Leading Individuals and Collectives: Perspectives and Challenges

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"Were Socrates and Charles XII of Sweden both present in any company, and Socrates to say, 'Follow me, and hear a lecture on philosophy' and Charles, laying his hand on his sword to say, 'Follow me, and dethrone the Czar' a man would be ashamed to follow Socrates." Samuel Johnson

INTRODUCTION

The tension between the group and the individual is nothing new. Writers as long ago as Ancient Greece have commented on the issue and devised ways in which the individual's will can be harnessed or subordinated to the greater good (Takala 1998). Since the Enlightenment, socio-political progress has been pinned to the idea of individuals' enthusiasm and ingenuity acting as an engine for the rest of the community. While there have been obvious and notably detractors from this view, even they recognise the difficulty in reconciling the two foci.[1] Certain organisations, such as the Church and the military, however, have relied on the subordination of the individual to the needs of the collective. In so doing, they have adopted several socialisation strategies that reinforce the collective and acculturate each member into this philosophy.

Times, as the song tells us, they are a changing. Since the 1960s there has been a growing literature warning of a fundamental shift of social values in favour of the individual. Societies are becoming atomised, divisions between private and public are being eroded, and the concept of welfare or 'the good' is being personalised—both in definition and accomplishment. If this is the case, then traditional organisations such as the military will face new challenges. And leaders will face these questions head on, as they will affect a wide range of issues, from recruiting, to motivating followers, to retention, to (re)defining the entire organisational ethos. Trying to balance the needs of the individual with the requirements of the military has increasingly become an issue for

most Western nations. The maxim of 'God, Queen, and Country,' is seen to be in competition with 'What's in it for me?' It is tempting for military figures to dig in and reply with romantic longings for 'the good old days.' Just as tempting, it seems, is the opportunity for some members of the public to place the military under intense scrutiny and expect miracles of social engineering to occur overnight, without any serious effect on operational capability. In its most elemental form the question becomes how much can a military mirror the society from which it is drawn, and which it ultimately serves, while remaining an effective combat force? The issue boils down to one of individual and collective rights, and the delicate balancing act armed forces must perform between the two.

The Layout of the Paper

Leaders, therefore, will need to examine their theories and models of leadership, asking hard questions. First, military leaders will need to know what these larger societal trends are, what they mean, and how they are likely to affect the armed forces. An overview answer this question forms the first section of this paper. Second, the concepts of individualism and collectivism will need to be more fully understood. The cultural implications of these perspectives shall be spelled out in the paper's second section. Thirdly, existing leadership models will need to be interrogated from the perspective of how well they deal with individuals while at the same time meeting the needs of the collective. A review of the three main bodies of leadership theory—universalist, contingent, transactionalist/transformationalist—constitutes the paper's third section. In order to bring the matter into clearer focus two cases will be studied briefly in the fourth part of the paper. Finally, conclusions will be set out in the form of suggested actions for

leaders, in order for them to determine how best to address the tensions between individual and collective needs, rights, and obligations.

THE RISE OF THE INDIVIDUALISED SOCIETY

Samuel Huntingdon believes that there is a peculiar 'military mind' which "stresses the supremacy of society over the individual and the importance of order, hierarchy, and division of function" (1986, 52). If we, as parties interested in military affairs, were to take this unambiguous statement at face-value, it would be impossible to escape a feeling of foreboding and anxiety. This angst would stem from a gradual but significant shift in societal values and patterns of organisation and behaviour. Increasingly, as indicated in a growing body of academic and policy literature, the society of 'military imagination' is changing. Entering a period described as postmodernity or late modernity, the underpinnings and motivations, extant since the Enlightenment, are shifting. This change is seen as evident in all forms of social life: the patriarchal nuclear family is in decline; the firm is transforming from a Fordist factory to a geographically dispersed loose group of 'telecommuters'; and the State is alternatively described as in decline, withdrawal, or in a period of contracting out[2].

Militaries (of the kind in Huntingdon's conceptualisation) would find themselves in a particularly difficult position during this upheaval. Instead of being seen as the guardians (appreciated or not) of the nation, they might find themselves perceived as irrelevant. Indeed, "none of us seem to fear a major war between the major powers…[Instead] our fears are informed by other wars: the war against crime, the war against terrorism, the war on drugs" (Coker 2001). This societal evolution perturbs the foundation of what the 'military mind' values.

What kind of evidence and theory surrounds this supposed social transformation? How is it manifest and how might it affect the military, both in terms of external relations with its parent society, and in terms of internal dynamics? These questions form the theme of this section of the paper and will allow us to see the issue of individualisation in its contemporary context.

Social Values are Changing…

Vaclav Havel, the absurdist playwrite, former political dissident, and president of the Czech Republic described his view of the society in which we find ourselves:

> The world of our experiences seems chaotic, disconnected, confusing.
> There appear to be no integrating forces, no unified meaning, no true inner
> understanding of phenomena in our experience of the world. Experts can
> explain anything in the objective world…yet we understand our own lives
> less and less. In short, we live in the post-modern world, where
> everything is possible and almost nothing is certain (1994).

