

[3]Percentages calculated by dividing overall numbers who left in 1975 by overall strength Dec 74/Jan 75. Raw data provided by DPIS.

[4]The calculation of an attrition ratio (female attrition - 23% / 13% - male attrition) provides a means of comparing the likelihood of female attrition, relative to their male counterparts, at various points in their career, as well as during chronological calendar years. In this example women were 1.78 times more likely to leave the Canadian Forces than their male counterparts in 1975. Attrition rates, in lieu of absolute percentages, are used as a basis of comparison throughout this investigation.

tendency during the first three years of service when male non-commissioned members have demonstrated higher attrition rates than female non-commissioned members.

Attrition rates for both females and males decrease considerably after 10 years of service and before members reach 20 years of service. The overall reduction in attrition rates between 10 and 20 years of service is predictable, as members who are serving under 'Intermediate Engagement' contracts (career status) become entitled to a military pension upon completion of 20 years of continuous service. Conversion to this contract also provides opportunity for conversion to an 'indefinite period of service' contract, for selected members. It is interesting to note, however, that it is during this period that the ratio of female to male attrition rates is generally the greatest.[5] Average attrition rates for the 1980 to 1991 time frame, for members with 10 to 20 years of service, indicate that the female to male attrition ratio for officers is 1.8:1, and 1.6:1 (Table 1) for non-commissioned members.[6]

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[5]The only exception is for the *female to male officer* attrition ratio which is the greatest in the first three years of commissioned service (see Table 1).

[6]Officer data are based on years of commissioned service, and non-commissioned member data are based on actual years of service. This reflects the differences in officer and non-commissioned member training plans as well as terms of service which each fall under. Officers are entitled to a gratuity upon completion of 9 years of commissioned service if they do not continue into a career status contract leading to a

It is, therefore, of particular concern that although women, overall, are more likely to leave the organization than their male counterparts, the difference is the most marked at this point in their careers. Not only are these women well on their way to receiving a significant lifetime pension, but they have overcome many of the difficulties which arise during early periods of service, such as extended periods away from home for training, the challenges presented by the training itself, and the period of adjustment to a unique organization. In addition, the organization loses over 10 years of training and experience which these women have gained.

TABLE 1 - AVERAGE ATTRITION RATES 1980-1991 AND FEMALE:MALE (F:M) ATTRITION RATIOS BY YEARS OF SERVICE / YEARS OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE, GENDER AND OFFICER / NON-COMMISSIONED (NCM) MEMBER STATUS♠

	FEMALE OFFICER	MALE OFFICER	F:M RATIO	FEMALE NCM	MALE NCM	F:M RATIO
0-3 YR	5.8%	2.8%	2.07:1	10.7%	11.2%	1.04:1♣
4-9 YR	9.46%	5.6%	1.75:1	7.4%	5.6%	1.32:1
10-20 YR	4.0%	2.2%	1.81:1	4.5%	2.8%	1.60:1

♠ Percentage data taken from Tanner 1992
♣ M:F Ratio

As we move into the 1990s, the premature exit of women will significantly impact the continued integration of women

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pension; in addition, officers are not commissioned until their training, which may include several years of university and/or occupation is completed. Non-commissioned members sign an obligatory three year contract upon enrolment which includes time spent in training.

into the organization. As indicated in a 1992 report on women in the Canadian Forces,

> "Although employment policy changes began in the late 60's and early 70's, the effects of these changes were not felt until the mid to late 70's for NCMs [non-commissioned members] and the early 80's for officers" (Tanner 1992a: 2).

That is, by 1981 women comprised 7.6 percent (Department of National Defence 1982) of the Canadian Forces, numbering over 5000 non-commissioned members and over 800 officers (DPIS). The women who joined during the late 70's and early 80's provide the first real potential for increasing numbers at higher rank levels, and full integration will depend upon the extent to which women are able to achieve higher rank and experience levels within various occupations and environments. This cannot be accomplished without increasing the number of years that women remain employed within the organization.

This research project was undertaken with the goal of explaining why women become increasingly more likely than their male counterparts to leave the Canadian Forces prior to 20 years of service, and how women's experience within the organization contributes to greater understanding of their premature exit. To explore the relationship between women and the organization, it is useful to look more closely at the history of women's experience in the Canadian Forces and the policy developments which have allowed their expanded involvement to date. Once women have been located,

in terms of organizational needs for 'womanpower' and Canadian government directives guiding how and where they will be employed, the questions and issues surrounding their premature exit from the organization will be addressed.

CHAPTER 2

WOMEN IN THE CANADIAN FORCES: INCREASING NUMBERS AND EXPANDING ROLES

Women have been participants in the military history of Canada since the early wars of nation building which took place between New France and New England. In 1692, for example, 14 year old Madeleine de Verchères led a defence of the fort at Verchères, New France against a Mohawk attack for two days during the early fur trading wars between the French and the Americans (Morton 1992; Prentice et al 1988). The heroic act of Laura Secord in warning British officers of an impending American attack during the War of 1812 is, perhaps, the most documented contribution of a woman to military activity in early North America.[7] It was not, however, until 1885 that women were recognized for the first time as members of a military force in Canada. The purpose of the following discussion is to provide an overview of the participation of women in the Canadian military, as their numbers have increased and their roles have expanded. The discussion will also trace changes in organizational policy which have accompanied the expansion of women's role and responded to increased demands for gender equality.

The first recognized female members of the military were nurses. Nursing sisters (as military nurses were

[7]See, for example, Prentice et al 1988.

traditionally called) took to the field with Canadian troops and were engaged in a theatre of active operations during the Northwest Rebellion in 1885 (Robinson 1985: 100). Within 15 years, nurses were once again supporting the military; following Canada's call for volunteers to participate in the South African War (Boer War), the first contingent of Canadian nurses arrived at Cape Town in December 1899. The third contingent of nurses to arrive in South Africa were recognized as an integral part of the Canadian Army Medical Corps, and the Canadian Army Nursing Service was formed in 1901 (Chenier 1984). Nurses became a permanent part of the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps in 1904 when they were admitted to the military reserve. Members of the nursing service were admitted to the regular force in 1906 (Pierson 1986).

The First World War, once again, witnessed a demand for military personnel, and the first organization of women in a military capacity in Canada, with the exception of nurses. In the event that they might be required to serve as home guards, Canadian women organized "paramilitary groups, outfitted themselves in military-style uniforms, and undertook training in military drill, rifle shooting, first aid and vehicle maintenance" (Chenier 1984). A total of 2,852 women also served as nurses with the Canadian Army Medical Corps between 1914 and 1918, the majority serving

overseas (Chenier 1984; DHist: File 72/99).[8] In addition, women were employed in large numbers in munitions factories while rural women assumed a large part of the farm work (Prentice et al 1988).

During the Second World War, another chapter in the history of Canadian women opened and closed - between 1939 and 1944 their participation in the Canadian labour force rose from 600,000 to over 1,000,000. 'Womanpower' was used to relieve the shortage of 'manpower' which threatened both industry and the armed forces (Pierson 1986). In July 1941, the first armed service to open its doors to women, other than nurses, was the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). During the war years over 16,000 women served in the RCAF Women's Division (WD) as clerks, cooks, drivers, parachute riggers, wireless operators, photographers, airframe mechanics and other related tasks (Chenier 1984; Pierson 1986), with peak strength reaching 15,147 in January 1944 (DHist: File 72/99). In August 1941 the formation of the Canadian Women's Army Corps (CWAC) was authorized and over 20,000 women served primarily as office, laundry and kitchen workers (Chenier 1984) with peak strength reaching 14,512 in April 1945 (DHist: File 72/99). Trades such as mechanics, ordinance, and gun operations did not open up for women

[8]DHist: File 72/99, indicates that 21 nursing sisters were casualties of the First World War, while Chenier (1984) indicates that 47 nursing sisters lost their lives while on active service.

until close to the end of the war (Chenier 1984). The Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service (WRCNS) was established in July 1942, and over 7,000 women subsequently served as clerks, telephone operators, signalwomen, operations room plotters and in other required areas. The WRCNS reached a peak strength of 5,947 in February 1945. By the end of the war, 4,480 nursing sisters had also served - 3,656 with the Royal Canadian Army Medical Corps, 343 with the Royal Canadian Naval Medical Service and 481 with the Royal Canadian Air Force Medical Branch (Chenier 1984). Women could enrol in the women's services if they were between the ages of 18 and 45 (initially 21 and 41) and possessed a minimum grade eight education. Married women were also enroled; however, women with dependent children were not eligible for service (Pierson 1986: 113). Although some women were afforded an opportunity to serve overseas and to be employed in occupations previously performed only by men, Alison Prentice et al note that the sexual division of labour, for the most part, remained in tact. In March 1945, for example, 6,000 CWAC tradeswomen[9] were surveyed and 62 percent were working as clerks (Prentice et al 1988).

During the Second World War nearly 50,000 women had served in the women's services of the Canadian armed forces

[9]Occupational categories for NCMs in the military have commonly been referred to as trades, thus 'tradeswomen' refers to all non-commissioned female members.

(Pierson 1986). The end of the war meant that, like many other Canadian women who had gained employment outside the home, their services were no longer required. In 1946 the CWAC, the RCAF WD, and the WRCNS were disbanded. Many believed that in a time of great need Canadian women had joined the services out of a sense of patriotism, but continued service on the part of women was not considered.[10] Vocational training programs, set up by the Canadian Department of Labour for ex-servicewomen, emphasized pre-war traditional roles as most post-war planners believed that "for most women the primary role should be the dual one of wife and mother, a role not to be combined, except in the direst of circumstances, with paid employment outside of the home" (Pierson and Cohen 1984: 223).

Despite these predominant social ideals, women were once again recruited for military service after Canada signed the North Atlantic Treaty in 1949, and Canadian military personnel were committed to the Korean War effort in 1950 (Simpson et al 1979). In 1951 female reserve

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[10]For discussion of considerations leading to the decision to demobilize the WRCNS, for example, see Gilbert Norman Tucker. 1952. *The Naval Service of Canada: Its Official History. Vol II. Activities on Shore During the Second World War*. Ottawa: King's Printer (published under authority of the Minister of National Defence): 482-3. This discussion also appears in Rosamond 'Fiddy' Greer. 1983. *The Girls of the King's Navy*. Victoria, British Columbia: Sono Nis Press: 147-8. Female and male officers in the air force and army proposed that women be included in the post-war services, but cabinet did not approve the proposal (Pierson 1986).

components were established for the Army and the Navy, while a regular force women's component was approved for the Air Force (Greer 1983; Simpson et al 1979). Initially, 4,000 positions were authorized for women in the RCAF and by July 1953 over 3,000 women were serving.[11] Those women serving in the reserve components of the army and navy served on a full time basis under the terms of a temporary contract, usually a three year contract. The Korean conflict ended in 1953, and in 1955 the authorized establishment for women in the RCAF was reduced to 2,500. In January 1963, the recruitment of women into the RCAF was suspended; in December 1960 approximately 2,600 airwomen continued to serve, and by 1966 their numbers had been reduced to approximately 530. (DHist: File 78/517).

In 1954 and 1955, the Royal Canadian Army and the Royal Canadian Navy also began recruiting women into the ranks of their regular forces (Simpson et al 1979). The proposed enrolment of women was set at 400 for the navy (365 enlisted, 35 officers), and 90 for the army (DHist: File 75/553). In 1965 a government decision was made to continue to employ women in Canada's armed forces and a fixed ceiling of 1,500, which would include women in all three services,

[11]Actual estimate of maximum numbers reached is 3,133 (DHist: File 78/517. *History of the RCAF (Women's Division) 1941 - 1971*).

was established (Simpson et al 1979).[12] This fixed ceiling remained in effect within the three services until unification in 1968,[13] and within the Canadian Armed Forces into the early 1970s. During this time women were assigned primarily to administrative and support services.[14]

Although women had now been employed on a continuous basis in the regular components of Canada's air, land and sea environments, since 1951, 1954 and 1955, respectively, their continued recruitment and employment was dependent upon the military's need for 'womanpower'. Additionally, only single women were enroled, and women were required to take their release when they became pregnant. Servicewomen were also released when they were married; however, exceptions to this regulation were made. In the RCAF, for example, an amendment made to the regulations in December 1953 indicated that "An airwoman who has attained her trade grouping and who does not desire her release after she

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[12]In 1966 the total strength of Canada's armed forces was 107,000 (DHist: File 86/330); women would, therefore, comprise approximately 1.4 percent of the total strength.

[13]The Canadian Forces Reorganization Bill, which unified the RCA, RCN and RCAF into one service, The Canadian Armed Forces, was passed by the House of Commons in April 1967. Unification formally took effect on 1 July 1968 (Morton 1992).

[14]From the time of unification until 1971, women in the Canadian Forces were employed in the following trades: Radio Operator, Administrative Clerk, Nursing Assistant, X-ray Technician, Accounts and Finance Clerk, Personnel and Defence Co-ordinator, Teletype Operator, Radar Plotter, Operating Room Assistant, Dental Assistant and Supply Technician (DHist: File 78/517).

marries is not to be released unless it is considered that her marriage will interfere with her usefulness to the service" (National Archives: File #393-98). A full range of statistical data on the release of women from the Canadian Forces from 1951 to 1971 is not available; however, government records estimate that between 1951 and February 1954, 6 airwomen were released for 'misconduct', 266 were released for 'inefficiency', 34 were released voluntarily on compassionate grounds, 56 were released as 'medically unfit', (which included pregnancy), and 1351 were released as unsuitable for reasons other than misconduct, inefficiency or medical unfitness. The latter category included release for marriage until October 1952 when a separate release category was established for marriage; between 1952 and 1954, this included 307 women. Estimates also indicate that the release of airwomen peaked with 1137 releases between January 1953 and February 1954, as Canada's involvement in the Korean conflict drew to an end (DHist: File 78/517).

The report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, which was published in 1970, marked a turning point for women in the Canadian military. The commission made 167 recommendations for changes considered "necessary to provide a climate of equal opportunity for women in Canada" and six of these pertained to women in the Canadian Forces. Specifically, the commission sought standardization of

enrolment criteria, equal pension benefits for women and men, the opportunity for women to attend Canadian Military Colleges, the opening of all trades and officer classifications to women, and the termination of regulations which prohibited the enrolment of married women and required the release of servicewomen on the birth of a child (DHist: File 78/517; Robinson 1988a; Simpson et al 1979). As of 1971, restrictions were removed from the enrolment of married women, women who gave birth to a child were no longer required to be released, women were enroled in the Regular Officer Training Plan (ROTP) which involved subsidization of a university degree at a civilian university, and the Defence Council directed that there would be no limitations on the employment of women "other than in the primary combat role, at some remote locations and at sea" (Simpson et al 1979).

A decision was also made to increase the number of women to a total of between 8,000 and 10,000 by 1981 (Public Service Canada 1974). By March 1974 there were 2,373 women in the Canadian Forces, employed in 33 of 95 trades. This represented an increase from 1.8 percent of the total force in 1970 (Tanner 1992) to approximately 3 percent of a total force of 81,000 (Public Service Canada 1974). Since 1971, new officer classifications opened to women included Aerospace Engineer, Communications/Electronics Engineer, Dental, Air Traffic Control, Air Weapons Control, Legal and

Logistics; new trades for non-commissioned servicewomen included Photographic Technician, Air Traffic Control Assistant, Military Police, Cook, Aero-Engine Technician, Air Frame Technician, Metals Technician, Machinist and Refinisher Technician. In addition, 88 women were enroled in university under government subsidized training plans[15] (Public Service Canada 1974). In 1975 amendments were made to the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act (CFSA), making pension contributions and benefits the same for women and men (Simpson et al 1979).

Roles for women in the Canadian Forces continued to expand and by 1978 women comprised 5.9 percent of the total force and were employed in 81 of 127 classifications and trades. Early in 1978 the Minister of Defence also announced that women would be considered for admission to Canadian Military Colleges[16] and in 1980 the first women entered military college undergraduate programs (Defence 1980; Simpson et al 1979).

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[15]Training plans included the Regular Officer Training Plan (ROTP), the University Training Plan for Officers (UTPO), the Medical Officer Training Plan (MOTP), the Dental Officer Training Plan (DOTP), the Dietetic Internship Training Plan (DITP), the Military Medical Training Plan (MMTP), the University Training Plan Men/Women (UTP(M)/(W)), and the Post RN University Training Plan (*Interaction* 1974).

