Between Military Intent and Experience: Understanding Disconnect through Institutional Ethnography

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Abstract: Recent scandals and longstanding systemic issues related to sexual misconduct, discrimination, and exclusionary practices have prompted the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to undertake cultural reforms. *CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve* (DND, 2022) speaks to the need for institution-wide culture change and the importance of leadership and education in this endeavour. Yet we don't know how the ideas purported within *Trusted to Serve* manifest within training. This disjuncture between policy and culture may be stalling progress and raises the question, how can policy and culture better communicate? Inquiring into Institutional Ethnography, this article shows its suitability to (1) make the disconnect between the institution's values, articulated in policy, and the daily experience of cadets visible; (2) draw attention to the ways cadets witness institutional policies upheld and contradicted within their learning environment; and (3) raise awareness on the unnecessary work imposed upon military members by the actions and beliefs of others.

Keywords: Military Culture, Military Education, Institutional Ethnography

Recent scandals and longstanding systemic issues related to sexual misconduct, discrimination, and exclusionary practices have prompted the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) to undertake cultural reforms at the institutional level. According to the CAF, culture change is about developing an environment of mutual respect, dignity, and inclusion amongst all members of the defence team and is guided by *CAF Ethos: Trusted to Serve*.[1] These challenges are not unique to CAF and can be seen to varying degrees within the armed forces of Western nations. Prior research suggests that attempts to address institutional culture within the CAF have been ineffective[2] and efforts to incorporate underrepresented groups (i.e., women, LGBTQIA2S+, and Indigenous peoples) are better described as acts of assimilation.[3] The lack of progress can be attributed to unchallenged beliefs and behaviours leading to a misogynistic culture.[4] As a high-level response to this criticism and a means to chart a new course, *Trusted to Serve* identifies leaders as having "the most significant impact on CAF culture and cohesion."[5] Yet, we don't know how the ideas and values purported within *Trusted to Serve* manifest within the classrooms of the institution's future leaders. This disjunction between culture and policy in the CAF is stalling progress on addressing systemic issues and raises questions about the relationship between policy and culture.

Educating approximately 30% of CAF officers, The Royal Military College of Canada (RMC) exists at the intersection between military, education, and leadership that is not immune to the socio-cultural issues affecting the larger organization.[6] During four years of study, institutional (i.e., CAF policies) and instructional forces shape the cadet experience. Whether through the application of policies (e.g., direct and focused instruction) or more subtle demonstrations of individual beliefs (e.g., tolerating

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[1] Department of National Defence (DND), *Canadian Armed Forces Ethos: Trusted to* Serve (Canadian Defence Academy, 2022).

[2] Marcia Kovitz, "Sexual (Mis)conduct in the Canadian Forces," *Critical Military Studies* 7, no. 2 (2021): pp. 79-99. https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2018.1494883

[3] Karen Davis, "Socio-Cultural Dynamics in Gender and Military Contexts: Seeking and Understanding Change," *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 8, no. 1 (2022): pp. 66-74. https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh-2021-0088

[4] Walter Callaghan, "Missing the Point: A Critical Reflection on Operation HONOUR and Reactions to Military Sexual Misconduct by Veterans of the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis* 41, no. 2 (2021): pp. 72-87. https://doi.org/10.7202/1076201ar

[5] DND, *Trusted to Serve*, p. 3.

[6] Louise Arbour, *Report of the Independent External Comprehensive Review of the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces* (2022). https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/documents/reports/2022/iecr-report.pdf

inappropriate behaviour), educators play a role in developing cadet values and attitudes. Therefore, it is important to understand how culture change initiatives are described, delivered through education, received, and integrated into the actions and lives of RMC cadets. Upon graduation, RMC cadets become commissioned officers and leaders within the CAF. Therefore, cadets are leaders-in-training and shaped by their time at RMC. While this paper uses RMC as an illustrative case worthy of exploration within the CAF, these issues are not unique as they mirror comparable challenges within the armed forces. This complication is of concern because the CAF believes leaders are integral to modernizing the institution.[7] Therefore, it is important to understand the ways in which the institution shapes and influences the development of leaders and to what extent a disjuncture exists between the goal of culture change and the reality experienced by students.