This is a topsy-turvy world where "the old poles of attraction represented by nation-states, parties, professions, institutions, and historical traditions are losing their attraction. And it does not look as though they will be replaced, at least not on their former scale" (Lyotard, 1979). Inglehart believes that the key development of the transformation to postmodernity is in terms of values. If modernity was the shift from traditional authority (as manifest by the Church and the feudal system) to rational-legal authority (embodied in the bureaucratic state), then the current evolution is about the 'deemphasis of authority' altogether. Postmodernisation is all about 'maximising well being.' (1997)[3].

In the process of modernisation, overarching themes were required to guide and shape progress—be it nationalist or economic. These themes were based in metaphysics and gave meaning to everyday experience. Whether they took the form of political ideology or national ideals of 'manifest destiny', they became the 'grand narratives' that

made the fight for survival make sense. In the 20th Century, the most visible narratives, set in opposition to each other were Liberty and Totalitarianism, brought to life in the struggles against Fascism and Communism. However, even domestic life was set to motion by such guiding philosophies: the backdrop to everyday life was one of Capitalism, the Welfare State, or 'Father Knows Best'. Theorists believe that in the postmodern condition we no longer believe in such abstract and dominating narratives. We now prefer to figure out the meaning in our lives on our own. Traditional religion gives way to New Age spirituality, capitalism gives way to concerned post-materialism. It is as if in the absence of any need for group survival, the old stories no longer apply. Authors like Giddens see this as a continuation of the 'demystification' evident throughout the modern period (1995), while others, like Hardt and Negri (2001), believe it is a break with modernity and the beginning of something qualitatively different.

But where does postmodernisation come from? Inglehart's research correlates it with economic growth. Richer societies, no longer having to worry about survival, can instead focus on comfort and so "begin to emphasize quality of life concerns, such as environmental protection and lifestyle issues" (2000, 219). Such attention on lifestyle means that people in postmodern societies value "self-expression instead of deference to authority and are tolerant of other groups and even regard exotic things and cultural diversity as stimulating and interesting, not threatening." (p. 223). Our affluent tendency towards 'disconnectedness', 'self-expression', and 'lifestyle' means "the postmodern state is one that sets value above all on the individual" (Cooper 2000, 31).

Like Dickens's Scrooge, we might wonder how this affects us. Are these shadows haunting us real: is Canadian society postmodern? Many believe so (Adams

and Langstaff 2000; Cooper 2000, 27; Inglehart, 1997). Environics researchers, asking

questions meant to measure people's value orientations, validate these conclusions[4],

plotting the responses on two axes—one measuring traditional versus modern values[5] and

one measuring whether or not people were 'self' or 'other' regarding. The trend in the

findings was a shift from 'other directed and traditional' values to 'self directed modern'

values (see Table One). Of particular interest, though is that the population tends to split

across this spectrum by age; the shift that is suggested in the research and predicted in

postmodern theory, is an intergenerational one.

Table 1: Value Shift: from 'Traditional Other Directed' to 'Modern Self Directed' (Source: Environics 1999)

Orientation	Other Directed	Self Directed
Traditional	**Traditional Communities, institutions and social status** •Ostentatious Consumption •Primacy of the Family •Need for Status Recognition •Religiousity •Confidence in Government	***Financial Independence, Stability, and Security (age 53+)*** •Financial Concern for the Future •Anomie •Risk Aversion •Hyper-rationality •Social Darwinism
Modern	***Experience-Seeking and New Communities (age 15-32)*** •Enthusiasm for Technology •Flexibility of Personality •Flexibility of Gender Identity •Personal Creativity •Adaptability to Complexity	***Personal Control and Self-Fulfilment (age 33-52)*** •Heterarchy •Rejection of Order •Need for Autonomy •Control of Destiny •Rejection of Authority

Adams and Langstaff, relying on Environics data, assert that

> Canadians…are moving rapidly into a postmodern phase. Our emphasis is
> shifting toward greater well-being, harmony, and a less traditional quest
> for spiritual meaning…Canadians, in fact, place greater emphasis on
> personal freedom and harbour less deference to traditional institutions
> such as the state, the family, and religious organisations (2000).

The Military is not Immune to these changes…

Akin to the question posed earlier, even if we allow that society is undergoing

postmodernization, we might still wonder whether or not this process is mirrored within

the military. Some commentators believe that the military is different from society, and

agree that it should remain that way (Elliot and Bacevich 2001; Feaver and Kohn 2000),

but many others feel that social change will be reflected in and by a society's armed

forces. Some see this as a positive development and urge further change (Granatstein

2001; Highham and Pacquet 2000; Lewis 2000; Gray 2000), some view it with regret

(Snider and Watkins 2000), while others are more pragmatic, resigning themselves to a

new paradigm (Coker 2002; Luttwak 1996; Moskos 1994 [1992]). One could say that the

role of the military has changed from one of simply defending society's values, to one of

reflecting them as well. In the Canadian context in particular, the military is expected to

go even further along this road, assuming not just a supporting role, but a pioneering one:

> "In a pluralistic, heterogeneous, fractured and turbulent social context, the
> need for legitimacy by the [Canadian Forces] requires that it becomes
> more adaptive to change, more representative of this social reality and
> capable of maintaining more rigorous ethical standards than the general
> citizenry" (Higham and Pacquet 2000, 1).