[16]In 1978 there was already one female post-graduate student at Royal Military College (RMC) in Kingston and women were also attending the Canadian Forces Staff and National Defence Colleges, which are the Canadian centres of graduate studies in military science and generally considered as prerequisites for advancement to senior officer levels (Simpson et al 1979).

On 1 March 1978 the Canadian Human Rights Act was proclaimed, prohibiting discrimination in employment practices on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, marital status, family status, pardoned conviction and disability. Exceptions included 'bona fide' occupational requirements; that is, a job could be refused to a person who could not perform it "safely, efficiently and reliably" (Canadian Human Rights Commission). As a result of this act and the on-going evaluation of Canadian Forces occupations directed at expanding women's roles, the Servicewomen in Non-Traditional Environments and Roles (SWINTER) trials were conducted between 1979 and 1985. During this time period, female personnel from mixed gender occupations were introduced into previously all-male units in the land, air and sea environments, including on board ships, in near combat units and in isolated locations. The SWINTER trials included the monitoring of personnel performance in these environments as well as surveys which monitored the attitudes of personnel serving in the designated mixed gender units. However, as noted by LCol Shirley Robinson, "it was really the women who were on trial" (1988: 23). Following the SWINTER trials and as a result of ongoing legal proceedings and efforts of the Association for Women's Equity in the Canadian Forces

(AWECF),[17] women's roles continued to expand. The AWECF provided information to a 1985 parliamentary committee on equality rights which discussed the role of women in the Canadian Forces, and would also be involved in the 1989 Human Rights Tribunal proceedings on the role of women in the Canadian Forces. Subsequent to the 1985 parliamentary committee, a 1986 Canadian Forces Charter Task Force on Equality Issues, recommended further expansion of the roles of women and that a programme be developed to provide detailed policy guidance and leadership training concerning mixed-gender employment (Robinson 1988). By 1986, Canadian Forces policy stated that "all personnel would be eligible to serve in seven previously all-male classes of units", including Auxiliary Oil Replenishment Ships, Service Battalions, Field Ambulance Units, Maritime Patrol Squadrons, Maritime Recce Squadrons, Electronic Warfare Squadrons and Military Police Platoons. In addition, the previously all-male Airborne Electronic Sensor Operator and Preventative Medicine Technician occupations were designated mixed-gender (Lamerson 1987).

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[17]The Association for Women's Equity in the Canadian Forces (AWECF) was formed in 1985 by a group of primarily ex-servicewomen. The group felt that there was a need to address women's concerns from outside the Canadian Forces as service members are restricted from political activity on their own behalf by provisions under the National Defence Act. The Association's current membership, although primarily ex-servicewomen, also includes women and men who have not been service members, but support equality for women in the Canadian Forces.

Finally, a 1989 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that all trials of women in non-traditional roles were to cease and that women were to be fully integrated into all Canadian Forces roles, except service on submarines, during the following ten year period. The tribunal reasoned that "widespread prejudice against women prior to 1986" justified the ten year phase-in for full integration (Canadian Human Rights Advocate 1989: 1-3). As a result of the tribunal decision the Chief of the Defence Staff reviewed policies on liability to serve and in July 1989, it was announced to the Canadian Forces that, "all suitably-qualified men and women serving in the regular force are liable for service in any unit [except submarines]" (NDHQ 1989). In other words, as a result of the tribunal ruling, all women were now liable to serve in the new areas being opened, regardless of the areas in which women were required to serve when a woman enroled.[18] By early 1990 the Minister of National Defence had formed the Minister's Advisory Board on Women, which was given a mandate to advise and make recommendations on the progress of integration throughout the ten year period

[18]The liability of all women to serve in all new areas was considered somewhat controversial, as men who had joined previous to unification of the army, navy and air force, were not required to serve in operational environments other than those which they had enroled to serve in. An airman, for example, was not liable for service on board a ship or in an army field unit unless he signed a 'Consent to Serve' in all operational environments.

stipulated by the Human Rights Tribunal (NDHQ 1990).[19]

With greater emphasis on recruiting women, the number of women in the Canadian Forces has increased from a total of 2,703 in 1977 (Tanner and Walters 1990) to 8,778 in 1992 (DPIS). As the numbers of women have increased and women, overall, have been in the service for longer periods of time, the number and proportion of married women in the service has also increased. In 1990, married women accounted for 27 percent of female officers and 23 percent of female NCMs in the first three years of service, 43 percent of female officers and 50 percent of female NCMS with 4 to 9 years of service, and 52 percent of female officers and 59 percent of female NCMs with 10 to 20 years of service - overall, 46 percent of female officers and 50 percent of female NCMs were married in 1990 compared to 24 and 32 percent, respectively, in 1977 (Tanner and Walters 1990).

As the percentage of women participating in the Canadian Forces has grown from an overall percentage of 1.8 percent in 1970 (Tanner 1992) to 10.9 percent in 1992 (DPIS), the focus has predominantly been on the equality of recruiting procedures and the expanding role of women within the Canadian Forces. Additionally, programs and policies have been developed to address women's employment issues.

[19]The board is comprised of seven civilian members - five women and two men, including two (1 female, 1 male) retired Canadian Forces officers (NDHQ 1990).

Women have been entitled to maternity benefits and associated medical care since 1971, and are currently entitled to 17 weeks of leave without pay (LWOP) for maternity purposes at the equivalent of 93 percent of their pay rate.[20] Additional leave without pay following maternity leave may be requested, but it is not an entitlement.[21] Since 1992, maternity policy further allows a servicewoman who does not elect to take the 17 week maternity leave, to be granted sick leave (at full pay) for the period during which she is, in the opinion of a medical officer, unfit for duty (Canadian Forces Administrative Order 56-29/Queen's Regulations and Orders 16.16).[22] Servicemember spouses may also be considered, upon request,

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[20]Following the standard two week waiting period under Canadian unemployment regulations, women are entitled to 15 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits. In addition, the Canadian Forces maternity allowance (MATA) provides the difference between unemployment benefits and 93 percent of the member's weekly rate of pay for 17 weeks, to servicewomen who have served a minimum of six months before the LWOP commences, and who agree to serve a minimum of six months following the LWOP period (Canadian Forces Administrative Order 56-29, Annex B). Women in the Canadian Forces, then, receive 93 percent of their pay for 17 weeks of maternity leave.

[21]Women in the Belgium armed forces, for example, are entitled to 14 weeks of maternity leave, a maximum of three months unpaid leave for nursing, and upon request may be placed on non-active status for a maximum of two years; in the case of handicapped children, non-active status can be extended to a maximum of four years (DHist: File 83/231, folder 22).

[22]This policy change followed a lengthy grievance and Human Rights investigation process which was initiated by Lise Boulanger, LCol (retired) and current member of the AWECF (AWECF 1993).

for a maximum cumulative period of four years of leave without pay for the duration of a posting outside Canada, for the purpose of spousal accompaniment when the two servicemembers can not be co-located for career/military purposes.[23]

In 1983, following the implementation of the Canadian Human Rights Act and the recognition that servicewomen may be vulnerable to harassment, the Chief of the Defence Staff issued a policy statement concerning personal harassment in the Canadian Forces. Between 1982 and 1988 several court cases and Human Rights Tribunals demonstrated the responsibility of an employer to create an environment for all employees that is harassment-free, as well as to act promptly to stop any harassment which is occurring. Subsequently, the Canadian Forces Associate Deputy Minister (Personnel) sent out correspondence reminding personnel of existing government harassment policies and the rights and obligations of employees with reference to those policies. In 1988, a Canadian Forces Administrative Order (CFAO), CFAO 19-39, was also promulgated on personal harassment. This CFAO represented the first policy of its nature directed explicitly toward Canadian Forces personnel. The policy defined personal harassment, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, and the process for initiating a complaint within

[23]This policy change expanded circumstances considered for leave without pay under administrative guidelines in 1990 (National Defence Headquarters 1990).

the Canadian Forces (Hansen 1990). A preliminary analysis of the harassment policy indicates that it is not as effective as it could be and recommendations have been made with reference to reviewing the policy, committing additional resources to improve awareness, examining the reporting and investigation procedures, and evaluating subsequent revisions (Hansen 1993).

Military policy in Canada, then, has reflected the needs of the organization as well as the increasing emphasis on gender equality within Canadian society. Since women began serving on a continuous basis in 1951, policies restricting women from serving after marriage and childbirth, and in various locations and roles have been removed. Additional policies have been put in place to address the increasing number of intra-service marriages, the need for maternity care and benefits, and since 1975 the superannuation act has provided for equal contributions and benefits for servicewomen and men (Simpson et al 1979). As has been discussed earlier, women continue, however, to leave the military at a greater rate than their male counterparts. The following discussions will consider this issue in greater detail.

CHAPTER 3

CANADIAN FORCES ATTRITION RATES: UNDERSTANDING GENDER DIFFERENCES

Women in the Canadian Forces are employed within a non-traditional, male-dominated organization. As indicated in the introduction, 'male-dominated' is defined as an environment or occupation which is comprised of less than 30 percent females or more than 70 percent males. Women remain a significant minority within every occupational grouping (see Tables 2 and 3), except the medical officer category. In 1992, nurses and doctors made up approximately two-thirds of this category, and women comprised 85 percent of military nurses and 18 percent of military doctors (DPIS data used to calculate proportions).

The medical officer category provides an exception which may be explained first of all, by the very large percentage of female nurses and the socially accepted role which female nurses have played in the military dating back to their participation in the Northwest Rebellion in 1885. In effect, women have a long experience of this category and have had an opportunity to shape conditions more than in other categories. This is also the only occupational grouping in the Canadian Forces in which male members have demonstrated higher attrition rates than their female counterparts, including during the 10 to 20 years of service category. As attrition among medical doctors has been a

long-standing problem for the Canadian Forces, it is likely that high attrition among the predominantly male medical officer occupation has a significant influence on the attrition rates for the medical officer group as a whole. In fact, in 1985 a special review board was convened by the Associate Deputy Minister of Personnel, National Defence Headquarters to explore this issue (Bradley and Paunonen 1989), and subsequent research into medical doctor attrition was conducted by the Canadian Forces Personnel Applied Research Unit.

In contrast to Jacobs' focus on occupations, for the purposes of this study, the Canadian Forces as a whole is considered a male-dominated environment for women. This is explained in part by the patterns of employment that Canadian Forces members often follow. An administration clerk, for example, does not necessarily serve in a static office environment, but may be required to work in an army field unit or on board a ship. As women's roles have expanded this has included not only access to previously all male occupations, but service in support occupations within predominantly male and operational environments; that is, women who are trained in the occupational areas in which the greatest proportions of women are employed, are increasingly required to serve in mobile and operational units where the greater proportion of males are employed. Also, as indicated earlier, women comprise between .6 and 30.0

percent of all occupational groupings (Tables 2 and 3), and less than 15 percent of the overall organizational population (DPIS), thus justifying this definition of a male-dominated environment.

Defining Attrition: Annual vs Cumulative

Following the example of Canadian Forces reports citing attrition rates (for example, Tanner 1992), attrition is defined as the number of people who leave the Canadian Forces under all release categories.[24] An attrition rate for a particular year is the total attrition for that year divided by the total strength, of a particular defined group, at the beginning of the same year. Annual attrition rates can be calculated on a particular group as a whole (i.e. the entire Canadian Forces population), or further subdivided into various categories. This research considers differences in attrition rates of females and males at various times in their careers, calculated on an annual basis. In this way it is possible to identify patterns in attrition from year to year.

Attrition can also be defined cumulatively. Cumulative

[24]These categories include mainly voluntary exit, as well as categories deeming members unfit for further service for medical, performance related and Canadian Forces policy related reasons. For this thesis, voluntary attrition rates alone would have been preferable, although the available data are formulated using all release categories. Voluntary release, however, accounts for most of those included in the data.

attrition rates identify, at any given period of time, the percentage of a cohort group which has left the organization. For example, a cumulative attrition rate tells us that 68 percent of those women who joined the Canadian Forces in 1980, had left by 1992; when we look at the same time frame for servicemen, the cumulative attrition rate indicates that 64 percent had left (Mathieu 1993). Considered in this way, the female to male attrition ratio (after 12 years of cumulative service) is 1.06:1. If we look at the nine year cumulative attrition rates for the same group of women and men - those who joined in 1980 - the female to male ratio is even less significant at 1.02:1 (female 61 percent; male 60 percent) (Mathieu 1993). From this information it is evident that women become more likely to leave, relative to their male counterparts, in the period of time between nine and twelve years of service, but the differences in attrition are not particularly significant. The use of annual attrition rates, in lieu of cumulative attrition rates, has allowed me to isolate, in greater detail, the patterns of attrition which are discussed below.

Organisation vs Occupation Approach

Available attrition data support an organization /environment approach in lieu of an occupational approach, in the case of women in the Canadian Forces. That is, there is no discernible relationship between the percentage of

women in the occupation grouping and the attrition rate of women, when compared to their male counterparts, with the exception of the medical officer grouping discussed above. This reinforces the earlier discussion with reference to the expanding roles of women and the proportions of women working in the various environments.

A comparison of attrition within administrative and support occupations, to attrition within occupations with lower percentages of females, reinforces this claim. Women served in administrative and support occupations during the Second World War, and have served continuously in those roles since 1951. By 1990 women comprised 18.2 percent of the officer, and 21.0 percent of the non-commissioned member population of these groups (Tanner 1991 - see Tables 2 and 3). Overall attrition rates are the lowest when compared to other occupational groupings; however, the proportion of female to male attrition, between 10 and 20 years of service (1.56:1) is similar to occupational groupings with a higher percentage of males, for which comparable data are available. For example, within communications and engineering occupations women comprise only 7.1 percent of the non-commissioned member population (Tanner 1991). Although the percentage of non-commissioned women in the administrative and support group is three times that of the communications and engineering group, the female to male attrition ratios for 10 to 20 years of service are

comparable at approximately 1.5:1 (see Table 2). This comparison reinforces the usefulness of using attrition ratios rather than absolute attrition rates when comparing gender rates of attrition.

It has also been suggested that as women move into occupations and environments in which they had not previously served , their attrition rates might increase. Suzanne Simpson et al have noted, for example, that,

> "Experience in the United States Forces has demonstrated that the introduction of women into non-traditional occupations has resulted in higher attrition (Use of Women in the Military, 1977). This observation is borne out by our statistics over the past five years when women have taken on expanded roles within the Canadian Forces" (1979:280).

However, since expanding roles for women are primarily into operational categories, it is worth noting that patterns of higher attrition are observed among both servicewomen and servicemen; that is, attrition rates are higher from occupations which serve predominantly in operational, as opposed to administrative and support, environments. In the sea environment, for example, women could not, until 1989 after the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruling,[25] serve in most naval occupations which required training and employment at sea. Although comparable data are not

[25]The 1989 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal ruled that all trials of women in non-traditional roles were to cease and that women were to be fully integrated into all Canadian Forces roles, except service on submarines, during the following ten year period (Canadian Human Rights Advocate 1989: 1-3).

available for attrition between 10 and 20 years of service because of women's recent entry into this category, average attrition rates during the 1980 to 1990 time period for non-commissioned members in the sea environment with 4 to 9 years of service were the highest in the Canadian Forces, *for women and men*, when compared to other occupation groupings. This, once again, supports the use of attrition ratios, which compare the attrition of women and men, in lieu of absolute attrition data as the main basis of discussion.

Additionally, earlier organizational policy which restricted the entrance of female officers into all categories except medical, and administrative and support, precludes the availability of attrition data over longer periods of time. The limited data which are available (see Table 3), suggest that female officers are most likely to leave, relative to their male counterparts, during the first three years of service, even though the female:male attrition ratio in the administrative and support category does increase between 4-9 and 10-20 years of service. Attrition rates and ratios for the new roles, such as sea and land operations, cannot be predicted with confidence, but it is probable that, similar to other occupation groupings, women's absolute attrition rates will decrease and the female to male attrition ratio will increase, between 4-9 and 10-20 years of service in these environments

(see Table 2).