Responding to Taber's call to expand methodological boundaries,[8] this paper will position Institutional Ethnography (IE)[9] as a qualitative method well-suited to exploring the distance between the CAF's stated goals and the lived experiences of its members. Institutional Ethnography allows for an examination of individual experiences and how they are affected by unseen powers. By exploring "how" as opposed to "why" of individual experiences, IE allows the researcher to identify, name, and understand how policies from afar affect the everyday lives of people. As an established method for considering social processes of organizational life, IE is well suited to examining the effects of policy.[10] Put another way, the goal of using an IE within the RMC would be to explicate how CAF policies such as *Trusted to Serve*[11] organize and coordinate the everyday lives of cadets. Understanding how standardized mandates actualize in real settings is important where conformity at the institutional level is sought.

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[7] DND, *Trusted to* Serve.

[8] Nancy Taber, "Institutional Ethnography, Autoethnography, and Narrative: An Argument for Incorporating Multiple Methodologies*," Qualitative Research* 10 (2010), no. 1: pp 5-25.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794109348680

[9] Dorothy Smith, *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (AltaMira Press, 2005).

[10] Jeffrey Longhofer, Jerry Floersch, and Janet Hoy, *Qualitative Methods for Practice Research* (Oxford University Press, 2013).

[11] DND, *Trusted to* Serve.

After a careful examination of existing literature, I suggest there are three compelling advantages to adopting an IE methodology to explicate the gap between policy and culture within the CAF, specifically by: (1) making the disconnect between the institution's values, as articulated in policy, and the daily experience of cadets visible; (2) draw attention to the ways cadets witness and experience institutional policies upheld and contradicted within their learning environment; and (3) raising awareness on the unnecessary work imposed upon military members by the actions, attitudes, and beliefs of others. Before delving into this, it is necessary to discuss what we know about the gendered implementation of policy within the CAF and the ways in which privilege and oppression manifest. From there, I will describe IE and relevant examples of its use to show the methods' suitability and applicability to understanding culture change within the CAF. Finally, I will expand upon the three suggestions posed above by showing how similar issues were explored elsewhere and how researchers might respond within a Canadian context.

This article brings two sets of literature into dialogue with each other that are not often in conversation with one another, CAF culture and IE, in an attempt to show how the latter can address the former. This article is guided by the following question: What can IE contribute to understanding and addressing the problem of CAF culture? What follows focuses on generating answers to that question.

Context within the Canadian Armed Forces

Hegemonic masculinity explains why men, or more specifically the 'ideal' masculine man, maintain dominant roles over women, marginalized males, and trans and gender non-conforming individuals. [12] Militarized masculinities build upon this idea and represent a particular form of hegemonic masculinity, and can be seen through concepts such as authority, bravery, and combat. [13] Within the CAF, personnel who do not fit within the heteronormative, cis-gendered white male narrative are forced to identify

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[12] Raylene Connell, *Masculinities* (2nd ed.), (University of California Press, 2005).

[13] Irja Malmio, "Rituals of (Un)Changing Masculinity: Cohesion or Diversity? A study of the Fraternization Traditions of Swedish Cadets' at the Military Academy," *NORMA* 17, no. 3 (2022): pp. 181–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2022.2033543

accepted nuance and adopt traits associated with this dominant group.[14] These nuances represent a "hidden curriculum."[15] For those outside of the majority group, they must operate within an organization where hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity are privileged and integral to culture and structure.[16] Examining masculinities and femininities within the CAF, Taber sought to understand how those who don't align with accepted norms are marginalized.[17] Building upon Deschamps's description that a culture permissive of low-level inappropriate sexual conduct exists within the CAF,[18] Taber states that the feminization of certain members contributes to gender discrimination and sexual harassment.[19] The development of a 'warrior' identity is important to maintaining the status quo because privileging a certain masculine identity is often constructed by feminizing non-desired traits.

Examining her time at RMC and within an operational helicopter squadron, Taber identified the challenges women face within masculine organizations and how learning to fit occurs outside of the classroom through a "hidden curriculum."[20] The hidden curriculum speaks to the ways in which women must change to fit in and could be seen through the adoption of more masculine traits and hegemonic norms. Attempting to understand how women operate within a masculinized CAF culture, McCristall and Baggaley found women's identities shifted in response to their circumstances. Consistent with other research, the women in McCristall and Baggaley's study needed to learn the nuances of the dominant culture through an informal or hidden curriculum and adopt

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[14] Philip McCristall, and Katherine Baggaley, "The Progressions of a Gendered Military: A Theoretical Examination of Gender Inequality in the Canadian Military," *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 5, no. 1 (2019): pp. 119–126. https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh.2017-0026

[15] Nancy Taber, "Learning How to be a Woman in the Canadian Forces/Unlearning it Through Feminism," *Studies in Continuing Education* 27, no. 3 (2005): p. 92.