Even given this strong normative position, by those who say that social change

should affect the CF, we are no closer to determining whether or not postmodernisation *is*

affecting or will affect the Canadian Forces. Strong arguments can be made to suggest

that the CF does not reside in any kind of social 'fireproof house far from flammable

materials'. First, if Inglehart and Environics are correct, and Western societies (including

Canada) are going through a value-shift, by sheer weight of demographics, the CF will

have to be affected. Representing, as it does, less than one-fifth of one per cent[6] of the

Canadian population it would take something rather significant to prevent at least some

of the new values from seeping in. Of course, the CF is exposed to these social changes

not only in the form of its existing members, but also in its potential recruiting pool.[7] If

we view the military's social environment in this way, we see a very small group,

surrounded by change that affects its current members and significantly shapes those people it hopes will join.

In terms of the postmodern end to the metanarrative, militaries are not immune from an end to collective meaning. As Havel mentions above, any certainty resulting from these metaphysical story-lines is now gone. What might this mean in practical terms? If we see the need for physical security arising from the particular way in which the dominant meta-narratives of the 20th Century were framed, then at a societal level "militaries now lack a shared interpretative framework with their publics" (Toiskallio 2001). Within the military, this postmodern trend is interpreted by some to mean that the image of "'solider as warrior' has become obsolete" (Abrams and Bacevich 2001, 20). Moskos sums up the new social environment and its implications for militaries thus:

> Post-modern society is distinguished from modern society by the transition from certainty to radical uncertainty about the meaning of purpose of central roles and institutions. In this situation, we cannot easily judge the relative importance of various collective activities (2001, 145).

In the Canadian context, recent commentary suggests that the idea of the 'national interest'—the cornerstone of the military's *raison d'etre*—might be going the way of the grand narrative, being replaced by a new image, one with individuals at the centre. Human security is described as a "unique people centred perspective" (Thompson 2000, 2) which some believe "has opened the door to abandoning Canadian national interest as the touchstone for decision-making" (Jockel and Sokosky 2000/2001, 2)[8].

We can look at the results of the *Debrief the Leader* project to find indications of how military values are changing. Particularly interesting in terms of the individual/collective debate are the responses dealing with the principle of "mission, own troops, and self". Traditionally, this almost sacrosanct trinity was an immutable set of

priorities. However, the results of the questionnaires and surveys conducted on over 800 commanders involved in operational missions seem to suggest that this is increasingly not the case. Again, to focus the matter on the individual versus collective issue, we might see a 'mission' orientation placing the needs of the group (in the widest, most abstract sense of the term) ahead of any set of individuals—be they one's troops or one's self. A mission is a reflection of the group's requirements, but it is void of any reference to individual people. If we put mission on one end of a scale and self on the other (as polar opposites) we could place 'own troops' somewhere in between. My troops are not 'me', but they are knowable people; they are individuals. Viewed in this way, we could expect, following the logic of postmodernisation, to see a swing towards 'self' regard, rather than remaining fixed on the mission. Responses reflect such a shift (albeit an incomplete one): perhaps an expression of tension, rather than a wholesale abandonment. Those interviewed state "it was a real dilemma how to preserve the mission while protecting my troops" and conclude that preserving this triad in rank order "can cause considerable difficulty." As the authors of the report indicate, "It is worth noting that more than 30% of the respondents…stated that they would automatically put the safety of their own troops before the maintenance of the mission" (Canada 2001a, 11). Here too, we can see that the 'national interest' fails to hold as a binding principle. Commanders on operational deployments found "that is was frequently difficult to identify any national interest to be upheld" and that this "core principle [was] viewed as an anachronism by many" (Canada 2001, 11).

Results from a smaller set of interviews[9] suggest a similar orientation. One respondent felt that the CF "couldn't offer enough independence or intellectual interest to

keep me in." Another stated that she "was fully prepared to be career member, but at the end of the day, any employee needs to feel that they are valued, and not just a statistic." Many echoed this need to find individual satisfaction. As one former Air Force officer put it, since he left his "life became self-directed. Now if I am under-tasked, under-challenged or under-stimulated by my occupation, it is my fault…I have not been bored one working day since I left the military." These former officers, who might be indicative of a wider group within the CF, have a strong self or individual regard. What they wanted and how they acted was very different than the model the CF had in mind.

This shift in values could have a profound effect on the military…

Military theorists have postulated what social changes might mean for armed forces for over forty years. Since having been faced with the radical upheavals of the 1960s, American analysts have theorised such developments as a "narrowing…differential between military and civilian elites" (Janovitz 1994, 124).[10] The ultimate result, as extrapolated as it may be from the observable trends, is a 'warless society'[11] (Moskos 1994). As societies become increasingly concerned with well-being, rather than survival, they tend to value the traditional role of the military less and less (Snider and Watkins 2000; Abrams and Bacevich 2001). Somewhat understatedly, Moskos warns that "as modern states move…to warless societies the sociology of the military changes accordingly" (1994, 135). In our study we will now turn to focus on one aspect of that sociology: the relationship between individuals and the collective.