TABLE 2 - NON-COMMISSIONED MEMBER (NCM) OCCUPATION GROUPS PERCENTAGE FEMALE IN OCCUPATION GROUPS, FEMALE (F) AND MALE (M) ATTRITION RATES, AND FEMALE:MALE ATTRITION RATIOS (R) BY YEARS OF SERVICE AND OCCUPATION GROUP*

	AIR	SEA	LAND	COMMUN/ ENGIN	MEDICAL	ADMIN/ SUPPORT
% FEMALE	8.3	2.0	.6	7.1	23.3	21.8
0-3 F	9.5%	20.4%	14.7%	11.6%	13.3%	9.4%
0-3 M	6.9%	16.7%	13.1%	11.1%	11.1%	9.4%
0-3R	1.37:1	1.7:1	1.12:1	1.06:1	1.2:1	1:1
4-9 F	6.4%	14.6%	10.8%	7.5%	13.3%	7.5%
4-9 M	4.4%	8.8%	7.3%	5.6%	5.7%	5.6%
4-9R	1.45:1	1.66:1	1.47:1	1.34:1	1.94:1	1.33:1
10-20 F	5.7%	#	#	4.5%	5.7%	3.9%
10-20 M	2.1%	2.8%	2.9%	3.0%	2.7%	2.5%
10-20R	2.7:1	#	#	1.5:1	2.11:1	1.56:1

* Percentage Data taken from Tanner 1991
# Due to the recent entry of women into the occupation group, attrition data is not available

TABLE 3 - OFFICER OCCUPATION GROUPS
PERCENTAGE FEMALE IN OCCUPATION GROUPS, FEMALE (F) AND MALE (M) ATTRITION RATES, AND FEMALE:MALE ATTRITION RATIOS (R) BY YEARS OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE AND OCCUPATION GROUP*

	AIR	SEA	LAND	COMBTN/ ENGIN	MEDICAL	ADMIN/ SUPPORT
♠ %FEMALE	2.9	.2	.9	5.1	38.9	18.2
0-3 F	3.3%	#	#	.8%	8.7%	5.3%
0-3 M	1.7%	#	#	1.7%	5.3%	2.2%
0-3R	1.94:1	#	#	2.12:1+	1.64:1	2.4:1
4-9 F	7.9%	#	#	8.8%	11.5%	6.9%
4-9 M	4.2%	#	#	6.8%	14.6%	4.8%
4-9R	1.88:1	#	#	1.29:1	1.27:1+	1.43:1
10-20 F	#	#	#	#	4.4%	3.3%
10-20 M	2.7%	#	#	2.3%	6.1%	1.7%
10-20R	#	#	#	#	1.38:1+	1.94:1

♠ Percentage Data Taken From Tanner 1991
+ Male:Female Attrition Ratio
# Due to the small numbers of females and/or their recent entry into the occupation group, data on attrition are not available

CHAPTER 4

EXPLAINING WOMEN'S EXIT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past two decades, organizations which employ women have predominantly used a 'gender model' of work to explain why women do not remain in male-dominated occupations, and have accordingly used gender model strategies to address problems related to women and work. According to Roslyn Feldberg and Evelyn Glenn, for example,

> While analyses of men's relationship to employment concentrate on job-related features, most analyses of women's relationship to employment (which are rare by comparison) virtually ignore type of job and working conditions. When it is studied at all, women's relationship to employment is treated as derivative of personal characteristics and relationships to family situations (Oakley 1974; Laws 1976). This type of analysis is referred to...as the gender model" (1979: 526).

Accordingly, women's exit from employment has been explained in relation to their individual characteristics and family status.

In the case of women leaving the U.S. military, for example, Patricia Shield has written that "Virtually the entire difference in attrition between military men and women is attributable to women's increased likelihood of leaving prematurely for pregnancy and parental responsibilities" (1988: 104-5). She further indicates, however, that career single mothers interviewed in 1985, stated that they liked the military because it was an "institution that took care of its own"; they were

patriotic, enjoyed being members of the armed forces, and emphasized the benefits of free accessible medical care, job security, convenient day care, and the knowledge that they are safe on the base (1988: 110). In fact, one woman who was interviewed for this project indicated that during the time which she was a single parent she would not have considered release, even though it became a viable option later. Nevertheless, these responses are not coherent with the main reason for exit which has been put forward by Patricia Shields. The following discussion looks more closely at women's experience within male-dominated environments, including the Canadian Forces, and alternative explanations for their exit.

Women's Experience in Male-Dominated Environments

The segregation of women in low-paying, female-dominated employment has received considerable attention in the recent past; however, much of the literature has focused on "the reluctance of women to enter 'men's jobs,' and/or women's socialized inability to behave in ways necessary for those jobs" (McIlwee 1988: 36). Another substantial body of literature focuses on women's propensity to leave employment during and after the birth of their first child (Desai and Waite 1991), and for family responsibilities (Anderson and Leslie 1991; Marsden et al 1993; Wenk and Rosenfeld 1992). However; as noted by Peta Tancred and Susan Czarnocki, one

theme has received muted attention i.e. "little reference has been made to the self-evident fact that if women's representation is to be increased in non-traditional [male-dominated] occupations, not only must they be drawn into them, but they must also be encouraged to stay" (1993: 97). Finally, Judith McIlwee has suggested that the successes and failures of the integration of women in male-dominated areas can be better understood through a focus on issues of power and group interests (1988). This chapter thus explores the literature which addresses women's experience as the 'gender at odds' within male-dominated environments and how this status may be linked to their premature exit.

There is evidence to confirm that not only do Canadian women continue to earn much less than their male counterparts, but that they are also experiencing various forms of discrimination within their work environments. In recent years, for example, the number of cases being presented to the Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) has steadily increased. In fact, the CHRC 1991 Annual Report indicates that the "annual total of new complaints has risen by roughly 100 percent since 1987 and is now approaching 1,000 per year" (79). In 1992, 81 percent of the cases presented were employment related, and 92.3 percent of those cases were complaints based on sex (CHRC 1991: 89). Most cases of sex discrimination are filed by women (CHRC 1991: 69). Despite initiatives such as the 'early resolution

option', which explores whether the parties involved in a complaint may be prepared to settle their dispute without resort to a full investigation, the CHRC has not been able to "outrun the sheer volume of new complaints" (CHRC 1991: 79-80).

What are the experiences that a male-dominated environment offers to women? Joan Acker suggests that when women and men are affected differently by organizations, the predominant assumption has been that essentially gender-neutral structures are confronted with gendered attitudes and behaviours. Alternatively, she suggests that organizational structures are gendered (male) and that gendering occurs in at least five interacting processes: (1) the division of labour, gender accepted and allowed behaviours etc.; (2) the construction of symbols and images that explain, express, reinforce, or sometimes oppose those divisions; (3) interactions between women and men, women and women, men and men, including patterns of dominance and submission; (4) gendered components of individual identity produced by previous processes; and, (5) the ongoing process of creating and conceptualizing social structures (1990: 146-7). Gendered processes such as these have the potential to influence the experiences of women in their employment - experiences ranging from harassment and discrimination in the workplace to the effect organizational policies and decision-making have on their career patterns. A male-

dominated environment, then, has been created and is reproduced for male participation and membership.

Cynthia Cockburn explains the resulting relative position and experiences of women and men within organizations in terms of power which is linked to institutional and cultural values:

> "To be 'equal' women must tolerate, join in, and be prepared to retaliate in kind when sexual innuendo and jokes, the stock in trade of modern management, were deployed around them...Women may be good at their jobs, but socially they are continually wrong-footed by such a sexualized culture" (1990: 83).

Sex discrimination, in these terms, is a built-in aspect of the organization, which "does not disappear with the elimination of discriminatory rules" (Burton 1992: 195). Understanding women's experience in a male-dominated environment means not only understanding formal rules and practices, but also understanding "the exercise of power at the work place, how jobs are organised and practised...[and]...the dynamics of the relationships among job holders" (Burton 1992: 195-6), in addition to how policies are formulated.

In a study of women and men working in traditional and non-traditional environments, Barbara Gutek and Aaron Cohen found clear evidence that women employed in non-traditional environments experience more social-sexual behaviours such as comments, looks, gestures, required dating and required sex than women employed in traditional environments and men employed in traditional and non-traditional environments.

Through such behaviours women are constantly reminded that they are "a woman in a 'man's job'" and as such they are perceived and treated differently (1992: 149). Women are seen as women rather than job-holders (Gutek and Cohen 1992: 135), a situation which affects various aspects of employment including job assignments, job evaluations and conditions of their work. In addition, women often lack a supportive network and experience isolation from their male peers, as well as confronting double standards in relation to acceptable behaviours and interactions (Sheppard 1992: 156-9).

Issues such as discrimination and sexual harassment have not been linked to women's premature exit from organizations, even though research has concluded that women do not, predominantly leave employment for family reasons (Wenk and Rosenfeld 1992), as commonly believed. Accounts of women's experiences in male-dominated employment have, however, suggested that there is a relationship. Cynthia Cockburn's research provides one such example:

> "The interaction between Wendy and the men in the office involved a little touching, but no compulsion, no threats. It is the kind of thing that passes for humour, the sunnyside of office life for the men she works for...It was [however] causing humiliation and distress. It was unwanted sexual attention. It was making her working day a misery. Consequently it was affecting Wendy's chances at work. *She talked of leaving the job before long* (my emphasis) " (1991: 140-1).

Cockburn further notes that most women that she interviewed "often took for granted that sexual discomfort is an

unavoidable fact of organizational life" (1991: 144). Other research has suggested that women's experience of the unpleasant, and often hostile, behaviours toward them in male-dominated employment may contribute to the continuation of job segregation and women's decision to leave such employment (Carothers and Crull 1984; O'Farrell and Harlan 1982; Strom 1993). In a preliminary analysis of women leaving academia, Peta Tancred and Susan Czarnocki have also begun to make the link between the organizational environment for women and women's exit. A significant proportion of the women that they contacted who had left academia, cited the 'nature of the workplace' as their main reason for exiting. Specifically, they identified the devaluing of their qualifications, lack of encouragement for professional development, isolation, marginalization and sexism in the workplace, as issues which were part of their experience (Tancred and Czarnocki, 1993). The relationship between experiences such as this and leaving one's job remains, however, largely unexplained.

The Canadian Forces Experience

Initial results of an ongoing attrition survey being administered to members as they leave the Canadian Forces indicates that "Proportionally, more female than male respondents reported that they thought that protection from sexual discrimination was better in civilian life than in

the Canadian Forces" (Parker 1992: 20-1). This is the only survey item that has so far been reported to yield significant gender differences. This finding is supported by an initial report of the results of a 'personal harassment' survey which was completed by 4,055 Canadian Forces members in 1992. The purpose of this survey was to determine the incidence rate of harassment in the Canadian Forces and to assess the effectiveness of 'personal harassment' policy which was implemented in 1988 (Hansen 1990: 3-4). Specifically, the results indicate that,

> "26.2% of the female and 2.0% of the male respondents believe they had been subjected to sexual harassment; 32.6% of the female and 19.4% of the male respondents believe they had been subjected to personal harassment (excluding sexual); and 31.5% of the female and 28.9% of the male respondents believe they had been the subject of abuse of authority while performing CF duties during the past 12-month period" (Hansen 1993: i).

Females report higher rates of all types of defined harassment than their male counterparts, and also identify gender as the most frequent basis of personal harassment (excluding sexual) (Hansen 1993: ii). The report concludes that "the current CF personal harassment policy and supporting training initiatives require improvement to meet the aim of a harassment-free work environment" (Hansen 1993: 29).

Other survey research administered to Canadian Forces personnel also points toward possible links between women's experience and women's exit from the organization. In a

study of stress experienced by Canadian Forces personnel, the survey responses of women and men in traditional and non-traditional military environments were compared. Non-traditional environments for women were defined as those environments which women were first employed in on a trial basis from 1979 to 1985 (service on board ships, in army service battalions, army field ambulances and army military police platoons). This research indicated that women, regardless of environment, reported more symptoms of stress, and less supervisor support and work group cohesion than their male counterparts. It is further suggested that while personal and environmental constraints may block or interfere with coping efforts, it is necessary to ask whether organizationally based circumstances, such as beliefs that prescribe certain ways of behaving, demands that compete for the same resources, individuals or groups of individuals, or types of threats prevent a person from coping effectively (Clarke 1990).

In a survey administered to Canadian Forces families in 1984-85, junior non-commissioned members and junior officers, who are usually younger and more likely to have young families than senior members, were most likely to report difficulty with children's behaviour, child care arrangements etc. For example, 16 percent of junior non-commissioned members, 19 percent of junior officers, and 21 percent of single-parent service members reported

difficulties in making satisfactory child care arrangements (Popoff et al 1986: 28-9). In a study of women in the Canadian Forces, it is suggested that because married women have higher attrition rates than single women, "modern social issues associated with dual income families, such as the employment mobility of the spouse, childcare facilities etc...should be addressed to identify the underlying factors influencing the release rates" (Tanner and Walters 1990: 40). Women's role as mothers and employment mobility issues, then, have also been cited in the attrition of women from the Canadian Forces.

As the numbers of women in the Canadian Forces have increased and women have been in the service for longer periods of time, the number and proportion of married women in the service have also increased. As indicated in chapter 2, married women accounted for 52 percent of female officers and 59 percent of female non-commissioned members with 10 to 20 years of service in 1990. In the Canadian Forces, overall, 46 percent of female officers and 50 percent of female non-commissioned members were married in 1990 compared to 24 and 32 percent, respectively, in 1977 (Tanner and Walters 1990). Average attrition rates comparing single and married women from 1980 to 1989 indicate that while married servicewomen do have the highest attrition rates among women, the difference between the attrition of married and single women is least significant between 10 and 20

years of service (see Table 3). This information indicates that married women have gained increasingly equal opportunity for continued employment in the Canadian Forces, but does not provide an explanation for the increased likelihood that women will leave the organization, relative to their male counterparts, after passing the 10 year point in their career.

TABLE 4 - AVERAGE ATTRITION RATES FOR SERVICEWOMEN 1980-1989 BY YEARS OF SERVICE / YEARS OF COMMISSIONED SERVICE AND MARITAL STATUS*

	SINGLE	MARRIED TO NON-MEMBER	MARRIED TO MEMBER	OTHER (DIV, SEP)
0-3 YEARS	4.9%	8.7%	10.6%	3.0%
4-9 YEARS	7.1%	15.8%	11.7%	7.0%
10-20 YEARS	3.3%	5.7%	4.3%	5.2%

* Percentage data taken from Tanner and Walters 1990

Perhaps, the most representative investigation of women's experience in the Canadian Forces is that of 'The Minister's (National Defence) Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces'(MABWCF). As part of their mandate to make recommendations on the integration of women, the MABWCF has observed operations and spoken with Canadian Forces members at numerous units and locations over the past several years. In their view, harassment remains a significant issue in the Canadian Forces, and one of the consequences is "an increase in the attrition of female members" (1991-92: 18). The Board further reported that women fear that posting service

couples apart which "could force one member to make a decision to take release", might provide "an informal method of removing complicated personnel issues" (1991-92: 16-17). Additionally, servicewomen fear that postings to operational units that were closed to women prior to the 1979-1989 'trial period', may be used as "a method of forcing release" of women who have contributed substantially to a pension, but cannot access it until they have served for 20 years (1991-92: 8); that is women sometimes feel that they are selected for a posting to an operational unit at a time when they are least in a position to go, and will therefore apply for release rather than accept the operational employment. These fears are especially salient in the past two years as the Canadian Forces has been involved in a 'Force Reduction Program' as a result of cuts in government defence spending.[26]

The literature surrounding women's experience in a male-dominated environment as well as reports specific to the Canadian Forces, indicate a potential, if not probable, relationship between the work environment and the premature exit of women, but do not conclusively establish that link. Research to date suggests that women's experience within an organization too often includes issues of discrimination, which are both sexual and based upon their gender -

[26]Total strength of the Canadian Forces has been reduced from 87,983 in 1990 to 76,553 in December 1993 (DPIS).

experience which differs fundamentally from the experiences of men within the same organization. The continuous exit of women from male-dominated environments at a higher rate than their male counterparts, is one indication of the failure to achieve full integration within an organization. As suggested earlier, an understanding of the encouragement and/or discouragement which women receive within the environment, as well as issues surrounding power and group interests as they influence the work environment, will contribute to a greater understanding of continued gender segregation. The following chapter discusses the approach used to explore women's experience as the 'gender at odds' within the Canadian Forces, and their subsequent exit from the organization.

CHAPTER 5

METHODOLOGY

Based on the information presented so far, the question which requires further investigation is not whether women experience an organization, such as the Canadian Forces, differently from men, but whether the processes which shape their different experience are related to premature exit from the organization. A research method which both explores women's experience in the Canadian Forces, and determines the link between that experience and decisions to leave is required.