[16] Tanya George, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion: Racialized Women's Experiences in the Canadian Armed Forces," *Atlantis* 41, no. 2 (2020): p. 50. https://doi.org/10.7202/1076199ar

[17] Nancy Taber, "After Deschamps: Men, Masculinities, and the Canadian Armed Forces," *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health* 4, no. 1 (2018): pp. 100–107. https://doi.org/10.3138/jmvfh.2017-0005

[18] Marie Deschamps, *External Review into Sexual Misconduct and Sexual Harassment in the Canadian Armed Forces.* (2015): p. 102. https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/dnd-mdn/migration/assets/FORCES_Internet/docs/en/caf-community-support-services-harassment/era-final-report-april-20-2015-eng.pdf

[19] Taber, "After Deschamps."

[20] Taber, "Learning," p. 292.

acceptable ways of behaving within a masculinized culture, in other words, they needed to assimilate.[21]

Shifting perspective from members of the armed forces to their partners, Bauer and Giles explored militarized masculinities in the home.[22] Using critical discourse analysis of interviews, they found militarized masculinities to be both problematic in the home and contested by their partner. The partners of military members associated militarized masculinities with displays of "strength, bravery, and resiliency in their training"[23] with one participant identifying issues when 'work' language and jokes entered the home. This resulted in friction that is seen through the military member's partner's response "I'm not your army buddy – I'm your wife."[24] While not focused specifically on the military member, this research draws attention to how institutional culture exists beyond the confines of the CAF.

Exploring how military cadets experience gender differences, Scoppio et al. compared findings between those enrolled at the two Canadian Military Colleges (RMC and RMC St-Jean) and those attending civilian universities under the Regular Officer Training Plan.[25] They found those attending civilian universities enjoyed a more positive learning experience. In contrast, women attending Canadian Military Colleges were less likely to perceive gender equality in terms of their treatment while men were less likely to believe in equality as it related to standards. This reinforces earlier work by Scoppio and Luyt which explored a diversity gap between these two groups of students. They found the military, as a deeply structured organization, struggles to embrace change and that this may be due to the homogeneous nature of CAF. An additional factor is the lack of diversity within Canadian Military Colleges when compared to civilian universities.[26]

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[21] McCristall and Baggaley "Gendered Military."

[22] Michelle E.E. Bauer and Audrey R. Giles, "Militarized Masculinities in the Home: 'I'm not your Army Buddy - I'm your Wife,'" *NORMA* 17, no. 1 (2022): pp. 21–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/18902138.2021.2017724

[23] Bauer and Giles, "Militarized Masculinities in the Home," p. 28.

[24] Bauer and Giles, "Militarized Masculinities in the Home," p. 28.

[25] Grazia Scoppio, Nancy Otis, Yan (Lizzie) Yan, and Sawyer Hogenkamp. " Experiences of Officer Cadets in Canadian Military Colleges and Civilian Universities:" A Gender Perspective. *Armed Forces and Society* 1, no. 21 (2020): pp. 49-69. https://doi.org/10.1177/0095327X20905121

[26] Grazia Scoppio and Ilka Luyt "The Diversity Gap: A Comparison between Canadian Military Colleges and Civilian Post-Secondary Institutions," *The International Journal of Organizational Diversity* 16, no. 3 (2016): pp. 1–21. https://doi.org/10.18848/2328-6261/CGP/v16i03/1-21

External to the CAF but still relevant, Barret, Jansen, Kramer, and Malmio explored the armed forces of other nations. Exploring three different communities within the United States Navy, specifically aviation, surface warfare, and supply corps, Barret's study identified a link between masculinity, violence and the military that is more multifaceted than the idea of male warrior suggests. Using a life history approach, Barret found each group held a distinct view on what is ideal, and that these beliefs were constructed through associations of difference with each group identifying certain traits as desired or *masculine* and therefore traits with negative connotations were deemed feminine.[27]