Individualism and Collectivism

The History of the Concept

The military is not alone in its desire to reconcile the needs of the individual to those of the group. The idea of a Social Contract formed much of the 17th and 18th centuries' political debate and called for just such accommodation. In early modern times it was seen as a way of either binding together individuals or protecting them from the excesses of the larger group. The collectivist approach is espoused by Rousseau, for example, who demands

> …the total alienation of each associate, together with all his rights, to the whole community; for in the first place, as each gives himself absolutely, the conditions are the same for all. (Curtis 1981, 18).

On the other hand, Locke saw the need for 'negative liberty'; that is, the individual freedom *from* interference. If there was to be community, it could only occur with the consent of the individual and had to meet his needs. There was no collective aside from a voluntary one, made up of rational, "free, equal, and independent" individuals (Curtis 1981, 344).

Later, around the time of the French Revolution, De Maistre would write "human reason in individuals is useless…because it only causes disputes" (Curtis 1981, 71). Hegel, too, thought that the collective should dominate: "in duty [toward his community] the individual finds his liberation" (Curtis 1981, 94). Eventually, though, at least in the West, individualism was seen as a superior basis of social organisation. Writers, such as De Toqueville, and later Weber, were impressed by what they saw as self-reliance, and believed individuals, left to make their own rational choices based on their best interests, would bring the collective along with them. They contrasted the progress of the United

States, with its voluntary individual-based associationalism with the European *malaise*, signified by their ascriptive collective-based forms of social bonding, especially class and ethnic group (Kim 2000).

The triumph of the individual is nowhere more celebrated than in the works of Gellner (1997). He believes that the West reached its stride with the evolution of 'Modular Man', a free agent, able to form and break relations as it pleases him in pursuit of his rational interest (pp.97-102). It is the modularity of liberalism that has fuelled the great progress experienced in the modern era, but even Gellner admits it leads to a society of 'provisionalism':

> Attendance at rituals is optional, experimentation with concepts tolerated. The shared world could no longer be taken with the utmost seriousness. It is provisional, good enough as a kind of daily shorthand, but suspended when serious issues are faced…Social cooperation, loyalty and solidarity do not now presuppose shared faith. They may in fact, presuppose the absence of a wholly shared and seriously, unambiguously upheld conviction. They may require a shared doubt (pp. 95-96).

Contemporary Theory

Triandis, a social psychologist dealing with the notions of individualism and collectivism labels them as 'cultural syndromes', meaning "they reflect attitudes, beliefs, norms, self-clarifications and values that contrast two types of cultures" (1993, 170)[12]. He believes "a major contrast between collectivists and individuals is in what they pay attention to. Collectivists cut the pie of experience by focussing on groups; individualists consider it obvious that the world consists of individuals." (p. 172). From these two opposite origins or 'worldviews' come differing values and social relations. Table 2 contains a comprehensive list of the different values broken down along these lines.

Table 2: Main Contrasts between Individualists and Collectivists. Source: Adapted from Triandis 1995.

Collectivists	Individualists
Unit of Analysis	
The group, the collective	The individual
Attributions for success	
Help given by collective	Ability
Attributions of failure	
Lack of effort	Difficult task, bad luck
Self is defined in	
Ingroup/membership terms	Trait terms
Individual vs Group Goals	
Group goals win	Individual goals win
Attitudes and Norms	
Favour interdependence	Favour independence
Values	
Security, obedience, duty, ingroup harmony, hierarchy, personalised, intimate relations	Pleasure, achievement, competition, freedom, autonomy, fairness
Ingroups	
Few, very important	Many, not too important
Social Behaviour	
Intimate, ingroup harmony important. Can be hostile to outgroups	Friendly, but not deep. Fairness toward outgroup.

If, following Huntingdon, we operationalise these abstract groupings to represent traditional military personnel as collectivist, and 'the rest of society' (to include new recruits) as individualist, we see that the organisation will come to be populated with very different people, each with their own values, preferences, and approaches to others. In fact, Jenkins goes so far as to claim that "long-standing cohesiveness…depends partly on individuals *having decided* …to live up to their responsibilities as defined by the [collective]" (2001, 354-355). Existing methods and models of leadership may be inadequate or inappropriate to meet this challenge.

Multiculturalism as Sub-collectives

A particular aspect of the change in social values is said to be increased tolerance. Since individualists have less regard for and attachment to an ingroup, they do not see outsiders as a threat. Issues like diversity and multiculturalism are seen as liberal concepts, a product of having a society of individuals. However, the idea of 'minorities' conjures up images of groups, perhaps more interested in collective rights rather than a strict adherence to individualist tenets. They are concerned with the ingroup, and often

see the outgroup as a threat to their continued existence. 'Assimilation' and

individualisation are seen as one and the same (Kymlicka 1990). This rather ambiguous

relationship between a variety of groups and the doctrines of individualism and

collectivism creates a further tension in organisations, such as the military. With an

increase in the number of recruits identifying themselves as belonging to 'identity

groups' (Canada 2001), the military will find itself populated by individuals on the one

hand and 'sub-collectives' on the other.