In her recent investigation into the factors affecting the integration of women in the Canadian military, Caralynn Strom found that survey results can mask problems that qualitative research may uncover. She notes that,

> "In the quantitative questions about harassment women reported relatively few incidents of physical and verbal harassment or problems in dealing with crude language in the workplace. Yet in answering the qualitative, open-ended questions on the same subject, the majority reported 'dealing with harassment and negative attitudes' as the worst thing about being a woman in the militia" (1993: 65-6).

As in the case of other cited research on harassment and stress in the Canadian Forces, the Strom research was not designed to predict or explore attrition. The researcher indicates, in fact, that the issue of measuring intentions and linking them to action, such as leaving the organization, can be problematic. She suggests that the

issue of attrition might be better handled by contacting women who have actually left the organization to conduct comprehensive follow-up interviews (Strom 1993: 69), thus linking intention and behaviour, as well as allowing respondents to describe their experience as they have perceived it.

To explore women's exit from the Canadian Forces, a qualitative research project involving open-ended interviews, was undertaken to allow a two way communication that considered the interviewees as 'knowers' in the research process, and as subjects contributing to knowledge construction rather than objects of research.[27] The interview process allowed women to describe their experience as it occurred within the context of the organization, that is, the social world within which their experiences were generated. As Dorothy Smith explains:

> "The language of the everyday world as it is incorporated into the description of that world is rooted in social relations beyond it...Investigating the everyday world as problematic involves an inquiry into relations that are themselves generalized through exploration of those relations from the standpoint of everyday experience...The standpoint of actual individuals located in the everyday world is always the point d'appui" (1987: 156, 159).

Starting with women's experience within the social context of the organization, I was able to explore the relationship between that experience and women's exit from the Canadian

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[27]This type of approach is suggested by many feminist theorists and methodologists, including Smith 1987; Maguire 1987; Oakley 1981.

Forces.

The Sampling Procedure

Women who had left the Canadian Forces between January 1990 and August 1993 were contacted through a random sampling process which was initiated by the Director of Personnel Information Systems (DPIS), National Defence Headquarters. In total, over 500 women met the selection criteria. The sample for this project, however, was limited to 327 women who were located in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia, at the time of the sampling. This geographical definition was made for two reasons: first, to allow access to those contacted, and second, to attempt to include women who had served in the air, land, and naval environments assuming that at least some who leave will settle in the vicinity of their last work location. As naval activities are located primarily on the east and west coast of Canada, Nova Scotia provided access to those who may have served in the naval environment. Air and land units are located in Ontario and Quebec.

Letters of introduction (Appendix B) were mailed out by DPIS to one third (109 ex-servicewomen) of the total sample which included women who had held the ranks of Corporal, Master Corporal, Sergeant, Warrant Officer, Master Warrant Officer, Captain and Major, at the time of their release. The letter of introduction also included a request for an

interview and an addressed envelope which could be used to return their response.

The Sample

The sample was further defined to include only those women who had taken a voluntary release, thus excluding medical and other releases initiated through Canadian Forces policy implementations. In total, 71 of the 109 sampled met all of the criteria for the investigation; of these, 30 volunteered for an interview yielding a 42.25 percent response rate. In total 23 were interviewed as described above; five were not geographically accessible during the period of data collection - three in Ontario and Quebec, and two who had relocated to Alberta and Germany; one could not be contacted; and, one woman who initially volunteered subsequently declined on the advice of her lawyer as she had a case against the Canadian Forces pending before a Human Rights Tribunal. A summary of the sample characteristics is provided at Appendix A, and is also discussed below.

The women who were subsequently interviewed joined the Canadian Forces between 1971 and 1981; four of those interviewed did not have continuous service, and in one case the total number of years, although over 20, did not include 20 years of continuous service. Additionally, one woman had served in the reserve force prior to enrolment in the regular force, and three have served in the reserve force

since their release from the regular force. The women held the ranks of Corporal, Master Corporal, Warrant Officer, Captain and Major at the time of their release and came from 16 different military occupations representing the Air, Communications and Engineering, Medical, and Administrative and Support branches. Although there were no representatives of land or sea operational occupations, some of the women had served in the land and sea environments prior to release.

The final interview sample consisted of four women whose first official language was French, and 19 whose first official language was English. Although Francophones comprise over 27 percent of the female population in the Canadian Forces (based on calculation of raw data provided by DPIS), they comprised only 17.4 percent of the women used in my analysis. The low participation rate of Francophones can be partially explained by the fact that the letter of introduction was written in English. While many Francophone women who served in the Canadian Forces for more than 10 years would have achieved English language ability, they may not readily respond to an English research project. As the attrition rate of Francophone females is higher than their Anglophone counterparts (based on calculation of raw data provided by DPIS),[28] an exhaustive investigation of women's

[28]This calculation is based on average attrition rates 1980-1991. Also looking at average attrition rates for the same time period, initial calculations indicate that while

exit from the Canadian Forces would necessarily comprise a proportionate number of Francophone women. This research remains to be undertaken. In fact, the Francophone women who were interviewed for this project described their status as Francophone and female as part of their experience in the Canadian Forces.

The Interview

The interview itself was open-ended and designed to allow the women to present the issues which they believed were relevant to their experience in the Canadian Forces and their ultimate decision to leave, as well as provide a common framework across interviews. The Canadian Forces Attrition Survey cited earlier, has identified several 'gender-neutral' reasons for members leaving the organization, but the open-ended interview format allowed women to present issues that are not defined in the survey - both gender-specific issues and processes that underlay the situations in which women find themselves prior to release.

The questions which were included in an interview guide (Appendix C) became part of every interview even though each woman was not asked every question. A letter of introduction (Appendix B) which each woman received stated

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Francophone females have the highest attrition rates overall, Anglophone and Francophone males demonstrate similar rates, and Anglophone female attrition rates fall between Francophone female and overall male attrition rates.

that the research was concerned with explaining the exit of members with more than 10 and less than 20 years of service; however, they were not told that the research was exploring women's experiences only. In some cases, it was assumed by the interviewee from the beginning that the attrition of women was the focus of the research because they felt that their own experience was gender specific. Gender issues were not addressed early in the interview unless the women themselves introduced them as part of their experience. In fact, this was the case in all except six interviews. Those who did not initially identify gender issues as part of their experience, later described instances in which their status as women, wives and/or mothers affected some aspect of their experience. All of the women consented to taped interviews. The formal taped interviews lasted from 40 minutes to two hours, with most covering a period of time between one hour and 90 minutes.

The common experience which I shared with the women that I interviewed played, for the most part, a significant role in the interviewing process for two reasons. First, as a member of the Canadian Forces I was familiar with most of the organizational language, especially acronyms, which became part of every discussion. Second, as a servicewoman with 15 years of service I shared many experiences with these women, having moved through the policy changes and overall organizational changes which have in some way

affected all of us.

The Analysis

The data presented in the following three chapters is the result of qualitative analysis of the information gathered in 23 interviews which were conducted between October 1993 and February 1994. Early in the interview process three additional interviews were conducted - two 'snowball' interviews which met the criteria for analysis, but were not included in the random sample described below, and a twenty-sixth interview with a woman who had actually served for 20 years. In view of the attrition information presented in chapter 3, women who had completed more than 10, but less than 20 years of service were selected for study.

Each interview was transcribed and coded to identify concepts which comprised women's experience and subsequent decisions to leave. This initial step of analysis is described by Anselm Strauss and Juliet Corbin as 'open coding'. Over 160 original concepts representing "discrete happenings, events, and other instances of phenomena" were identified and subsequently compared to build categories which "appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon" (Strauss and Corbin 1990: 61). For example, the category of 'Maternity and Workplace Experience' (see chapter 6) was formed using original concepts such as low evaluations after maternity leave; administrative problems with maternity

leave; taken off job when pregnant although still capable of doing job; expected to do work which poses risk to pregnant women; male supervisor mimicked movements of pregnant women; resentment from supervisor with reference to time away for maternity leave; loyalty to job questioned with second pregnancy; supervisor recommended abortion, etc. The frequency with which concepts and categories occurred, both across the sample and within individual experiences, defined the major categories for analysis.

The procedure described above presented problems for the final analysis in terms of understanding issues within the context which they occurred; that is, the process of coding requires the separation of experiences into discrete events which no longer represent an individual's experience. Instead they become a representation of an objectified, decontextualized occurrence. Linda Christiansen-Ruffman refers to this as one aspect of the 'either/or syndrome' which permeates social science research methods and obscures the experience of those we study,

> "Because of the either/or syndrome, we often divide even nominal data into apparent dichotomies, conceived along a continuum of one level of reality through our instructions to form mutually-exclusive and exhaustive categories. We assume that data from an individual may be coded into either "job" or "family" reasons, but not both. Perhaps a more legitimate - and corrective - assumption would be to see how both "ends" of such dualisms might apply to an individual in different ways over time and space. This might counter the tendency common in contemporary social science of reducing the world to one dimension, taking people and concepts out of context and then forcing one choice of a dichotomy" (1989: 135-6).

She further cautions against analysis which is limited to harmonizing dichotomies as this assumes a binary world.

The final analytical challenge, then, was one of rebuilding the women's experiences using the major categories, and placing them back into the context within which they took place. Throughout the research process, for example, it became evident that women had often stayed in the Canadian Forces after very negative experiences, but later left as a result of a seemingly less negative experience. A total analysis of women's experience and exit had to consider not only why the women left, but previous aspects of their experience which did not result in immediate exit. Their experience had to be understood within the context of their distant and recent past experience, as well as the parallel processes which comprised their experience. Thus the analysis presented in chapters 6 and 7, uses a "biographical" approach as well as an analysis of themes in order to illustrate a link between contextualization, women's experience, and their subsequent decisions to leave.

Generalizing Experiences

The research sample and the analysis which follows represents the experiences of women who left the Canadian Forces in the early 1990s with more than 10 and less than 20 years of service. The random sampling procedure which was

used, although somewhat influenced by a participant's motivation to volunteer, and restricted by the availability of attrition data by years of service, supports the generalization of women's experience and exit to other women in the Canadian Forces. It is probable that the experiences and reasons for exit would be similar, for example, to women who left after eight or nine years of service.

Several of the women who volunteered to participate in this research did so in the hope that the telling of their experience might help someone else in the future. Many others volunteered because they thought it would be interesting, or simply because they wanted to help a graduate student with her research. Thus the various motivations do not indicate any particular bias in the sample.

As argued in chapter 3, the organization as a whole is considered a male-dominated environment, and the available attrition data do not support separate analyses for the various occupation groups. The following discussions present the analysis of women's experience within the organization, and the processes which preceded their exit.

CHAPTER 6

GENDER AND THE WORKPLACE

Women's decisions to leave the Canadian Forces were made within the context of their experience in the organization and how it contributed to their overall life experiences. As discussed with reference to the analysis of the interview data, the discrete unit analysis of women's experience and decision-making obscures the explanations which we seek as social science researchers. The following discussion represents the context which forms an inextricable aspect of women's experience within a male-dominated organization.

As women have entered the Canadian Forces, they have entered with the knowledge that it is a 'man's world' and that they will have to adapt accordingly. As one woman humorously noted, "it was kind of like the army..or the air force [or the navy], will make a man out of you." Organizational researchers, Albert Mills and Stephen Murgatroyd, note that the "'masculine' character of organizational power throughout the public domain" is evidenced by images of male-dominated governments, civil services, judiciary and police, armed forces and media; that is, "Through a myriad of images we are confronted with the understanding that 'it's a man's world'" (1991: 76). Accordingly, women encounter two rules when they enter male-dominated organizations: it's a man's world, and it's man's work (Gutek and Cohen 1992; Mills and Murgatroyd 1991).

As women enter the 'man's world' they are struggling not only with questions surrounding their capability to do 'men's work', but issues surrounding their identity as women. In her account of life in the United States Army, Captain Carol Barkalow described it this way:

> "It isn't enough to be lifted out of context, slapped into a uniform, taught a new language, and dispatched whimsically around the globe. Accompanying these generic changes is a much slower, frequently painful, and highly individualized process of self-definition. In the military it is a challenge merely to function as best as one can within the system without losing one's sense of self. Meeting that challenge as a male within a male-dominated institution is tough enough; as a female it can sometimes prove devastating. Women who cling to traditional ideas and images of female identity may find very few places to gain a foothold" (1990: 232-3).

Similarly, one respondent described her Canadian Forces experience as walking a fine line between capability and identity as a woman:

> "I remember walking this very fine line as a female officer where you had to maintain..be prepared to do anything and still be a lady, which I thought was still important in order to gain the respect. But on the other hand, try and educate this incredible mass population of men to stop treating you differently. Really seriously differently" (Officer; Married; 2 children; 10 years service).

After investigating the re-creation of gender in a male workplace, Irene Padavic argues that "men adjust to women's presence by developing collective interpretations of experience that allow them to preserve male ideology while still accepting women's presence. Women in turn shape their work identities in response to these interpretations" (1991: 281). She further argues that whether men perceive a woman

as 'feminine' or 'unfeminine' will, at least in part, determine how they treat her. When women are defined as feminine, men are afforded "the opportunity to demonstrate and clarify masculinity", and to "exercise and demonstrate their power to define a situation, thus perpetuating gender dominance" (1991: 287). Women who are considered 'unfeminine' by men serve to blur the distinction between women and men and therefore, do not allow men to confirm their masculinity. In this case, the men in Padavic's study reacted to one such woman with ridicule, an unwillingness to train or help her, and by attributing her job success to others. Padavic concludes that "a woman who enters a male-dominated workplace encounters men's expectations of her, which in turn condition their actions toward her and through a reciprocal process, her sense of self and her self-presentation" (1991: 284).

Women must cope simultaneously with symbols and behaviours which perpetuate and maintain male ideology, and develop identities as women which satisfy the organizational culture. The male identity of the organization is strongly evident through **sexualized behaviours and norms**, such as male attitudes of paternalism, sexist male talk, joking and innuendo, pin-ups and calendars, and sexual harassment, in the day to day environment of work. In addition, socially constructed views of how women and men should behave in both

social/sexual and work capacities form an important aspect of women's work experience (Mills and Murgatroyd 1991). Finally social and biological differences related to childbearing and childrearing are translated into organizational norms and expectations, further shaping women's experience and organizational perceptions of their experience. Each of these areas, with specific reference to women's experience in the Canadian Forces, are illustrated in the following discussions.

Organization and Sexuality

Exactly what sexuality has to do with anything, especially in terms of work experience, is unknown to most when they enter organizational life. Irene Padavic explains that as women enter a male-dominated environment two things happen:

> "(1) men must come to some accommodation with the women and (2) the women must adapt to a male workplace and to people who define their relationships with one another in part by their difference from and objectification of women" (1991: 284).

The women that I interviewed cited several ways in which they were frequently reminded that they were women in a man's world, and most importantly, they were also reminded that they would be continually assessed primarily as women, that is:

> "You never had a chance to even prove that you were OK. You were already put into a certain category - you know - you were either gay or you were a slut. You couldn't be just a normal woman willing to carry your weight and do your job" (NCM; Married; 12 years service).

As noted by Albert Mills and Stephen Murgatroyd,

> "Sexuality is also linked to *heterosexuality* within organizations. The successful manager is not only male but is a *man*...And females [are] expected to be *women*. Lesbian women or those 'suspected' of being lesbian can suffer a number of negative consequences within organizations" (1991: 168-9).

Effective October 1992, Canadian Forces policy which restricted the service of homosexuals, was revoked, as the policy was found to be in violation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (*Canadian Forces Personnel Newsletter* 6/92). It is unlikely, however, that legislation will have an immediate effect on the heterosexual norms and expectations which are part of the overall gendered ideology of the organization.

Other examples of 'male ideology' which contributed to women's experience included messages which they received regarding assumptions surrounding the sexual uses of women in the military:

> "I found it kind of degrading. It was just the way they talked. They openly discussed their sexual habits, and as though everything was there for their convenience and the overtones of well..that's all we serve..that's the only reason they let servicewomen in the service was to have with her..you know what I mean?" (NCM; Married; 2 children; 11 years service).

It is difficult, if not impossible, then for women to become just another member of the organization. As the woman quoted above noted, you didn't really have a chance to prove that you were other than the definition provided by the environment. The fact that they are women, and *not men*, becomes a part of women's identity within the workplace.