Using different approaches, both Malmio Jansen and Kramer explored defence academies from the perspectives of the military cadet. Malmio explored how traditions within a Swedish Military Academy constructed and upheld masculinity norms. Through their examination of the student handbook and interviews with first-year cadets, they identified three themes: separation, which establishes and reinforces the binary category of civilian and military members; homosociality, consisting of those activities which reproduce masculine norms; and fraternization, describing activities designed to create cohesion amongst the group. From this they found cohesion was defined and based upon masculine norms which led to conflict between society and its desire for diversity and the military's need for cohesion. Malmio explained how militarized masculinities obscure individual aspects of gender and through that make it hard to identify how certain traits are oppressed.[28] Jansen and Kramer used Institutional Ethnography to explore the military cadet experiences navigating official structures within the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA), a setting comparable to this proposed study and will be used to demonstrate Institutional Ethnography's applicability within the CAF. They found the cadets adapted to dealing with "perfect imperfection,"[29] which can be seen as cadets realized that "the widely appreciated military values are not observed by all"[30] and leads to a reduction in esteem for the NLDA.

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[27] Frank J. Barrett, "The Organizational Construction of Hegemonic Masculinity: The Case of the US Navy," *Gender, Work & Organization* 3, no. 3 (1996): pp. 129–142. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0432.1996.tb00054.x

[28] Malmio, "Rituals of (Un)Changing Masculinity."

[29] Marenne Mei Jansen and E. Kramer, "Military Mores – An Institutional Ethnography," *Ethnography and Education* 14, no. 4 (2018): p. 11 https://doi.org/10.1080/17457823.2018.1471612

[30] Jansen and Kramer, "Military Mores," p. 11.

Building upon militarized masculinities, an examination of institutional policies shows how privilege manifests within these documents. The CAF's military structure and culture is white, masculine, and heterosexual [31] and that militarized masculinity is privileged. [32] The connections between masculinities, gender and the CAF as a social institution produce the context within which institutional policies are conceived and developed. The CAF exerts control over its members through the development and application of institutional policies. As text, these policies represent rules that govern all aspects of a military member's life. By examining research focused specifically on policy, such as Taber's analysis of *Trusted to Serve*, [33] or the effects of policy on individuals, [34] we can see that policy and its implementation is not neutral.

Dominant narratives are perpetuated through the ideological codes such as duty, honour, and service before self. These themes are evident within the *Duty with Honour*, [35] which defines the profession of arms within Canada, and concepts such as universality of service, which speaks the potential requirement to sacrifice one's life during military service. Exploring these documents, Taber found they reinforce "prevailing norms as well as a dominant narrative" [36] and stand in contrast to employment equity policies and the CAF's stated desire of having a diverse membership. Taber also examined and identified concerns with the implementation of CAF policies focused on harassment and found they are often reactive. Instead of addressing broad issues such as creating a more inclusive environment for women or those who identify outside of the male/female binary, policies are more narrowly focused. Taber's key claim is that the gender-neutral stance of these documents and the absence of a definition defining sexual harassment contradicts research and treats all forms of harassment as equal. [37]

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[31] George, "Troubling Diversity and Inclusion."

[32] Taber, "After Deschamps."

[33] Nancy Taber, "Trusted to Serve: Rethinking the CAF Ethos for Culture Change," *Canadian Military Journal* 22, no. 3 (2022): pp. 13–19. https://www.journal.forces.gc.ca/PDFs/CMJ223Ep13.pdf

[34] Sandra Biskupski-Mujanovic, "The "Lucky Ones" and Those That Weren't: Sexual Misconduct in the Canadian Armed Forces," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 28, no. 2 (2022): pp. 144–159. https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2022.2071955

[35] DND, *Duty with Honour*.

[36] Nancy Taber, "The Profession of Arms: Ideological Codes and Dominant Narratives of Gender in the Canadian Military," *Atlantis* 34, (2009): pp. 27–36. https://journals.msvu.ca/index.php/atlantis/article/view/216/206

[37] Nancy Taber, "The Canadian Armed Forces: Battling Between Operation HONOUR and Operation Hop on Her," *Critical Military Studies* 6, no. 1 (2020): pp. 19–40. https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2017.1411117

Exploring socio-cultural changes within the CAF over time, Davis emphasizes the importance of recognizing how cultural discourse shapes responses to gender differences, and that narratives are often adopted without a deeper understanding of cultural influences. Following an examination of the last 50 years, Davis describes gender integration as a "strategy of assimilation"[38] where the social constructions of gender remained unchallenged and a culture of gender neutrality was adopted. However, rather than being a solution, gender-neutral policies may contribute to the problem. Interviews with service women on sexual misconduct and institutional efforts to address this issue reveal the complexity of applying universal policies.[39]