Mai-Dalton, relying on previous work done by Barry, created two models of how

this issue might be viewed (Figure 1). Each model or perspective represents a particular

'worldview' which in turn influences policies, organisational structures, and leadership

styles. If we hold Model 1 as the ideal-typical view held by collectivists, we can see that

society is broken down in to a majority and several minorities, all on the periphery. Each

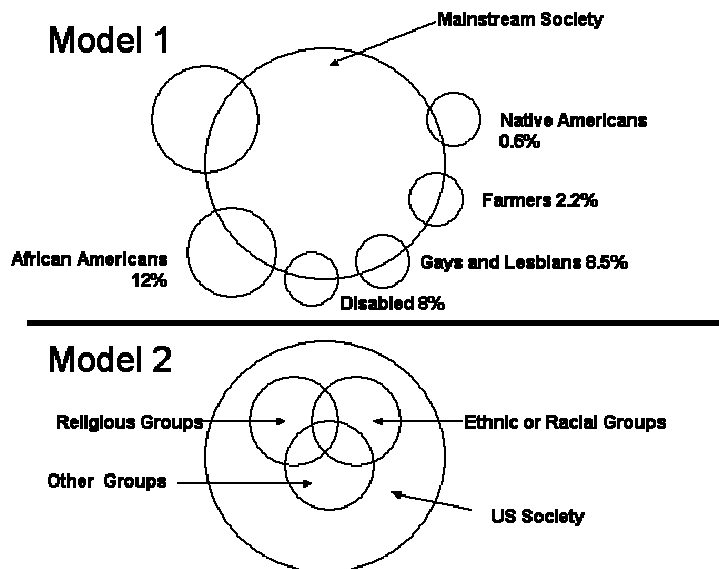group is dealt with monolithically and is defined by its difference from the mainstream.

Figure 1: Barry's Two Models of Intergroup Relations (Source: Mai-Dalton 1993)

Model 2, however, tends to lump groups together, into more abstract groupings, which are amorphous and integrated—indeed they constitute—the larger society.

The difficulties with Model 1 seem apparent: 'minorities' or sub-collectives are denied a place in the mainstream collective. From the perspective of this model, there are innumerable minority groups (even women, who represent at least 50% of Western societies can be considered minorities in this model), yet somehow they have little constituency in the society-at-large. When they are included in social programs or organisations, they are most likely treated as 'tokens' or are subject to numerical quotas. There are calls now for minorities and minority issues to move in off the periphery and become 'mainstreamed'.[13] While most would agree that Model 1 is unfair, Model 2 is not without its problems. Because of the lumping together of groups, community identity can be lost in the process of assimilation. Certainly, groups have 'progressed' from the periphery to the centre, but now they are seen only as members of the larger collective, having lost any particular identity along the way. This tension, between not only individuals and collectives, but now between collectives and sub-collectives often plays out in forcing people to choose between isolation on the one hand and disintegration of traditional or alternate identities on the other. As Kymlicka states, neither the Liberal or communitarian position is entirely clear or helpful in this regard (1990, 232).

Ways of Working

Noting that the individualisation of Western society is a process at least three hundred years old, we might wonder how militaries have escaped it to the extent they have. The answer may lie in the process of socialisation. But if armies must recruit from societies where individual rights have such primacy, *how* do they create their operative

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value system, and instil some kind of respect for, and dominance of, the collective? For

centuries, armies have relied on periods of socialisation largely achieved during two key

developmental stages. The first is during basic training when "the new members are

integrated into the group [and] they internalise its values and attitudes and learn what is

appropriate behaviour"(Kellett 1991, 25). Because the army must rapidly immerse the

new recruit in this environment, basic training has been characterised by total and

constant 'attention' from the trainer on the trainee. "It has been shown that the greater

the degree…the target is under the control of the influencer, the more likely the target is

to incorporate the values and norms of the influencer" (p. 25). This dominance is

achieved largely at the expense of certain individual rights and freedoms; recruits are not

free to move, assemble, nor express themselves as they see fit. This is clearly in

opposition to the existing norms in civilian life. Group punishment and team-building

exercises are also introduced to make individual recruits identify with the larger group,

namely their peers undergoing the same uncomfortable treatment. The routine of

inspections, reduced privacy, and absolute uniformity assist in reducing the individual

nature of each recruit during the gradual transformation from civilian into soldier. As

Hankey explains

> The…army…was built in such a way as to relieve the strain on the individual.
> The dogmas were firm, the discipline strong, the procedures stereotyped. Those
> who joined it knew what it was they were joining, and that they must conform or
> be expelled. (cited in Kellett 1981, para 381).