Symbols of `male ideology' were also present in the form of sexist jokes, calendars, and posters. The following provides an example of the way in which women are objectified through body images:

> "One day the boys in the section had a chart. Pictures of women's breasts, and they were all labelled. This one's pancake, this one's peaches, this one is pears, this one is watermelons and the list went on. A whole page. And this one guy that didn't know how to be around a woman, passed this to me and said, 'Which one are you?'" (NCM; Married; 2 children; 16 years service).

Women are further put in a position in which they are expected to react to male ideology. In another example, a woman described the way in which a male supervisor made physical gestures in reference to the size of a female co-worker's body when she was bent over doing work. The way in which women react, as will be seen later, also becomes a criterion upon which they will be further assessed.

Double standards of behaviour, based on gender, further contribute to the maintenance of the male workplace ideology. As one woman stated:

> "I was told, for example, that the reason why he was unfaithful to his wife was because there were women on the course, and it's not his fault if he cheated on his wife because we were there and tantalizing him and coming onto him and whatever, and if there were no women on the course, there wouldn't be that problem. So it was our fault." (Officer; Married; 15 years service).

A double standard of sexual behaviour, such as this, is not unrelated to the sexual definitions of women presented above. If women are defined as sexually available, then men

expect them to be available to them, and to provide them with an escape from responsibility for their own behaviour. When women's sexuality is labelled as inappropriate, this in turn has a negative impact on perceptions of their performance on the job. The double standard is felt with regard to explicitly sexual behaviour, and is one way in which "Sexuality is often used to punish women who are seen to violate gender or organizational norms" (Sheppard 1992: 157).

Verbal reminders further confirmed that women were in a male domain, and sexually objectified within that environment:

> "The guys that were really bad..they didn't think women belonged at all, and they had no qualms about calling you any name..they would call us [the women] cunts and split-asses..." (NCM; Married; 2 children; 15 years service).

Physical reminders also contribute to the maintenance of the male workplace:

> "I remember this old sergeant. I was just a private. He'd say stuff to me like, 'You want to go fishing without a pole?' And he used to rub up against me when he walked by. But I was only a young thing and I didn't even know that he wasn't allowed to do that..." (NCM; Married; 3 children; 13 years service).

As women are continuously reminded of their sexual identity as women in the workplace, they must develop ways of dealing with interpretations of their sexuality as part of their total work effort.

Rules are part of organizational life for all members, both female and male. However, the rules - written and

unwritten are controlled by the power holders - usually men, and rules are used to control, constrain, guide and define social action (Kanter 1977; Ferguson 1984; Cockburn 1991; Mills and Murgatroyd 1991). Women struggle to adjust to the new rules and frequently experience less difficulty with the 'written' rules than the 'unwritten' ones that have been represented here. One woman, for example, described the difference between a good posting and a bad posting in terms of how the rules were presented. In one case she had no difficulty because "you knew what the rules were as soon as you walked in the gate", but in another case even though they said "Here's the rulebook - this is what we do" (NCM; Single; 10 years service), 'hidden' rules controlled the situation in which she found herself. The above experiences were part of the 'rule learning' process for women.

Women adjusted and reacted to the 'rules' of this environment in various ways, often depending upon the status or authority that they held within the particular situation. In one example, a female officer was successful in having offensive material removed from an office environment. She described it as follows:

> "And they sell these calendars, for his regiment, and they're all naked women! And they were all half naked women wearing parts of uniforms..parts of the regiment's uniforms. I mean it was absolutely disgusting..the Sergeant had this calendar on his filing cabinet, and I said, 'I want this gone. This is absolutely unacceptable.', and he said, 'Why is it unacceptable? The Colonel sells them..it must be OK.' And I said 'No, it's not. I don't care if you want to watch it. I don't want to see it, so change it. Put it

somewhere I can't see it" (Officer; Married; 15 years service).

This officer did have authority over the individual displaying the calendar; however, it would have made the situation more difficult for her had the Colonel been displaying the calendar. Although, as will be seen later, the hierarchical structure of the military chain of command contributes to the negative experiences of women in the workplace, several women noted that, unlike their experiences in the civilian workplace, sufficient rank will sometimes accord you the power and/or respect that you need to address an offensive or unacceptable situation.

Another group of women learned early on that emotion and reaction to male behaviour, in spite of its demeaning qualities, would not help them. They dealt with their situation as follows:

> "There was five of us [women] on the crew the first year and we had sat down and agreed that we wouldn't even give them any reaction. They used to walk into a crew room in front of about 60 people and say 'Well, it's about time all the lazy split-asses got out and did a tow job'. So we would stand up and we would go out and we'd do it without a word. And that was an agreement we made to fit in" (NCM; Married; 2 children; 15 years service).

The strategy used to adapt in this case allowed the women to go about their work with as little conflict as possible. In several cases the women explained that it was better not to react, and they believed that this type of treatment was just part of life in the Canadian Forces.

Incidents such as these contribute to the working

environment for women. As expressions of organizational sexuality, they are effective in reminding women of 'their place' in the male world, thus further serving to sustain negative images of females in the workplace, control female behaviour, and to encourage and excuse sexual harassment (Mills and Murgatroyd 1991: 88; Padavic 1991: 289). Organizational sexuality is not only unpleasant for women, but permeates other aspects of their organizational experience. Women frequently described situations where they had to work harder or smarter than their male counterparts to achieve the same goals. Some of the issues that they faced and strategies which they used to confront them are discussed below.

Performance and Credibility

Although several of the women who were interviewed did not believe that they had been exposed to behaviour which could be considered discrimination or harassment, they did acknowledge that being a woman in a male-dominated environment means that you have to work hard, 'prove yourself', plan carefully, and continuously be aware of how you react to sensitive situations. As one woman put it, "...it wasn't like two weeks proving. It was like a year to prove that you weren't going to cry. They did everything to try and make you cry" (NCM; Married; 2 children; 15 years service). Recognizing that the tendency is to evaluate you

as a female first, and that your professional evaluation is linked to how you did in the first category, women described strategies that they used to maintain their credibility on the job. Strategies varied depending on the perspective and attributes of the individuals, and included ignoring potentially explosive [i.e. sexist] comments, directly confronting the situation, and working to keep emotions in check.

Gaining awareness of what it means to be feminine or not, emotional or not, irrational or not becomes part of the on the job training experience for women. Social ideology surrounding women and sexuality in the workplace is about job performance and it is about credibility in the workplace. One woman described one of her learning experiences as follows:

> "I remember a year after I was there this guy said to me, 'You know, when I first met you, I thought 'Oh God', because when I shook your hand it seemed so soft. I thought 'She's not [same trade as him] - what a woos!'. *But you really proved yourself'* [my emphasis]. That was in '85 or something. After he said that to me I always made sure I had a firm handshake. I thought 'Why didn't he tell me that before?'" (NCM; Married; 3 children; 13 years service).

Being perceived as too 'feminine' in this case meant that this woman had to prove that she was capable of doing a 'man's' job. The assumption is that femininity does not equal capability.

In other situations women recognized that because they were a woman, credibility on the job would mean managing

their emotions in a way that was acceptable, to men, *for women* to react:

> "Sometimes you get that 'nice girl go away and buzz off' type of atmosphere that you have to deal with. You really have to cut a fine line between earning respect and making sure that you're respectable as a person, not just a nice little girl and humoured...You get a lot of intonations if you start getting upset about something. You can see it..how sometimes the guys just say, 'Whoop, we've caught her on a bad day kind of thing - we'll all back off'. Where if guys get angry everybody just kind of expects that..we better behave sort of thing. You really have to watch how forceful you get sometimes" (Officer; Married; 13 years service).

Forceful or angry men get the job done; however, angry women are perceived as emotional. Women who want to get the job done must do it in a way that satisfies men's expectations of female behaviour, and of a leader. As noted earlier, women are expected to be *real women*, and thus may find themselves in a constant struggle to "balance between images of management and of women" (Mills and Murgatroyd 1991: 169).

Finally, women continue to believe that they must work harder then men to maintain their credibility in the workplace. As one woman indicated:

> "I had to make sure I was absolutely right when I stated something or wrote something down because otherwise there would be a hundred different people to pick me apart. As a woman, I don't think I was alone there. I think most women go through that. The old thing that most women have to work ten times as hard as a man to get the same recognition. I really think that's true in the military...Actually, I guess I could almost be a victim of sexism myself that way because I expect women in the military..always have..to work harder than most men I see and if they don't it's almost a feeling that they're not working hard enough"

(NCM; Single; 12 years service).

Women are also constantly aware that if one woman 'screws up' then everyone knows - "..any time a woman screwed up it was really something that everybody in the hangar knew, whereas people screwed up daily" - and other women will be judged accordingly - "..so one woman does this over here and everybody..all the rest of the women have to make sure now that they don't do that sort of thing" (NCM; Single; 12 years service). Through their own experience of hard work to overcome preconceived notions of female performance, women also begin to expect their female trainees, co-workers and supervisors to work harder and better than they would expect a male to work.

Competency, then, is judged in terms of characteristics commonly attributed to males; however, when women display those same characteristics, it is likely to be either overlooked or attributed to some fault in the women's character (Mills and Murgatroyd 1991: 90). In this way, gender ideology is perpetuated within the workplace by women and men, maintaining the male-defined organizational environment.

Maternity and Workplace Experience

Fourteen of the women who were interviewed had had at least one child, and had used maternity leave policies while serving in the military. Several related additional types

of discriminating behaviour in the military workplace related to their maternity, behaviour which further served to remind them that as women and mothers, perhaps they were better suited to roles other than that of a serviceperson. In a study of the image and self-image of women manager's, Deborah Sheppard noted that:

> "Pregnancy is a highly sexualized status but with ambivalent and often negative attributions. It calls attention to women's sexual and reproductive uniqueness while revealing the incompatibility and often hostility with which pregnant women are regarded in organizational life" (1989: 151).

In fact, one woman in my study described a situation in which she felt that there was some distance between herself and her male co-workers prior to pregnancy. As most of them were married with families, she hoped that after she had a child, the common experience of family would provide an avenue to open communication and thus develop her working relationship with them. However, she was disappointed to discover that "it actually didn't work out that way. It sort of created more of a barrier..." (NCM; Married; 2 children; 13 years service). Several of the women in Deborah Sheppard's study worried that "they would no longer be seen as 'serious' organizational members because the perceived demands of childbearing and child-rearing would be seen as incompatible with organizational responsibilities" (1989: 152). For many women this fear becomes reality.

Experiences with maternity in the Canadian Forces ranged from subtle annoyances to workplace discrimination

and harassment. One woman became frustrated with a difficult administrative process during her first maternity experience and changed her approach for her second maternity period:

> "Even though you're on leave without pay, I feel like you almost get punished for getting pregnant in the service. So I wised up, and with my second one I accumulated all my leave, and yes, every year you have to write a memorandum and say I'm going on this big trip or something, could I please carry it over. So that it was almost like planned parenthood" (NCM; Married; 2 children; 11 years service).

In this particular case there was no evidence of discrimination, but she found the whole process of communicating with her supervisors, administrative staff and unemployment insurance agents quite cumbersome - too cumbersome to endure a second time. The Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces (MABWCF) has also noted that administrative issues related to pregnancy can be a problem. Problems associated with obtaining accurate and concise information can vary from place to place and are often dependent upon "the attitude and knowledge of the person administering the policy" (1991-92: 30). In addition, women that the MABWCF spoke with also felt "they were made to feel responsible, at fault, or 'to blame' for becoming pregnant, despite a number of years of effective service" (1991-92: 32).

In another case a position assignment was influenced by maternity. The woman involved also used her first experience with pregnancy as a lesson learned and made

changes the second time around:

> "I learned my lesson. Before I went to ____[work location A] I told them..I'm posted to your unit. I am pregnant. Immediately I got sort of put on the back of the list, in terms of positions. I was on maternity leave..I probably went back about the beginning of October, to work. And was junior person - supernumerary. Supie positions where you're doing odd jobs all over the place. So I learned..by the time I went from ____[work location A] to ____[work location B]. I was pregnant..I knew there were two jobs open - ____[one position] which I wanted, and the [other], which I did NOT want. There is no way I'm taking that job and there's no way I'm telling them I'm pregnant! So it worked out" (Officer; Married; 3 children; 12 years service).

Pregnancy in this case, affected job assignments even though the servicewoman remained fully capable of performing the required duties of whatever job she was assigned. In addition, position and work assignments based upon an anticipated maternity absence from work, could have potentially long term effects on career development and/or job satisfaction for the woman involved.

Discrimination in the workplace, as a direct result of pregnancy, also occurred in some instances. One woman described her experience this way:

> "I feel that I maybe went through a harassment situation with one [supervisor] throughout pregnancy. I can sort of see the attitude of people that say 'Why should I be paying for your maternity leave?' The bottom line is that it's there and I can take maternity leave and the Forces recognizes it, and I would take 10 weeks. She would just give me a hard time all the time..just everything. Like she would say to me..and none of the other people she would give crummy shifts..bad shifts. She gave me a lot of nights" (Officer; Married; 2 children; 13 years service).

In this case, as the women managers feared in Deborah

Sheppard's study, the supervisor believed that pregnancy should not be an organizational responsibility. The pregnant woman was considered an obstacle to workplace functioning and treated accordingly. The organizational difficulty with pregnancy (which was frequently mentioned by the women themselves) is the shortage of personnel which is created in the workplace. As noted by the MABWCF, "Where replacement is not a problem, there is little resentment of pregnancy", and "When replacement is a problem ...resentment tends to build among both male and female colleagues, who will be assuming extra duties during the period of leave" (1991-92: 31-32). Accordingly, the MABWCF had recommended that replacement needs should be considered to minimize difficulties due to the absence of personnel in the workplace.

In yet another case, the workplace discrimination of a pregnant woman negatively affected her future in the Canadian Forces. She described her situation this way:

> "I started getting really good PERs [Personnel Evaluation Reports]. I went on the French course for a year. And then I went to [work location], and I wasn't here three months and I got pregnant. But I still had a really good PER. I was only in my first year here and I got the second highest in the shop. After coming back from maternity leave - and I wasn't the only one. There was another girl who was on maternity leave too, and she got..me and her got the lowest..we tied for the lowest in the shop. And I was shocked. I couldn't believe it" (NCM; Married; 3 children; 13 years service).

Issues of job performance evaluation are among the most difficult to challenge in a work environment, as it is often

an issue of perception. Maternity provides one more indicator of women as female, and is, therefore, one more issue affecting perceptions of women's ability. Their credibility is dependent on how they measure up, relative to their male counterparts, who do not, of course, become pregnant. The experience of the MABWCF indicates that this type of practice is not uncommon; in fact, it reported that "Fears that pregnancy adversely affects the PERs are frequently expressed", and that "These practical concerns are reinforced by attitudes encountered toward pregnancy" (1991-92: 32) among servicemembers.

The attitudes toward women and pregnancy reflect both the problems surrounding women's absence from the workplace for childbearing, and perceptions surrounding women's biological and sexual difference. Additionally, perceptions surrounding childbearing are strongly linked to social norms surrounding childrearing. Deborah Sheppard notes that "research has shown that selection and promotion of women reflect widespread adherence to unsubstantiated beliefs that all women will leave to have children" (1989: 152). Research indicates, however, that women are more likely to leave jobs for other than family reasons (Wenk and Rosenfeld 1992), and 1991 Canadian data indicate that although women with children over six years old are more likely to work than those with children under six, women with children of all ages are more likely to be working than not working

(Armstrong and Armstrong 1994). Lynda Holstrom further argues that it is important to distinguish between childbearing and childrearing, for the following reason:

> "Though pregnancy and child bearing attest to a biological difference between the sexes, child rearing has been socially allocated to women and is thus more amenable to change" (1973: 75).

The biological division of labour, then, is potentially much less of a career handicap for women than the socially defined division of labour. While women's social roles are largely defined outside of the organization, organizational policies, practices and norms play a large part in perpetuating those social roles.

Why Women Stay: The Rewards of Male-Dominated Employment

The experience which women have shared over the past two decades in the Canadian Forces is that of being female in a male-dominated, male-defined and male-organized environment. While many women are quick to describe their experience as a member of the Canadian Forces as very positive overall, they also described experiences which challenged their control over how they were perceived within the workplace, and the organization as a whole. Those who had not experienced overt discrimination or harassment believed that the fact that they were women made a difference in how they were perceived as professionals by their superiors, co-workers and subordinates. However, women often stay for extended periods of time. As one woman stated, after 10 years of

service, "The reasons for me to leave the military outweighed the reasons for me to stay". As long as the reasons to stay outweigh the reasons to leave, women will stay. The following discussion of the rewards and benefits of military service for women illustrates the other side of the organizational context in which women must make the final decision to stay or leave.