Utilizing a Gender-Based Analysis Plus lens, Taber examined the contents of *Trusted to Serve* which is focused on expanding the military ethos established within *Duty with Honour.* Described as a *boss text*, *Trusted to Serve* avoids the term warrior and the need for members to be inclusive. However, Taber notes that simply adding an inclusive lens while also retaining privileged forms of military membership is insufficient in broadening the definition of who is the ideal military member. Taber highlights the importance of formal education focused on teaching the ethos outlined within *Trusted to Serve* but notes it must also be seen and normalized in the informal learning that occurs every day among members. New members enter the CAF and are likely to reflect the norms they learned as students as they advance and thus reproduce culture through their own practice. Taber highlights the need to pay particular attention to what recruits internalize about military service at the start of their career and how they compare themselves to the ideal military member.[40]

Institutional Ethnography as Method

The connections between masculinities, gender, policies, and the CAF as a social institution is an important line of inquiry and can help make sense of critical reviews of the CAF and observations that as an environment, RMC privileges a hypermasculine culture.[41] IE is a method well-suited to understanding how the everyday lives of military

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[38] Davis, "Socio-cultural Dynamics in Gender and Military Context," p. 69.
[39] Biskupski-Mujanovic, "The "Lucky Ones."

[40] Taber, "Trusted to Serve."
[41] Arbour, *Independent External Comprehensive Review,* p. 15.

cadets are affected by CAF socio-cultural and institutional policies.[42] Institutional Ethnography permits an exploration of individual experiences and how they are affected by unseen powers. To understand how knowing is linked to power, institutional ethnographers examine how a subject's knowledge is organized.[43] By exploring the "how" as opposed to the "why" of individual experiences, IE permits researchers to identify, name, and understand how policies from afar affect the everyday lives of people. Illuminating the "invisible" which acts to create a particular set of circumstances, catches the attention of an institutional ethnographer. How do invisible forces within the CAF reproduce a cultural status quo, or more optimistically, do these powers contribute to positive change? As a method of inquiry, IE challenges dominant discourses through an examination of visible and invisible institutional culture.[44] The following will briefly describe IE and key terms within this methodology. Throughout, I will connect these terms and concepts to a CAF context.

Through investigation, the aim of IE is to understand how the work of individuals in a particular location is coordinated by work elsewhere with the goal being to amass sufficient evidence to first describe and then explicate how "disparate interests are activated or subordinated."[45] For my purposes, it is a methodology well suited to explicating how an institutional policy such as *Trusted to Serve* becomes discernible within the everyday lives of cadets and the social relations which coordinate their lives. Smith identified the value of identifying the complex actions that coordinate people across time and location both with and without their knowledge.[46] Labelled as *social relations*, this idea of an individual's actions being socially connected moves beyond the person to incorporate texts. Texts provide a means to identify the relations between people and the institution.[47] It is through this "socially organized exercise of power"[48] that texts establish themselves as ruling relations. By understanding *social relations* not visible from the

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[42] Longhofer, Floersch, and Hoy, *Qualitative Methods for Practice Research.*

[43] Marie Campbell and Frances Gregor, *Mapping Social Relations: A Primer in Doing Institutional Ethnography* (University of Toronto Press, 2008).

[44] Dorothy Smith and Allison Griffith, *Simply Institutional Ethnography* (University of Toronto Press, 2022)

[45] Janet Rankin, "Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography: Analytical Work Prior to Commencing Data Collection," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 16, no. 1 (2017): pp. 1-9. https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406917734484

[46] Dorothy Smith, *Institutional Ethnography: A Sociology for People* (AltaMira Press, 2005).

[47] Campbell and Gregor, *Mapping Social Relations.*

[48] Campbell and Gregor, *Mapping Social Relations*, p. 32.

knower's perspective, Smith sought greater understanding. Identifying how we know what we know where this knowing originates and how it contributes to the experience of individuals is central to IE.

Within IE, the institutional ethnographer seeks to learn from the 'everyday' to identify how it came to be and why it occurs as it does through an exploration of the texts which guide and control individual actions. Put another way, IE seeks to investigate how experiences are socially organized which can be seen through analysis by focusing on how individuals speak about "standards, protocols, forms, regulations, rules, guidelines, and policies."[49] By examining these various forms, one seeks to understand how the participant's world is formulated. IE focuses on ruling relations at the object of inquiry. IE goes beyond individual experiences to understand how these experiences are organized and coordinated by forces beyond them.