The second development stage that helps transform a civilian is the introduction

to the Regiment or Squadron or Ship's Company. Here, the total control of the recruit

school is largely absent, but the tools of peer pressure, group expectation, and tradition

are used in much the same manner. The individual is placed in a context that runs back

through time, in some cases hundreds of years. Individuals *qua* individuals do not matter here, only members of the team, and ultimately, only the team itself. The trappings of the Regiment, its Colours, its VC winners, and its Battle Honours serve to provide the new members with constant reminders of the group that has been joined, and in which they (usually) want to advance and succeed, or at least belong.

As effective as these approaches may have been, contemporary military leaders are left with one nagging question: Will this approach still work in a society suspicious of shared meanings, wary of history, and collective notions of 'glory' and 'honour' (Coker 2001, 458)? If societies and militaries are becoming postmodern, how do we lead?

Summary

We have seen a picture painted that suggests that a trend, centuries old, is entering either a new phase or at least reaching new heights. Across the West, including Canada, societies are said to be increasingly individualised; sceptical of over-arching themes, traditional institutions and authority; and predicated on self-regard and reflexivity. Added to this, particularly in the Canadian case, is the issue of 'multiculturalism', where collective and individual perspectives collide. All of this will have dramatic effects on the military, and no one will be more affected than leaders at all levels. Managing to coordinate, organise, and motivate an armed force representative of this new kind of society will require flexible strategies, potentially much different than the ones employed in the past.

LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND MODELS

Despite the volume of literature written on the subject of leadership, some feel that it is 'under theorised', not adequately explained. Rather, the theories that exist tend to rely on empirical phenomena and have therefore been convention and conventional wisdom (Barker 2001, 473). If we are correct in assuming that this convention may no longer be dominant, we are left with little to guide us.

Critiques of Universalism

This rejection of convention may not be as recent as we may first think. In the 1950s, Medalia and Miller challenged orthodox management theory with their belief that "man works, not in order to be happy, but where he is happy" (1954, 348). In order to assistance in the creation of happiness the leader must "recognise nonlogical and (irrational) elements or processes of communication" (p. 348). Thus began a new approach to leadership, one that slowly caught on. Two tenants of this thinking were that leadership could not be universalised and could not ignore followers.

In 1974, Lawler wrote an article about the 'Individualised Organisation'. In it, he criticised those management and organisation theorists, as well as managers themselves, who believed in a 'one size fits all' approach (Lawler 1974, 31). He believed such thinking to be "over-simplification" because it ignored the fact that "individuals…react differently to organisational practices concerned with job design, pay systems, leadership, training and selection" (p. 32). Organisations tended to ignore these nuances and instead implement two strategies. The first was to ignore the differences and carry on with universal approaches to human resource, administration, and leadership problems. The second was to rely on effective selection, hoping "to hire only those individuals who fit

the kind of system that the organisation employs" (p.33). Even then, Lawler saw this as problematic, noting "effective selection depends on favourable selection ratios, which are rare, and on the legal ability of organisations to run selection programs." The result would be "more diversity rather than homogeneity in the work forces of most organisations, decreasing the likelihood of universal applicability" (p. 34). Lawler's vision certainly seems accurate in today's world. From a Canadian military perspective, diversity is increasing and strict control over 'who joins' is decreasing (Tesseron 2001; Canada 2001). Therefore, universal theories of leadership seem less than helpful.

A second strand of the new critique of leadership and management theory stemmed from the realisation that, in a non-universal world, followers, not just leaders, mattered. Hollander acknowledges that "leaders define situations for followers" but reminds us that "followers must be willing to 'buy' that definition" (1993, 32). Leadership, then, is a process (p. 29). Wills, while concentrating on the traits and behaviours of great leaders, emphasises the need for a two-way relationship, for goal-sharing, between leader and follower (1994, 11-22). This strand of leadership is manifest in theories calling for the 'participative approach'. However, Fox feared that these too, were becoming overly universalist in outlook, believing as they did that all followers prefer to participate. He critiqued theories, like McGregor's 1960 'Theory Y' and others based on the fact that "they indicate a practically uniform desire for greater participation, collaboration, and mutual responsiveness" (1977, 17). His critique focussed on 'real life' problems encountered when leaders attempted to use consultative-participative approaches without regard for individual preference.[14]

Contingency Theory

These two openings (both criticisms of universalist theories), paved the way for a rash of new 'contingency theories'. Fielder's 'Contingency Theory' or 'leadership effectiveness model' centred on the relationship that a leader has with his or her followers. The most highly regarded are most closely positioned to the leader (Fiedler 1993). The theory uses a measure of co-worker preference (the Least Preferred Co-worker or LPC scale) to indicate what attributes a leader finds particularly unappealing in a work setting. It has been criticised, including by Fielder himself, for being enigmatic. While his theory tends to display good correlation with empirical studies, the mechanism by which it works is not well understood (1993). Essentially it spells out the there are contingencies in leadership and that in some situations differing styles will have different effects, but does not go much further.