Membership in the Canadian Forces, in spite of the negative aspects described above, offers many benefits. When women were asked to describe their experience, overall, it became evident that the ultimate decision to leave was a very difficult one. Leaving meant that these women would forfeit financial rewards, opportunities for training and advancement, networks of friends and colleagues, and the pride which they felt in a job well-done and service to their country. Women described some of the advantages of being in the military this way:

> "..Very interesting and the sort of things I normally wouldn't do..I think the education and the ability to learn as much as you did in a short period of time is probably the best thing about the military...I would have been promoted this year if I hadn't gotten out" (Officer; Married; 13 years service).
>
> "Through the military, they gave me my confidence to do the work. I was confident in the work that I was doing. That's something - I'm grateful to the military for the training" (NCM; Single; 10 years service).
>
> "I lived in a small town where everybody was a teacher or a nurse so I just wanted to do something different..I very much enjoyed the job. I had experience in the jobs I was doing far above what I would ever get in the civilian world. I think a lot is expected of people that we just take for granted. Once

> you get out, people just don't have that kind of experience. So the experience is probably the very, very best" (Officer; Married; 1 child; 13 years service).

Another women, when asked what kept her in as long as she did stay, replied:

> "The money, and I was really proud. You put on your uniform, you feel really proud, and I knew a lot of stuff. I knew I was smart. I knew I was pretty intelligent in all the stuff I did then. People would say, 'You're in the military?', and I'd tell them what I did and they'd be incredulous. 'You really do that?' People would look up to me. There was a lot of self-respect. I know my Mom and Dad..they were so proud of me" (NCM; Married; 3 children; 13 years service).

As detailed in chapter 2, women have gained many benefits within the Canadian Forces - benefits which gave them equality with their male counterparts in terms of pay, pension, training and employment. The organization has increasingly recognized, through policy changes, the need to provide women with adequate benefits for maternity as well as equal opportunity to train and serve in all aspects of military service. Several women acknowledged that while the military chain of command sometimes had its drawbacks, there is something to be said for knowing that you are getting the same pay as your male counterpart because pay is based upon rank. In addition, even though perceptions are influenced by "the fact that you're a woman", rank will accord you a certain degree of respect. It is not surprising, then, that the decision to leave was a difficult one for most of the women that I spoke with.

The experiences which women described to me, as **women**

in the organization, formed part of their overall experience as servicemembers. In varying ways, as will be discussed in the next chapter, these experiences were directly or peripherally related to their decision to leave. While in several cases women told me that they never would have left because of experiences such as those described in this chapter, these processes did, for the most part, influence the situation which they were in when they left. For example, the influence of maternity on job assignments can in turn influence the scope and nature of a women's work experience, and subsequently her perceptions of her future in the organization. In the end, the contextualization of experience in the organization is inextricably linked to future exit from the organization. The following chapter looks more closely at the processes and experiences which resulted in release from the Canadian Forces.

CHAPTER 7

NECESSARY CHOICES: UNDERSTANDING WOMEN'S EXIT FROM THE CANADIAN FORCES

The following discussion of organizational experience and family/organization conflicts illustrate the demands which were placed on the women who left and the point at which they decided that the benefits of membership and employment no longer allowed them to achieve an acceptable quality of life. Seven of the 23 women that were interviewed identified discriminating or harassing situations which were directly related to their decision to leave. Nine of the women interviewed had either a redress of grievance[29] or a harassment complaint ongoing at the time of release for issues such as discrimination and harassment. Others had attempted administrative solutions prior to release, but had abandoned the effort when they felt it would not help them. Still others decided against any administrative recourse or action outside their chain of command as they felt it would make their situation worse. Without exception these women had attempted to resolve the situation initially, by dealing directly with the problem at the workplace. Other women, although they indicated that they left for reasons unrelated

[29]Redress of grievance is a Canadian Forces administrative procedure through which members can seek compensation and/or resolution to a situation in which they believe they have been the victim of an injustice. This procedure is separate from the harassment complaint procedure, and involves submitting a grievance in writing within the organizational hierarchy/chain of command.

to discrimination or harassment, identified various incidents related to supervisory support and the work environment which contributed to their decision to leave.

Nine of the 23 women interviewed identified family related circumstances which were directly linked to their exit from the organization. While in three of these cases, the women felt that it was important that they were home full-time to raise their children, especially during the first few years, the remaining six left as a result of circumstances affecting family stability, primarily in terms of geographical location. The women often felt that they were left with no choice other than release; that is, they believed that their family and organizational roles were incompatible, especially once children became part of their families.[30]

While there were exceptions, women, overwhelmingly, chose to leave the Canadian Forces for gender-specific reasons which reflected quality of life issues - both in terms of family responsibility and personal well-being. Those who left strictly for one or the other were the exception. Virtually all of the women interviewed for this project made distinctions between their satisfaction with the work itself and the organizational processes which they

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[29]After release, 12 women moved directly into full-time employment, six became a full-time mother/homemaker, four pursued education on a full-time basis, and one moved on to part-time employment. At the time of the interview, these numbers had changed to 11, 5, 4, and 3, respectively.

encountered; in fact, 17 of the 23 women interviewed, expressed high levels of satisfaction and pride in relation to the jobs which they were doing in the Canadian Forces.[31] Research which has explored female job satisfaction in male-dominated occupations has been inconclusive in determining the likelihood that job satisfaction is linked to difficulties which women experience with predominantly male co-workers. While some conclude that there is not a link (Jurik and Halemba 1984; McIlwee 1982), others have indicated that "perceived male co-worker hostility significantly reduced the job satisfaction of blue-collar women" (O'Farrell and Harlan 1982: 260). However, there is an implication that women do not necessarily need a supportive atmosphere on the job so much as the absence of harassment and discrimination.

In the final analysis, the circumstances which affected women's decisions to leave were frequently linked to the organizational environment. More specifically, lack of supervisor and administrative support, often exacerbated by supervisor discrimination and harassment; cumulative stresses which resulted from combinations of discrimination based upon gender, maternity, family status, and language; and, lack of control over, and perceptions of commitment to,

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[30]After release, three women moved on to Reserve Force employment in the same occupation, and four others moved on to employment which allowed them to transfer occupation skills which they had gained in the Canadian Forces.

career. Each of these areas overlap and contributed to women's decisions to leave to varying degrees. The interaction between these issues and women's decisions to leave are illustrated and discussed in each section of this chapter.

Discriminating Processes: No Relief in Sight

The women interviewed for this project did not leave the organization as a result of a discriminating environment or a harassing situation that could be resolved. In fact, early in the interview process and after listening to women recount numerous experiences of verbal and physical harassment, I began to question why women stayed, rather than why they eventually left. Release did not become an option for these women until they reached a point in which the discriminating or harassing situation had been ongoing for a considerable amount of time, and they became aware that they were powerless to effect positive change to their situation. The following cases provide illustrations of these women's experiences.

BRENDA:[32]

(NCM, Married, 3 children, 13 years service)

Brenda described the frustration that she experienced in her attempts to seek redress of a low evaluation report which

[32]The names used to identify individual cases are not the real names of the women who participated in the interviews.

coincidentally followed her maternity leave and two years of harassment on the job:

> "I'd write it up and an officer would say change this and change that. I didn't have a computer or anything. I was always handwriting everything and I didn't have a lot of time to do it..three kids and you come home from work at four, try to make supper and try to do a wash, clean the house and then have time to work on my redress? I didn't have time. I tried to make time, but then I just got out before I finished redressing it. Then I thought, well, it wasn't going to do me any good anyway".

At one point Brenda thought that the harassment she was experiencing in the workplace would stop - the Warrant Officer responsible had been promoted and posted. To her horror, a Sergeant to whom she had previously turned for support, took over harassing her when the initial harasser left. When she had previously suggested to the Sergeant that she was considering harassment charges, he had advised her against it because the Warrant Officer might be her career manager one day.

Brenda applied for release under the Force Reduction Program because the Sergeant suggested to her that she should leave early with the special package because otherwise she could be asked to leave later. Considerable uncertainty surrounded the 1992 Force Reduction Program; as it was unknown whether volunteer applicants would provide the number of releases required, it was further assumed that retention would be based upon merit. Brenda was given every reason to believe that she could lose her job as she had received low PERs and was continuously harassed at work.

Harassment included unwanted sexual attention - "...he was following me everywhere...I'd turn around and he'd be there staring at me - staring me up and down" - as well as incidents in which the Warrant Officer screamed at her in the presence of co-workers. In another instance she was denied a duty trip to repair a piece of equipment for which she was fully qualified. When she questioned why she couldn't go she was told, "No we don't need you to go - you've got kids".

Although Brenda applied for release under the Force Reduction Program because she feared losing her job in the near future, she stated that, "I would never have gotten out, but the last two years were really bad for harassment. It was awful. I used to go to work..I used to cry in the morning". The circumstances surrounding her low evaluations and her belief that she would be released are further characterized by a lack of support and credibility in her work environment based upon gender, and beliefs surrounding gender roles.

CHRISTINE:

(Officer, Married, 15 years service)

Looking back over her experience in the Canadian Forces, Christine indicated that what she remembers most, "is frustration, powerlessness..this feeling of being totally..having no power whatsoever and not being able to do anything about it". She described her career as "very

positive" and "very negative"; a description reflecting the experience that she felt that she gained and the supportive people that she encountered, as well as her perception that "there was an overwhelming lack of acceptance of women in the military". Although her release was not linked to a particular situation, she described numerous incidents of personal and sexual harassment, that were based upon gender, language, and age. She described for example, a time when she had provided professional advice to a senior officer who didn't like the advice. He screamed at another officer that he wanted, "that *little girl* out of ____ [here]! No little girl is going to tell me what to do!". In another situation a senior officer had arranged for condoms to be placed in her purse, and then requested that she report to him as he was 'disappointed' with her - a practical joke which she did not find amusing. She found that women and their body image was also an issue, and cited instances in which the amounts and type of food that she ate was commented on. She was impatient with implications that Francophone women were 'sluts', and frustrated when evaluations noted that she "functioned 'fairly well' in English despite the fact that it was [her] second language", (the evaluator functioned in one language only). In the end,

> "...as much as I enjoyed what I was doing..I loved what I was doing..the environment was untenable for me. That's why I left".

The relatively few years remaining until 20 years and a

pension seemed like a lifetime, and there were no indications that things would change in the foreseeable future. Christine believed that women who seek redress for discrimination suffer "twice as a woman...because you're never believed. You have to prove it, so it's still going on".

* * *

When women received messages such as those received by Brenda and Christine - messages which indicated to them that there was little hope of the harassment and/or discrimination ending, release became the only escape. In cases like Brenda's the women were experiencing obvious harassment and discrimination in the workplace. In cases like Christine's it was the ongoing exposure to an environment which continuously applied double standards to the performance and behaviour of women and men, and the frequent efforts that were involved in addressing these differences, which formed the final decision to leave. The women who left the Canadian Forces in the midst of ongoing discrimination, had without exception attempted to resolve the situation by speaking to their supervisor, whether or not the supervisor was the problem. They were either ignored, told to ignore the problem, or found themselves in a situation that was becoming worse instead of better. After confronting the problem directly without success, women then submitted a redress of grievance or

harassment complaint, went to the next authority in line, or requested release after being unable to resolve the problem. One woman, for example, indicated to a superior that her immediate supervisor was abusing his authority, and that she considered it personal harassment. She was told that, "You might feel the way you want. That's the way it's going to be, and if he decides it this way, he gets my support". This woman remembers that her morale was very low at the time, and indicated that she managed to make it through the following year with the support of a co-worker. She did, however, submit a redress prior to leaving the Canadian Forces. The redress was granted subsequent to her release when the investigation determined that a male co-worker had also experienced the abuse of this particular officer's authority. While gender provides the basis for discrimination in many instances, the likelihood that a workplace in which gender discrimination exists is also a breeding ground for other types of discrimination and abuse of authority is discussed later in this chapter.

The degree to which women experienced discrimination or harassment was often closely linked to the support or lack thereof which they received within their work arrangements. While support from co-workers was often identified as a mechanism to relieve the stress which women were experiencing, it was the ultimate support which they received from supervisors and senior personnel which

determined whether or not the experience became serious enough to cause undue stress for the woman involved. Within the organizational hierarchy supervisors are responsible for the performance and well-being of their personnel; however, some women accept that for now women have to look out for other women. As one woman indicated:

> "I don't think it's up to women to take care of each other. I don't think that should be women's job. But I do think that that's what happens and in as much as we might not like it, it's still a man's world and men still dominate and control that. And these are the people you're going to report the harassment to and these are the people who have to initiate this. So you have to be really careful. **Really, really** careful about that" (NCM, Single, 12 years service).

Cynthia Cockburn concurs with this when she notes that "In the 1990s more women are likely to find themselves with responsibility for promoting sex equality in organizations" (1991: 13). In most cases in which women left because of discriminating circumstances, those superior to them in the chain of command were either directly responsible for the discrimination, or implicated through their passive or active acceptance of the behaviour. The following discussion explores the involvement of those in leadership positions more closely.

The Power of Leadership: One More Reason to Stay - Or Leave

The structure of an organization such as the military is characterized by a hierarchy of leadership which accords certain responsibilities and authority to those who hold

positions of supervision and management over others. While those in positions of leadership would find it difficult under current organizational structures to effectively guide and control the activities of the workplace without the authority that the organization gives them, this authority also provides them with the opportunity for abuse. The power accorded to leadership positions provides individuals with a certain amount of discretion in the completion of their duties, and the manner in which their performance is subsequently sanctioned and evaluated by the organization provides the guidelines for maintaining or altering relations within the workplace (Kanter 1977). The women who were interviewed frequently referred to the nature of leadership, as a significant influence on the quality of their experience in the Canadian Forces; that is, whether they considered their experience to be negative or positive, the nature of supervision and leadership was held responsible.

Although some of the women indicated that they had left for reasons largely related to their personal goals rather than deterrents within the organization, supervision often provided further motivation for release when decisions were pending. Debbie provides an illustration of this statement:

DEBBIE:

(NCM, Married, 12 years service)

Debbie explained to me that, immediately prior to her

release, her Warrant Officer "wasn't someone that you could turn to and would really take the time to take revenge if you went to someone else". In addition, his actions were fully supported by a Captain who managed the section. After some consideration of her situation at work Debbie submitted a request for release, and explained that,

> "I just got hassles from the time I put my release in..I had my release in for four months. He was going to charge me for insubordination..the Sergeant and my Master Corporal were trying to tell this guy [I] didn't do that..You know at the time I was getting ready to get out and I actually considered not getting out. Then when that happened I was clear that I was going to get out. As far as we were concerned he [the boss] was going to be there for a lot more years to come. A lot more years. So it was like, well, I can stay here and this is going to be always in the way or just stick to my original plan and get out. So I got out".

Debbie was threatened with an insubordination charge after staying at work to perform essential duties, with her Sergeant's permission, instead of appearing for a work-related, but non-essential activity. This last work situation, then, was emphasized by a boss who was more concerned with 'controlling' her than actually getting the job done. While she did not consider this a gender-specific situation, Debbie, like several others, concluded that there were many little things that lead to her decision to leave even though not everything happened at the same time. She added that she didn't often complain because "I had to be careful because I also needed to protect..that I wasn't just some whiny broad, that we [women] were so labelled". Also, like many others, Debbie had experienced sexual harassment

from senior personnel earlier in her career. Even though several other women had experienced the same type of harassment from one individual, these women were told by senior personnel that if they "didn't have proof [they] should not be saying anything because here's this man's whole career on the line...". She knew from past experiences that women were frequently treated differently, and that their experience was not considered as important as, for example, 'this man's' career.

* * *

Another woman, who was exploring her options for change both within and outside the military, also described her last supervisor as part of the overall situation leading to her decision to leave:

> "He told a lot of sexist jokes, and I was really uncomfortable around him. He was my boss...and actually that's the only thing in the squadron that bothered me and I might not have jumped on the FRP [Force Reduction Program] so fast if it hadn't been for him. Because at that point I did want to go back to school. I just didn't want to deal with him any more or people like him" (NCM, Single, 12 years service).