There are three foundational terms used within Institutional Ethnography which orient the researcher throughout the process: (1) standpoint, which acts as a particular point of view; (2) the problematic, also described as the puzzle which needs solving; and (3) ruling relations, defined as those institutional texts which govern over the individual. Adopting a *standpoint* is an integral aspect of Smith's sociology for people and its establishment provides a specific position from which to begin one's inquiry. IE starts with people and their experience and leads to understanding how their doings are coordinated by the institution. As a point of entry, selecting a specific standpoint assists the researcher in understanding how their subject is controlled and guided by the larger institution.[50] Starting from the vantage point of RMC cadets provides a starting point for exploration. By exploring how their lives and the work they do are organized could make visible the extent to which institutional efforts to address CAF culture manifest within the cadet's classrooms and shape the way in which they approach being in the military. Thus, a specific standpoint represents an individual's experiences and a starting point for the researcher to examine social relations which may not be particular to that individual and contribute to the development of the *problem.*

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[49] Eric Mykhalovskiy, Colin Hastings, Leigha Comer, Julia Gruson-Wood, and Matthew Strang, "Teaching Institutional Ethnography as an Alternative Sociology," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Institutional Ethnography*, ed. (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021): p.53). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-54222-1_4
[50] Smith, *Institutional Ethnography.*

In IE, the *problem* is the puzzle which needs to be solved and represents a disjuncture between what is being experienced from the standpoint's perspective and what is intended by the larger organization or structure.[51] The problem is not necessarily the same thing as one's research question or the specific problem articulated by your standpoint. Instead, the problem is discovered through early inquiry and according to Smith and Griffith, it provides a "general direction and focus of inquiry."[52] Thus, a problem is discovered. While it may be hypothesized, it is only through initial inquiry into the everyday experiences of the standpoint that one gains a sense of the larger issues at play and how they coordinate the issues at the local level. Maintaining RMC cadets as a standpoint, and through initial inquiry with cadets as subjects, a possible problematic could materialize which sees contradictions between everyday experiences and the CAF's intent to have an environment of mutual respect, dignity, and inclusion amongst all members. If this were to emerge, the Institutional Ethnographer would seek to understand how ruling texts (i.e., policies related to culture change) are operationalized on campus and within the classroom.

Adopting a specific standpoint positions the researcher within their research. Through initial inquiry with their standpoint, they develop a problem by identifying discrepancies between local experiences and organizational intentions. It is here that the IE moves beyond the everyday experiences of individuals to understand how their local world is organized socially. The everyday world and those within it are organized socially amongst themselves and connected to the ruling regime via texts.[53] These *ruling relations* **are the social relations which organize and regulate society. Therefore, through IE, the researcher seeks to understand explicate and make visible how everyday work is organized and coordinated amongst individuals locally and from afar.[54] The Institutional Ethnographer seeks to discover how ideas contained within text affect people.[55] More importantly, IE can help us understand how CAF policy such**

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[51] Campbell and Gregor, *Mapping Social Relations.*

[52] Smith and Griffith, *Simply Institutional Ethnography,* p. 22.

[53] Grainne P. Kearney, Michael K. Corman, Nigel D. Hart, Jennifer L. Johnston, and Gerard J. Gormley, "Why Institutional Ethnography? Why Now? Institutional Ethnography in Health Professions Education," *Perspectives on Medical Education* 8, (2019): pp. 17-24. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40037-019-0499-0

[54] Rankin, "Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography."

[55] Campbell and Gregor, *Mapping Social Relations.*

as *Trusted to Serve* acts as a 'boss text' and shapes leadership development within the military.

Institutional Ethnography and the CAF

The previous sections brought two sets of literature into conversation, issues with CAF culture and IE. In this section, I focus on how IE is compatible with explicating the disjuncture between policy (i.e., mutual respect, dignity, and inclusion of all members) and individual experiences within the CAF. Drawing upon the findings of recent external reviews, I suggest IE can: (1) make the disconnect between the institution's values, as articulated in policy, and the daily experience of cadets visible; (2) draw attention to the ways cadets witness and experience institutional policies upheld and contradicted within their learning environment; and (3) raise awareness on the unnecessary work imposed upon military members by the actions, attitudes, and beliefs of others. To demonstrate IE's relevancy to the first two issues, I draw upon Jansen and Kramer's IE within the Netherlands Defence Academy (NLDA). Regarding unnecessary work, I will draw upon Taber's idea of a hidden curriculum [56] and Smith and Griffith's discussion of what constitutes work. [57]