Transformational Models

Bass (Bass and Avolio 1993; Bass 1997) spells out the difference between so-called transactional leadership and transformational leadership. Both recognise that there is a relationship formed between leader and follower, but transactional theories characterise this relationship as an 'economic' one: leadership is a transaction of mutual exchange where the follower performs a task in return for something from the leader. The leader has strategies at her disposal, but they are limited to rewards and punishments. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, requires that leaders "broaden and elevate the interests" of their followers, generating "awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group" (Bass 1997, 320). Table 3 highlights the differences between the two models, as Bass conceptualises them.

Table 3: Characteristics of Transformational and Transactional Leaders (Source: Bass 1997)

Trait or Strategy	Leaders role

	Transformational Leader
Charisma:	Provides vision and sense of mission, instils pride, gains respect and trust.
Inspiration:	Communicates high expectations, uses symbols to focus efforts, expresses important purposes in simple ways
Intellectual Stimulation:	Promotes intelligence, rationality, and careful problem solving
Individualized Consideration:	Gives personal attention, treats each employee individually, coaches, advises
	Transactional Leader
Contingent Reward:	Contracts exchange of rewards for effort, promises rewards for good performance; recognises accomplishments
Management by Exception: (active)	Watches and searches for deviations from rules and standards, takes corrective action.
Management by Exception: (passive)	Intervenes only if standards are not met.
Laissez-faire:	Abdicates responsibilities, avoids making decisions.

The role of the transformational leader then is to "share the vision" with followers, bringing them along through mentorship and coaching, not just standard setting and correction. This, of course, has several implications for organisations in which transformative leaders work. Bass believes that in order for this model to work, recruiting must be redesigned to allow the leadership strategies to take centre stage. Charisma and intellectual stimulation, in other words, need to be advertised. Selection and promotion systems, too, must be overhauled, providing the leaders with all-around feedback so that inspiration and coaching may be 'tweaked'. Job design and career progression also need to change, in order that individualised attention can be made possible. What is the point of mentoring someone if the development ladder and job opportunities in the organisation are non-negotiable? (1997, 330-333)

There is broad agreement that transformational leadership models have the potential to be the most effective. More sophisticated that 'carrot and stick' and more easily applied that 'pure contingency' models, transformational leadership marries some form of group structure and purpose with individuality. The fundamental feature, though, is the leader as visionary. Manz and Sims, for instance, believe through this function, "leaders can lead others to lead themselves"; they see the potential for complete transformation via "SuperLeadership" (1997, 412). Barker, taking a somewhat different approach, believes it is the recognition of Giddens' "duality of structure" that makes

transformational leadership so potent. (2001, 483). He defines this kind of leadership as a "process of transformative change where the ethics of individuals are integrated into the mores of the community as a means of evolutionary social development" (p. 491)

Summary

In this section, we have seen a brief overview of the development of leadership theory since the 1950s. Based on two important premises—the inappropriateness of universal solutions and the importance of followers—the theory has developed to a stage where leaders are seen as transformative figures, who have an integrative role between individual and collective. In the final section of the paper, the applicability of this role will be examined.

EXAMPLES

Two contemporary examples might prove illustrative at this point. The first is a case where the issues of individualism, collectivism, and 'sub-collectivism' come into focus. By hightlighting some of the findings of the 2001 Perron Report, it is possible to see just how heterogeneous the Canadian Forces is becoming, and the tensions that exist across the many levels of complexity. The second case is an illustration of how a large organisation changed its style (at least its outward looking 'marketing' style) in the face of the postmodernisation going on around it. The U.S. Army's new recruiting campaign centres around the slogan 'An Army of One' and it emphasis on the kinds of issues associated with an individualistic population is a striking departure from tradition.

The Perron Report: Diversity as Challenge

In 2001, the Department of National Defence Minister's Advisory Board on Canadian Forces Gender Integration and Employment Equity issued their report, which

was the culmination of nearly three years of work. In the foreword the Chief of Defence

Staff (CDS) stated

> Implementing [the report] may be one of the hardest and most challenging
> tasks undertaken by the CF. I realize that it may touch a service member's
> emotions, values and beliefs and will require some to question and make
> changes to their behaviour. It will also force us to review many policies,
> systems, and practices - many of which have never before been questioned
> (Canada 2001).

While it may have been inaccurate to state that defence employment equity policies had

never before been challenged, the CDS realised the gravity of the CF's undertaking. The

results, according to the Board, were mixed: some progress had been made but large

issues, especially in terms of organisational culture, remained unacceptably unimproved.

One area that illustrates how issues of collective, 'sub-collective' and individual

are played out is that of 'self-identification'. Although 'voluntary', members of the CF

who were "visible minorities and Aboriginal Peoples" were expected to declare this fact

during formalised census-style questioning. In fact, so fundamental an issue is 'self-

identification' that the Board insisted, "it is a leadership responsibility to promote self-

identification, and leadership must be accountable for ensuring that information is

gathered, maintained and analysed according to rigorous standards." (Canada 2001).