In the end, this woman applied for an FRP release as it provided her with a good opportunity to pursue further education and development outside of the military.

When women related their positive experiences within the Canadian Forces the nature of supervision was also identified as a key factor. For example, one woman described one posting this way:

> "I worked as ____ [position] in ____ [location] for four years in one department with seven guys and that was the greatest time too. I mean we had a great time. We just..we did sports..we were always doing sports - sports and ____ [the job]. That was our whole life. I worked for a great boss. He was just wonderful. We still contact each other. I still talk to the guys in that shop" (NCM, Married, 2 children, 16 years service).

Another woman told me that when she went to one posting, she "really lucked into a super boss, and he didn't have any of the attitudes that the other boss in ____ [previous posting] had" (Officer, Married, 3 children, 12 years service). On another occasion a senior officer was credited with fully supporting a unique request related to family circumstances; in this particular case the servicewoman involved was seriously considering release to resolve her problem, but was able to remain in the military for several more years.

These women's experiences illustrate the importance of leadership in shaping worker experiences within the organization, suggesting that "managers can influence workers' and supervisors' behaviour, if not their attitudes" (O'Farrell and Harlan 1982: 263). This view is supported by an explanation that describes managers as 'self-interested' and operating from a 'rational bias'; that is,

> "By definition the self-interested manager attempts to act in the manner that will most greatly enhance his or her own career or position, or will eliminate threats to it" (Larwood et al 1984: 341).

The self-interested manager, therefore, behaves in a way that will satisfy 'powerful others'. From this perspective, the following can be stated:

> "Discrimination is less likely if the power holder has signalled that it is unnecessary or disliked. Signalling situations include those in which (a) the power holder is a member of the discriminated against group; (b) the power holder likes, respects, or has initially contacted the manager through a member of the discriminated against group; or (c) the power holder has gone to an unusual length to state that discrimination is not acceptable" (Larwood et al 1984: 343).

In the case of workplace harassment and discrimination, then, supervisors control the immediate situation in a way that they feel will be of most benefit to their career. While the supervisor has the power to control workplace behaviour, the nature of this control is influenced by those wielding sufficient power to make changes. Within the organizational hierarchy, each supervisor/manager/leader is a potential power holder relative to the position of those below, and acts in accordance with those above them in the chain of command. The organizational hierarchy, then, is the tool which puts power into effect (Mills and Murgatroyd 1991). Kathy Ferguson states, in fact, that "Bureaucratic language is one-directional, in that it is difficult to 'talk back,' and it is acausal, in that it is difficult to find out where the directives originated and who is responsible for them" (1984: 15). The barriers which women face in the resolution of ongoing discrimination, therefore, represent an organizational disposition toward support of the 'status quo' which can often only be traced to individual attitudes and incompetency. Real and effective resolution will be found only in solutions which address the

organizational ideology surrounding sexuality and gender roles. In the meantime those who do not adhere to the organizational 'status quo' must cope with additional stresses which are imposed by their difference.

Gender and Stress - Continuous and Multiple Sources

While stress is an aspect of work that every employee must deal with at one time or another, women frequently experienced situations which were creating considerable stress as a result of the continuous exposure to an unpleasant environment or harassment, and multiple sources of stress which might be affecting them at the same time. In addition, when women found that they were isolated with the problem within their workplace with no social or administrative support, the situation was exacerbated. In some cases this meant a particular situation had been ongoing for anywhere between one and three years - usually beginning with the unacceptable behaviour of one or two senior members and evolving into a 'poisoned' work environment. In other cases, women felt that they had been discriminated against throughout most of the time which they had spent in the Canadian Forces - they were not able to ignore the injustices, and continued service meant a constant battle to be treated fairly in the workplace. The continued exposure to the environment, in addition to the knowledge that there was no way to escape, frequently

escalated the stress which these women were experiencing. The following two women's experiences provide an illustration of the processes and outcomes of cumulative and/or multiple sources of stress in the working environment:

DONNA:

(NCM, Single, 10 years service)

Donna had been harassed by her supervisor and discriminated against as a woman in an environment that was predominantly male. She described her early experience in this unit, as she overheard two Sergeants talking about her:

> "And they said, 'she's got three strikes against her. One, she's Anglophone, two, she's wearing a blue uniform' - I wore an air force uniform - 'and three, she's a woman. As long as I'm _____ [one Sergeant's position] she'll never work for me'..I mean, here I am..and all this was within my first few days. I was totally taken back, because I thought this isn't fair. This isn't happening. I'm imagining this. I really thought I was imagining this".

In this situation Donna found that the colour of her uniform and language that she spoke were barriers which she had to deal with in the workplace. In addition, she found herself at a disadvantage because she was female. She attempted to resolve the situation by talking to her supervisor. When that didn't work, she submitted a harassment complaint on one occasion and a redress of grievance on another. Once the paperwork was submitted, the workplace situation continued, and in the end the paperwork was never addressed; in fact it was lost - twice. At one point, she sought a

solution through a female officer who told her, "I'm not surprised at all..You had two strikes against you when you walked in, and it's not nice to say, but that's the way it is". Donna became even more frustrated at this point because she knew that people were aware of the negative situation in her working environment, but there was no indication that anyone was willing to effect any changes. The only recourse left for Donna was to leave the situation. When a posting was denied, release became the only viable alternative. Her experience became one of isolation and hopelessness. She told me that she didn't know anybody in NDHQ (National Defence Headquarters), but if she had "had a name or even a position up there [she] would have called and [she] would have screamed bloody murder". Finally, she made the decision to leave, but not without considerable effort and perseverance on her part. She described it this way:

> "...when I put my release in, I was just so fed up, after I put in the compassionate and they said no. I would have taken anywhere. I said just get me out of here - I don't care. I said I would have gone to _____ [another base]. I said not any more. I said I want out of here..and I don't care where it's at. And then it took me about two months of humming and hawing, talking about it, crying myself to sleep, and I said this is the way it is. This is no life..so I'm going to pack my bags and get ready to move".

Donna, like several others that I spoke with, said that had she known what kind of experience was waiting for her she would have left the Canadian Forces several years before. In the end she felt that the price that she had paid was too high.

DENISE:

(NCM, Married, 2 children, 16 years service)

Although Denise described her career in the Canadian Forces as positive overall, and concluded that she left for "a whole combination of factors", she also felt that she would "never make it to 20 years..without perhaps even punching someone in the face". The last few years of service had involved working for a boss whom she considered "very inept" and lacking interest in the people who worked for him, and a lot of "unhappy changes" in her trade. She felt that because her boss wasn't doing his job, she ended up with "about 30 percent more workload" than she should have had. She described the period preceding her release this way:

> "I slugged and busted my butt for one year. The first year I was here I worked all day long..I'd put my kids to bed and work until midnight, one o'clock in the morning. Turn around the very next morning and do another day's shift and repeat the same thing all over again. It was just - it was crazy. It was crazy. So I got to the point where I'm saying what am I doing this for?"

During this time, Denise noted that Canada was becoming more frequently involved in conflict situations overseas. At a time when she already had limited time to spend with her children, she felt that "sooner or later [she] was going to get pulled away from [her] kids". Denise had also requested that she be considered for a position on her base that she described as something that she really loved to do - "that's always been my baby" - and received no support from her boss. The Force Reduction Program provided her with a good

opportunity to take the pressure off, even though "maybe it's not such a good financial move".

Denise had accepted the expectations of the organization throughout her career while she raised her family, including instances of sexual harassment, postings to places that she had never asked for, and the extra hours with no pay that are often part of military service. In the end, she found herself in a situation which was very stressful, not only as a result of balancing long hours at work with family responsibility, but a situation that was exacerbated by a boss who was seemingly unaware of the workload that she was facing and who provided no support to those who worked for him. In this case, as in other apparently 'gender-neutral' circumstances, the work environment is difficult for all workers; however, the disproportionate responsibility which women have for home and family creates an added stress. Women, then, pay an added price for poor leadership and low quality work environments.

* * *

In another example, a woman did not recognize the significance of the stress she was experiencing until after she had left the Canadian Forces. When asked how she felt about her decision to leave as she looked back on it now, she told me this:

> "I have no regrets because I didn't realize I was being harassed so much. I didn't realize all my headaches were because I was being harassed all the time. I just said to my husband a couple of weeks ago, 'You know, I haven't had one headache since I got out! I can't believe it!' I used to have a headache everyday, and I used to go to MIR [medical inspection room] and I'd get sinutab..oh, I used to get all these headaches..I'd be there getting tylenol and aspirin. Every single day I'd be there getting something" (NCM, Married, 3 children, 13 years service).

Another common response from women when they were asked how they felt about their release when they looked back now, was that they should have left earlier. In one woman's words, "I should've got out earlier. I wasted my time staying around being treated like shit" (NCM, Married, 2 children, 15 years service).

Workplace stress is an issue which can affect everyone, female and male, in one way or another. The significance of women's experience lies in the various sources of stress with which they must cope. Women are participating on a daily basis in an environment in which they are the minority gender. As discussed earlier in the paper, this means managing their image as a woman as well as performing at a level that will be perceived as satisfactory to their supervisors. This often means working a bit harder than their male counterparts. When they are additionally subjected to a 'poisoned' work environment through continuous discrimination they are dealing with an additional source of stress. In some cases, women described harassing situations related to gender which they were

either able to resolve or leave behind through a posting, only to find themselves in a situation which was negative not just for them, but for all members of the work environment - female and male. The woman who had just escaped a stressful situation related to gender could find herself, almost immediately in another stressful situation.

The end result is that even though the precipitating circumstances under which a woman left may not have been gender-specific, by virtue of her gender she has dealt with continuous sources of stress in the work environment. Everyone encounters better times than others or is forced to deal with difficult situations throughout the course of a career. Women, however, are likely to be exposed to more stress, more often, simply because they are women. When the stress is continuous enough, and there is no hope that the work situation will become acceptable, release becomes the only viable option for some women. Women, it seems, pay a disproportionate price for workplace problems, but as the following discussion suggests, they are not the only ones who are affected.

Gender and Discrimination: A Workplace Issue

Sexual harassment has, perhaps, the highest profile of the various forms which sex discrimination can take in the workplace. In a critique of the way in which sexual harassment cases brought before U.S. courts were handled,

Catharine MacKinnon notes that employers escaped responsibility for harassment in work environments when the courts interpreted the events as *personal* - that is,

> "In all the cases in which relief is denied, the terms used to describe women's complaints of sexual harassment are strikingly similar, often identical, even when the cases do not refer to each other. Personal is the most common descriptive term for the incidents...Carmita Wood, who left her job because of the physical repercussions of attempting to ignore persistent sexual harassment by a superior, was denied unemployment benefits because her reasons for leaving work were found to be 'personal' and 'noncompelling'" (MacKinnon 1979: 83-4).

In addition to women's reactions to events or their working environment being interpreted as personal, the conduct of the harasser is also interpreted as personal, further relieving the employer of responsibility for employee behaviour.

> "To label sexual harassment 'personal' contributes to the mystification that sexual behavior, because it is sexual, is unique to particular personalities, specific or isolated to particular individuals or types of individuals, necessarily intimate or interpersonally special" (MacKinnon 1979: 87)

Taken one step further, that which cannot be labelled as clear incident(s) of sexual or personal harassment would further be attributed to personal, but not legitimate, experience. The experiences of the women who left the Canadian Forces illustrate, just as Catherine MacKinnon argued over a decade ago, that discrimination is not a personal, but a legitimate workplace problem.

Catherine MacKinnon also notes that sexual harassment was unspeakable until a social definition became

accessible - "The unnamed should not be mistaken for the nonexistent. Silence often speaks of pain and degradation so thorough that the situation cannot be conceived as other than it is" (1979: 28). Harassment is acknowledged only as long as the victim recognizes it as harassment, and it can be clearly demonstrated that the harassment occurred within an institutionally developed definition. One woman explained to me, for example, that she was the only woman in the environment she was working in prior to her release, and that she had experienced subtle harassment from her peers over the past two years. She described it this way:

> "The guys that gave me the hardest time were the _____ [rank level] - same rank [as me]".
> Interviewer: What about your supervisors? Were they aware of the problem?
> "Oh yea, they were, very much so, but they didn't do anything about it. According to them it was *my* problem..." (NCM, Single, 13 years service).

When asked if she had considered using the harassment policy to address the situation she was in, the above woman answered, "No, because I didn't have any proof. Maybe they'd say the guys don't want to talk to you - so what". In this particular case, the discriminating behaviour that this woman was experiencing was not considered harassment or discrimination by supervisors in the workplace even though this woman experienced different treatment based upon her gender. The treatment she was receiving was not only not defined as harassment, but was part of a continuous process which is further difficult to identify and prove; that is,

"everything they can do to make you look bad they will do...and that was going on *all the time* [my emphasis]". In addition, this woman did not experience discrimination at the hands of one 'problem' individual. As stated by the MABWCF, "It is not sexual harassment, in and of itself, that is the main problem...It is the almost routine denigration of women's participation by some seniors and peers that undermines integration" (1991-2: 18). This situation serves to illustrate not only the often invisible nature of discriminating processes in the workplace (to everyone except the person receiving the different treatment), but also the pervasive nature of workplace discrimination.

Additionally, women who had experienced discrimination often noted that others, (most frequently female co-workers), had also experienced similar treatment. One woman, for example, described a series of incidents during a field exercise in which she was participating. At the time of the exercise she had a young child and had arranged for long term child care to cover the period of the exercise. In addition, she and a co-worker, who both wanted to participate in the exercise even though there was only one position for them, had agreed to split the exercise in two - she would go for the first half and then they would change positions. She arranged her child care accordingly. When it was time for her to leave the exercise, her supervising officer insisted that she put it in writing why she was

leaving, thus giving the impression that she was unable to complete the exercise, even though the supervisor had been aware of the arrangements prior to the exercise. She explained to me that this was an unfortunate situation that occurred because her supervising officer happened to be an individual who was in a position of power that he couldn't adequately handle. This individual, she further explained, was also making sexual comments to females of lower ranks, as well as emotionally and psychologically abusing lower ranking males. When the Commanding Officer was made aware of the problems being created by this individual, he stated, "I know what he's like. I know he shouldn't be doing this, but I have to be careful because he's under a lot of pressure..so you're basically going to have to put up with him". In this particular case, one individual who held a position of power had a negative effect on the performance and experience of several individuals, including men and women. This person's problem was a workplace problem that had a direct effect on the performance of the unit as a whole.

Workplace discrimination, then, is seldom experienced in isolation from harassment just as it is often not a personal issue between an initiator and a receiver. Workplace harassment and discrimination based on gender and gender roles is a workplace issue. The effects permeate the workplace, affecting morale and stress levels, and therefore

worker productivity. If gender discrimination and harassment are ignored and denied, larger workplace problems are likely to also be ignored. Women frequently bear a greater amount of workplace inequity because of the dominant position of difference that their gender status represents in the organization. It is not, however, just a question of equitable treatment for women, but equitable and quality treatment which allows all workplace members to realize their full potential.

Family, Career and Mobility: A Question of Commitment

The current organization of military service requires that every member be available on a full-time basis, and maintain a lifestyle which offers maximum flexibility to the operational demands of the organization. To this end family interests are accommodated when it is considered in the best interest of the organization. *The Canadian Forces Personnel Concept*, for example, states that:

> "Personnel mobility is fundamental to the effective manning of the Forces. This need must, however, be balanced by concerns for the stability of units and impact of frequent geographical moves on military members and their dependents (1992: 5).

While the existence of family is acknowledged, the organization, first and foremost demands a total commitment from each of its members. The women who left the Canadian Forces for 'family' related reasons identified family stability and dual career issues which compromised not only

the quality of their family life, but their ability to continue to offer the total commitment that the organization demanded.

These women were predominantly, (but not exclusively), officers who left at the end of the 'Short Service Engagement' which marks the end of nine years of commissioned service. The circumstances under which these women made the decision not to continue service, are different from a normal request for a voluntary release in that these women were often offered a conversion to career status or continued service to 20 years under an 'Intermediate Engagement' contract several years before the actual end of their nine year contract. If they accepted their conversion to 'Intermediate Engagement' at the time that it was offered, they would forfeit the gratuity (severance pay package) which is payable at the completion of the 'Short Service Engagement'. If they did not accept the conversion and changed their mind later, they believed that they could apply for an extended contract at a later date. When these women made the decision to leave, therefore, it was in anticipation of receiving the gratuity. Most of these women did not change their mind about leaving as the end of their contract approached, primarily because they had young families and believed that at some point the military would not accommodate two careers in the same location. Those who did express interest in continuing

their career in the Canadian Forces found that they were unable to do so, as the Force Reduction Program was under way and they could not convert to a new contract.