As I rely upon the findings of recent external reviews, it is important to understand their individual obligations. As an external reviewer, Deschamps was mandated to "examine CAF policies, procedures and programs in relation to sexual harassment and sexual assault, including the effectiveness with which these policies are currently being implemented." [58] During their review, Deschamps identified an underlying sexualized culture in the CAF that is hostile to women and LGTBQ members. In contrast, Arbour's mandate focused on examining sexual misconduct, including how it is dealt with by the military justice system, and leadership, which included for the first time an ability to scrutinize the recruitment and training systems. [59] While their mandates differed, much overlap exists, and common issues identified show a disconnect between the CAF's intent and the experiences of military members.

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[56] Taber, "Learning."

[57] Smith and Griffith, *Simply Institutional Ethnography.*

[58] Deschamps, *External Review,* p. 2.

[59] Arbour, *Independent External Comprehensive Review.*

Research Background

Adopting the cadets' perspective as their standpoint, Jansen and Kramer combined textual analysis, ethnographic fieldwork, and group interviews over an 18-month period. Through the conduct of preliminary fieldwork speaking with staff and graduating cadets, they were able to both narrow the focus of their research while also learning about key concepts and everyday life at the NLDA. It is during this initial inquiry that Jansen and Kramer identified their problem, or puzzle which they believe needs to be understood.[60] Following their analysis of the discourse contained within institutional texts, Jansen and Kramer found the NLDA's pedagogical model included military training, academic education, and character education.[61] A quick glance at RMC's website shows that the Canadian military college uses a similar model organized according to four pillars: academic; military leadership; physical fitness; and bilingualism.[62]

Espoused and In-Use Values

Military ethos is based upon respect and dignity of all people, and this is embodied in CAF policies such as *Duty with Honour*.[63] However, Deschamps identified a disjuncture between the CAF's professional standards, as established in policy, and the reality experienced by members daily.[64] Arbour echoed this sentiment and described current issues within the CAF as a "collective failure"[65] where the organization has fallen well short of its own institutional ideals. While Deschamps suggested policy is critical in the CAF's effort to confront sexual misconduct and sexual assault, I suggest having the appropriate institutional policies is insufficient without proper implementation and subsequent enforcement.

Institutional Ethnography provides a means to understand how policies are being implemented and experienced by military members. Further, it permits an exploration into why these policies are not effective and where the original intent becomes disconnected from actual practice. It is important to recognize the importance vested in

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[60] Jansen and Kramer, "Military Mores."

[61] Jansen and Kramer, "Military Mores."

[62] Royal Military College, "Four pillars of RMC," Royal Military College, Accessed 20 December 2022. https://www.rmc-cmr.ca/en/training-wing/four-pillars-rmc

[63] DND, *Duty with Honour.*

[64] Deschamps, *External Review,* p. 102.

[65] Arbour, *Independent External Comprehensive Review,* p. 15.

character education by both the NLDA and the Netherlands Armed Forces in comparison to the informal way in which it is taught. Character education is often based upon military traditions and can be seen informally between classes and during the conduct of optional (i.e., social activities) and mandatory (i.e., the hazing period) events. Jansen and Kramer's research findings showed the different ways NLDA cadets were influenced by curriculum beyond the formal classroom.

Jansen and Kramer describe the NLDA as a "paradoxical learning environment"[66] where cadets need to remain calm in the face of challenging situations yet must know when to break rules or embody "less disciplined behaviour." [67] Institutional Ethnography demonstrates its ability to recognize how policies are seen from the standpoint of cadets, and more importantly, how they are seen to be upheld and contradicted by those around them in their daily lives. Within the NLDA learning environment, two paradoxes are identified, *perfect imperfection* and *individual in the system*. The first paradox pits the idealized nature of the NLDA against the experiences of cadets. The second paradox, *individual in the system*, encompasses the friction cadets experience within an institution that asks everyone to be their authentic selves yet requires they blend in and do as they are told. While the system is held in high regard, cadets identify faults with the institution and its people.[68]

Learning Environments

Deschamps found the sexualized environment within the CAF has an accumulative effect on its members and over time "such conduct creates an environment that is hostile to women and LGTBQ members."[69] Further, Deschamps noted the experiences of members justified the claim that current training related to inappropriate sexual misconduct is failing on two fronts. Training failed to demonstrate what appropriate conduct looks like and it failed to inculcate an ethical culture within the CAF. This is attributed to maintaining a "dominant boy's club mentality"[70] where members fail to learn what is acceptable conduct and what is prohibited by policies. If the CAF is failing to adequately deliver training focused on inappropriate sexual misconduct, how are inappropriate