Without exception, the servicewomen who left for family reasons had children, or were expecting a child in the near future. These women frequently expressed the belief that the organization accepts minimal responsibility for addressing family issues, such as ensuring that families are kept in the same location. They also frequently expressed the belief that once a woman has children, her commitment to her job is automatically questioned; that is, it is assumed that if you have an interest such as family, your interest in doing a good job for the organization decreases. Indeed, careers with men in mind, often come with the expectation that two people will be available for certain jobs - a wife to look after home and children as well as the wage worker. Careers also "demand a full-time schedule, an itinerant life for rapid advancement, professional entertaining, and so on" (Holstrom 1973). The following cases illustrate the experience of women who were faced with conflicting family and work issues:

LYNDA:

(Officer, Married, 4 children, 15 years service)

In Lynda's situation, the organization required that she be employed at two locations at the same time. Her spouse was placed in a 'Command' position, with the preference being

that he fill the position with his spouse accompanying him. While the receiving unit had a position which they would employ her in, to allow both of them to fulfil paid employment in the same location, the branch which employed her insisted that she was required at another location. As she couldn't be spared from one location, a request for leave without pay, to accompany her spouse for his posting, was also denied. Lynda's family had already been apart for one year for career reasons, and she felt that she was left with no option except to take a release from the Canadian Forces. In the end, the organization which couldn't spare her temporarily, lost her permanently from her paid position, but continued to benefit from her unpaid work at the other location. Lynda expressed disappointment over the way that things happened, but does not regret her decision to keep her family together.

PAT:

(Officer, Married, 2 children, 12 years service)
Pat had served only three years of a nine year 'short service engagement', when she was given the opportunity to sign an 'intermediate engagement'; if she signed the intermediate engagement she would be able to continue serving in the Canadian Forces until she had 20 years of service. However, she would forfeit the cash gratuity which is payable upon the completion of a short service engagement. In making a decision, she had to consider not

only her career, but that of her servicemember spouse and the future of their young family. Pat felt that it was too early to make the decision and deferred decision-making until a later date. Her boss at the time was completely supportive. Her subsequent boss, however, indicated that if she wasn't prepared to commit to the Canadian Forces, he wasn't prepared to **waste** any Personnel Evaluation scores on her. Although Pat did not agree with her boss, she explained that she did "understand his point of view and accepted his decision". In the end, Pat and her spouse decided that she would leave the Canadian Forces to ensure that they would remain together as a family. Although her career, overall, was going well, she is confident that she made the right decision for her family. Pat has continued to apply her training and experience to work with the Reserve Force in two different locations since her release from the Regular Force.

* * *

In addition to family stability, these women were also concerned that they were no longer able to fulfil a complete commitment to the organization. They articulated this commitment as being ready, willing and able to go anywhere at any time. One woman explained that after requesting a period of leave without pay to accompany her spouse on a posting, her boss concluded that if she was not 'dedicated' enough to work, then positions on career courses should not

be available to her. It is not surprising, then, that women understand that their commitment to the organization includes putting its interests ahead of their own personal concerns, most often family. As indicated in earlier discussion, women are disproportionately held responsible for family responsibilities, and are, therefore, put into a position in which they have to prove their commitment to work. The assumption is that men have a spouse to take care of family interests so their commitment to work is less likely to be questioned.

In most of the cases in which a woman identified 'family' as the predominant reason for leaving, the woman had a servicemember spouse.[33] An additional concern for these women was that their children may be not only separated from both parents at the same time, but that both parents would be involved in a potentially dangerous task at the same time. Specifically, one woman stated that, "..with both of us in the service and two children, I really felt that I couldn't honestly say that I was ready to go at any time off anywhere", and "I don't know if I'm prepared to risk the chance of both parents being in a risk situation from their children" (Officer, Married, 2 children, 10 years service).

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[32]17 of the women in the sample were married, 11 to servicemembers. All of those who became a full-time mother/homemaker (6) after release were married to a servicemember.

Several women also referred to the constant challenge of finding day care for their children, taking annual leave when their childrer were sick, and relying on their extended families and close friends when they were required to be away from home for extended periods of time. In some cases these responsibilities were shared with spouses, but more often than not the family was the woman's responsibility. In a study of dual-earner couples in Canada, for example, the researchers concluded that couple symmetry does not exist; in fact, gender inequity is "most pervasive where the greatest need for equity would appear to exist: among young employed mothers with one or more children under the age of six" (Lupri and Mills 1987: 48). One woman described a situation in which she was at work and couldn't find someone to relieve her so she could leave, her husband was at work and couldn't be located, and the babysitter called saying that her baby had a fever. While she was disappointed in her co-workers who wouldn't help her out even though she had filled in for them for their own family situations which had arisen previously, she said to me, "I tell you something - you haven't seen guilt until you're a mother and your kid is sick and you don't know what to do" (NCM, 2 children, 12 years service). This woman described this situation as instrumental in her decision to leave the Canadian Forces. Family responsibility, as identified earlier, is an additional stressor for many women, and the problem is

exacerbated by inflexibility in the workplace. The women in this study who had the financial resources (usually a spouse's income) to leave the military to either be at home part-time or full-time, or to ensure the family's geographic stability, most often chose to leave when their family was in its infant stages.

Overall, women described an overwhelming lack of control over their career development including what type of work they would do, where, and when. This phenomenon is not necessarily gender-specific, but a general characteristic of the 'career-management' system used in the Canadian Forces. Equality, in the organizational sense is interpreted as same treatment for all, regardless of gender or family status. Members who request 'compassionate' status due to extenuating personal circumstances, forfeit career training and advancement until the problem is resolved and they are once again available for employment anywhere at any time. The assumption is that if members are not ready, willing and able to fulfil all organizational commitments without question, their personal interests stand in opposition to the organization and their work.

The organizational emphasis on career progression which is contingent upon full-time, itinerant, and continuous service, then, presents problems which are unique to many women with family responsibilities. Rather than accommodate those who are forced to choose family obligations over their

career, the organization frequently adopts positions of inflexibility which directly and indirectly punish women. In one case, for example, a woman who was posted without consultation or any opportunity for an alternative location, and who subsequently requested a voluntary release due to family circumstances, was accused of 'posting evasion'. As a result she was restricted from re-enrolment or service in the Reserve Force, except in the case of a national emergency. Although she was able to change the circumstances associated with her release, she was put in a position in which she had to 'prove' that her circumstances were legitimate, and not in opposition to her commitment to the Canadian Forces. The Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces has recognized the problems that this inflexibility presents for women, and has suggested that further study of the impact of career structures on gender is needed (1991-92: 16). The Board has further recommended that policies which facilitate re-entry into the Regular Force and into the Reserve Force be explored (1991-91: 3).

The experiences of these women are illustrative of the dichotomy which exists between organizational commitment and family responsibility within organizational ideology. This ideology shapes the way in which policies are formulated and decisions affecting organizational members **and** their families are made. Assumptions which posit waged work as the central focus for a person's life are actually dependent

on the wage worker's non-responsibility for domestic labour (Tancred 1992). As noted by Peta Tancred, the feminist literature surrounding issues of public and private gender role separation, "has underlined that this separation is a myth and that the organization has direct implications for reproductive work" (1992: 11) - both in terms of the way in which the organizational sexuality and gender roles are reproduced, and reproductive/domestic roles are defined and organized in the private sphere. While organizations exist in relation to the broader societal value system, each is "shaped and reshaped by the other" (Mills 1992: 103).

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ENVIRONMENT AND EXIT

The attrition of women from the Canadian Forces can be understood both in terms of a male-dominated and male-defined work environment which presents numerous barriers to equality for women in the organization, and social values which dictate women's roles in Canadian society. However, as noted above, there is a reciprocal relationship between the broader societal context and the organization - each contributes to the other. On the one hand, women's roles have expanded and policies governing the equitable treatment of women and men have evolved as a direct result of political and legal directives, such as the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women, and the decision of the 1989 Canadian Human Rights Tribunal. On the other hand, women within the organization have exerted continuous effort to adapt and address injustices which they have experienced, and continue to experience. The organization, as a result of these interacting efforts, effects or resists change.

The experience of women, and their subsequent decision to leave is only one way of measuring the degree and success of change. Attrition rates into the 1990s indicate that women continue to leave the Canadian Forces at a greater rate than their male counter parts, except during the first three years of service. The fact that women become more

likely to leave than their male counterparts after 10 years of service provides some indication that women do not experience a fully supportive environment within the Canadian Forces.

Women make the decision to leave within the context of a male-dominated environment which is characterized by policies which have been changing, to some extent, since the 1970 Royal Commission on the Status of Women. These policy changes increasingly reflect so-called `gender-neutrality' to accommodate the integration of women. Despite policy "laundering", the workplace itself, however, continues to operate around ideologies of `men's work', and women therefore remain the sexualized `other' in the environment. Part of the experience of being a woman in this environment includes challenging barriers to negative perceptions of women's ability, and stereotypes and myths surrounding maternity and domestic responsibility. This raises the question of whether `gender-neutrality', in terms of policy, is a misleading concept within a context such as the Canadian Forces. Adrienne Rich has argued, for example,

> "If there is any misleading concept, it is that of `co-education': that because women and men are sitting in the same classrooms, hearing the same lectures, reading the same books, performing the same laboratory experiments, they are receiving an equal education. They are not, first because the context of education itself validates men even as it intimidates women." (1985: 24-5).

Just as an educational setting provides a different learning experience for women, an organizational context such as the

Canadian Forces provides experiences and challenges for women that men do not encounter. Policies, then, although applied 'equally' to women and men, will effect different experiences of the work environment and the challenges which it presents.

A disturbing number of women left the Canadian Forces simply because they experienced a work environment that ranged from unsupportive to outwardly hostile toward women. The result for many is a continuous series of challenges which extend, to varying degrees and descriptions, throughout their entire career. Family responsibilities, which are disproportionately women's domain, are either not taken into account, or are taken into account without the input of the women involved, and in a way that negatively affects their careers. Finally, the relationship between organization and family is regulated in a way which excludes one from the other, ignoring the reality of inseparable spheres.

The sample used in this study does not represent women serving in land and sea operational occupations, although some women did serve in these environments during their career. It is likely that many of the experiences of the women in this sample will be representative of women serving in these occupations, and the results of this research, with reference to women's exit, can be generalized to these groups. Although it is recognized that women serving in

mobile operational environments might be presented with unique challenges with reference to family responsibility, there is no reason to believe that they will not experience a male-dominated environment in ways similar to other women in the organization. In fact, their experiences are likely to be more clearly defined on male terms. As several of the women who were interviewed acknowledged, it is difficult to break new ground for women.

The system which has been put in place to address injustices in the workplace has also failed many of the women who have left. Although the system may produce equally dismal results for men who find it necessary to seek resolution of unacceptable workplace circumstances, women must rely more frequently on leadership and administrative processes to address the barriers which interfere with their job performance. While women continue to serve, they are disproportionately responsible for effecting positive change in the workplace. Because their status of gender difference is one that continuously challenges organizational ideology in various ways, they are most often put in a position of conflict with organizational rules and behaviours. The changes that women effect, however, also have an impact on the quality of life for others who represent "difference" in terms of such things as family commitment, sexual orientation, or minority status based on language, race or ethnicity. In the absence of positive workplace leadership

and broader organizational supports, however, it will "take generations of highly motivated and persistent women to even begin to effect equitable changes" to some of the conditions which women face" (MABWCF 1991-92: 14). The women who leave, however, leave behind a unique lifestyle, substantial financial benefits, and valuable opportunities for training and advancement.

The Minister's Advisory Board on Women in the Canadian Forces has recommended that more effective reporting procedures be put in place to allow women to effectively address issues of discrimination and harassment - procedures which would allow women to seek redress outside of the hierarchy which imposes much of the problem. The Board is steadfast in its view that further education and training surrounding gender issues is required, as well as improved methods of implementing education and training packages. Finally, as indicated earlier, the Board recommends that methods of improving the flexibility of the organization vis a vis women's family responsibilities and roles be explored.

While many women feel that things are slowly changing, and many women and men continue to exert considerable effort to provide equitable opportunity for an improved quality of life and career for women in the Canadian Forces, women continue to represent a "difference" which the organization as a whole has not yet fully confronted through its policies and treatment of women. To effectively implement change to

the barriers which women face, the current dichotomy of organization and family commitment will first have to be addressed, and concurrently the organization will have to adopt a stand which reflects real, rather than politically and legally desirable, commitment to change.

APPENDIX A

THE SAMPLE*

1. Release Item:

4C - 12 (request submitted for voluntary release prior to the end of a contract)
4B - 7 (end of contract/turned down offer for extension of contract prior to end of short service engagement - Officers)
5C - 4 (requested voluntary release under Force Reduction Program)

2. Rank Status:

Non-Commissioned Member - 12
Officer - 11

3. Marital Status:

Married - 17 (11 to a servicemember)
Single - 6

4. Children at Release:

No children - 8
Preschool Child(ren) - 3
School Age Child(ren) - 7
Preschool and School Age - 5

5. First Official Language:

English - 19
French - 4

6. Branch of Military:

Administration and Support - 12
Medical - 5
Air - 5
Communications and Engineering - 1

7. Years of Service:

10 - 3
11 - 3
12 - 5
13 - 7
15 - 3
16 - 1
22 - 1 (broken service)

8. Activity Immediately After Release:

Full-time Position Out of Home - 12
Full-time Mother/Homemaker - 6
Part-time Position Out of Home - 1
Full-time Student - 4

* Specific Occupations and Cross Referencing of Sample Characteristics Are Not Provided in the Interest of Confidentiality

APPENDIX B

(Letter of Introduction - mailed out to sample October 1993)

13 September 1993

My name is Karen Davis and I am a Personnel Selection Officer in the Canadian Forces. I am currently working on my Master's Thesis in Sociology at McGill University.

My thesis research involves finding out more about why members leave the Canadian Forces with more than 10, and less than 20 years of service. Information which could be provided by people like yourself is, therefore, valuable. This research is being completed to fulfill the requirements for the Master of Arts degree in Sociology at McGill University.

You have been selected at random to receive this letter. It is my hope that you will agree to participate in an interview to support my project. Participation is voluntary, and the interview will be kept strictly confidential; that is, any information concerning you will be available only to myself and the professors who are advising me on this project. Excerpts of the interview may be made part of the final research report, but under no circumstances will your name or identifying characteristics be included in the report.

If you are willing to participate in an interview, please fill in the requested information on the enclosed page and return it to me in the stamped envelope provided. I can also be contacted through EMail CX57000@MusicA.McGill.CA., if you prefer. Once I receive a reply, I will contact you to arrange the interview at a time and place which is convenient for you. If you do not wish to participate in an interview, I would also appreciate your comments.

Thank You for your time.

Karen Davis

_____**YES**, I will participate in an interview. I can be contacted as follows:

NAME:_____

ADDRESS:_____

PHONE:_____

_____**NO**, I will not participate in an interview.

_____**NOT INTERESTED**

_____**NOT AVAILABLE**

_____**OTHER** (comments welcome)

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Thank You, and review of confidentiality (as stated in letter that was received)

Overview of Canadian Forces Career - Occupation, Training and Experience, Postings, Rank

Experience Within the Organization - Best/Worst (aspects of being in the military), Most/Least Valuable, Expectations and Actual Experience

Processes/Events Leading to Decision to Leave (options considered, sudden or gradual decision etc.)

Intended Activity Upon Release

Activities/Experiences Since Release

Looking Back - Overall Assessment of Experience Within the Canadian Forces (for example, did it meet your expectations?)

Effect of Gender Related Policy Changes - maternity leave, expanded roles etc.

Personal Circumstances - Marital Status, Children...

What made you decide to participate in this interview (or agree to)?

Are there any aspects of your experience within the Canadian Forces that we haven't covered that you feel is significant (especially to your ultimate decision to leave?)

If I have further questions or would like to clarify any points later, do you have any objection to me calling you?

Are you interested in receiving a copy of the completed research project? (If yes, verify mailing address for summer 1994)

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