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[66] Jansen and Kramer, "Military Mores," p. 10.
[67] Jansen and Kramer, "Military Mores," p. 10.
[68] Jansen and Kramer, "Military Mores."
[69] Deschanps, External Review.
[70] Deschamps, External Review, p. 96.

behaviours and beliefs revealing themselves within other learning environments? Arbour found a "disconnect between rhetoric and reality"[71] and that the behaviours of instructional staff contradicted and therefore undermined the education related to culture change.

Institutional Ethnography is a suitable means to explore the disconnect between an institution's intent, as articulated in policy, and the daily experiences of cadets. It provides a means to explore how members experience the CAF educational system as a social organization and assist in examining how the values and ethos outlined within institutional doctrine appear or fail to appear throughout the daily lives of members. In an examination of the NLDA and the larger military organization within which it exists, Jansen and Kramer find the discourse surrounding military leadership stresses a need to promote military values, adhere to certain characteristics and follow set guidelines. These appear to represent the *ruling relations* that organize and regulate the everyday lives of cadets. Starting from the vantage point of individuals, IE seeks to identify and explore disconnects between experience and intent. Jansen and Kramer's use of IE to explore the NLDA shows how written policy manifests in the lives of cadets. If the CAF's intent is to create a culture of mutual respect, dignity and inclusion through policy and formal instruction, IE provides a means to make visible within the daily experiences of cadets the ideas contained within the written policy.

Unnecessary Work

Military training and education can be a difficult endeavour that challenges individuals in ways that can be viewed as perfectly acceptable, from the need to understand and demonstrate a specific skill (i.e., using a weapon) to articulating complex thoughts or recent learning (i.e., a college essay). I believe this type of work is likely anticipated and accepted by those joining and undergoing training and education within the CAF. In contrast, I suggest that some members experience and must respond to 'unnecessary' work such as micro-aggressions, harmful stereotypes, and unconscious biases. Arbour found the term 'sexual misconduct' is too broad as it encompasses everything from assault and harassment to what I have just described as unnecessary work.

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[71] Arbour, *Independent External Comprehensive Review,* p. 214.

In Taber's IE, she explored the idea of a hidden curriculum, which focused on socializing her to the accepted (i.e., masculine) norms of RMC.[72] I believe the 'hidden curriculum,' which she used IE to further illuminate, represents an aspect of unnecessary work. Institutional Ethnography seeks to understand how everyday work is organized and coordinated locally and from afar.[73] Further, IE's definition of work is not limited to more obvious forms, instead, it considers everything people do. By examining the unnecessary work forced upon those outside the dominant majority, IE provides a way to understand how the individual military member's learning experience is shaped.[74]

Conclusion

There is a disconnect between stated policy and culture in the CAF. As an institution, the CAF has proven to privilege certain qualities, predominately masculine traits, and oppress others, mainly feminine characteristics. As the CAF attempts to evolve its culture to better reflect Canadian society, we must ask how institutional intent manifests within education and training. After examining recent literature, I am left wondering how institutional intent, achieved through 'boss texts' such as *Trusted to Serve*, reveals itself in the lives of military members. How is the CAF's revised military ethos received by and integrated into the actions and lives of RMC cadets? Jansen and Kramer demonstrated IE's utility as a method capable of exploring social processes within a militarized setting. Using IE, they moved beyond individual cadet experiences to understand how their actions were coordinated and controlled by the larger institution. Jansen and Kramer identified the way policies, both formal and informal, influenced and affected cadets was inconsistent with the institution's intent. Within RMC, does formal educational efforts to address culture and informal norms come into conflict? Institutional Ethnography, as a methodological approach, aligns with a need to understand how culture change education is delivered, received by, and integrated into the actions and lives of RMC cadets. While more work is needed at the theoretical and practical levels, both of which I intend to do, this article opens an inquiry space and contributes by offering one set of suggestions for those considering how to confront the issue of change within the military.

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[72] Taber, "Learning."
[73] Rankin, "Conducting Analysis in Institutional Ethnography."
[74] Smith, *Institutional Ethnography;* Smith and Griffith, *Simply Institutional Ethnography.*

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