While the process of gathering such information may seem enlightened (without a

formalised understanding of who makes up the CF, the CF will not know how its

employment equity and recruiting policies are functioning), when viewed through the

lens of Barry's Two Models, we can perceive potential problems. First, this process

appears to fall squarely within a Model 1 understanding of the world: 'minority' groups

inhabit the periphery and need to be attracted to the mainstream. Second, self-

identification encourages members of the CF to identify with one collective, rather than a host of many others. It reinforces difference, and pressures individuals who would prefer to be identified by other means (perhaps by religion, or by character traits, or by none of these things) to at least include their 'visible' identity in an attempt 'to get a handle' on the issue. Self-identification becomes 'compulsory identification to the group'.

The Board also found some shocking attitudes amongst some of the personnel they interviewed. These attitudes, according to the Board's report form part of the culture of the CF and are revealing of which of Barry's 'mental models' their holders might be using; two quotations will do to illustrate the point. A lieutenant expressed a point of view that indicated a particular attachment to either the military-as-collective, or Canadian society-at-large, which could not abide for the inclusion of other traditions: "If they (visible minorities) don't want to abide by our traditions, they should have never come here." An Officer Cadet from the Royal Military College stated "all this immigration must stop. We are diluting the Canadian population with all these immigrants and can't even recognize ourselves anymore." It would seem from these comments that when those on the periphery do enter the mainstream, they must do so 'whole-heartedly'. Interestingly, Model 2 can be seen to support this position as well. It is not clear if those 'assimilated' are to be permitted any vestiges of group identity, or whether they must see themselves solely as individuals and members of the larger collectivity.

Obviously, these isolated comments should not be seen as indicative of the entire, or even the majority of, the CF. However, they, and the issue of self-identification,

illustrate two significant points. First, they go along way to demonstrating the kinds of pressures 'non-mainstreamers' face. On one hand they are expected to proudly declare their status as members of 'sub-collectivities', while on the other they are decried for their differences. Second, these episodes reinforce the fact that individual and collective issues are *leadership issues*. Leaders in organisations will have to be aware of the potential for such identity issues and arm themselves with strategies for dealing with them.

'An Army of One': Catching Flies with Honey

The former U.S. Army recruiting jingle is familiar to us all: 'be all that you can be in the Army'. It stressed maximising one's potential through 'membership' in the larger team. That has now changed. Looking at the current recruiting campaign, there is little mention of 'team' or even 'membership'. Instead, it can be argued, the U.S. Army has designed a program that reflects much of an individualised, perhaps even postmodern, agenda. The slogan is no longer 'be all that you can be', but rather 'Be An Army of One.'[15] Not only is their no mention of the wider team, the individual appears to have no need of one at all: one can be simultaneously the particular and the universal.

If we examine an excerpt from the U.S. Army recruiting web site, we can identify several other postmodern characteristics. Take this 'testimonial', from Richard, a corporal in the combat engineers:

> I am an Army of One. Even though there are 1,045,690 Soldiers just like me, I am my own force. With technology, with training, with support, 'who I am' has become better than 'who I was'. And I'll be the first to tell you, the might of the U.S. Army doesn't lie in numbers. It lies in me. I am an Army of One. And you can see my strength.

This extraordinarily 'personalised' account of what Army life is like contains many of Triandis' hallmarks of individualism (see Table 2 above). The 'unit of analysis' is definitely the individual. While there is a collective, it is implicit rather than explicit: it is the provider of 'technology, training, and support' but deserves no greater credit than that. The corporal views success in terms of his own betterment; indeed he defines the self in terms of traits. Remarkably, even when surrounded by over a million others, Richard remains 'an Army of one'. He clearly values independence and achievement over membership in a group. The individual joins, it would seem, only for reasons of personal interest, rather than for metaphysical ideals of sacrifice, duty, or service.

In another example, Tiffany, a Spanish-speaking interrogator, further demonstrates that a key reason for enlisting is furthering one's personal goals. There is nothing new in this: militaries have for some time stressed their relevance and their ability to provide marketable job skills. However, this issue is discussed not under 'training' or 'qualifications' but under 'leadership'. "Lead by example," the web site says, "Set the pace for your future. Tiffany talks about how the Army helps prepare her for a career in the civilian world." Even leadership is not viewed as being tied to group activity, but rather an individual strategy for advancement.

The website is littered with other phrases and passages that appear to be aiming at the individual *qua* potential recruit. The Army is "rewarding", people are concerned with "making a difference", one recruit's decision to leave home and join up is described as a "journey of independence." Finally, enlistment, for one young man "is going to make me mature about things, make me care more about the important stuff, *like family and friends*" (emphasis added).

This shift in emphasis towards personal goals accords with the leading postmodern military theories (Moskos 1994; Moskos and Burk 2001). Triandis' claims that "individualists…pursue their self-interest, regardless of the implications for the collective…[they] always look for the best 'deal' they can get" (1995, 130). Coker testifies that "We have moved from the kind of vocational service to a much more contractual understanding of what the military profession is. It is a job that offers opportunities. People go into the military because they want a career. They do not go into the [S]ervice…to serve their country to serve their country of to serve some collective entity" (United Kingdom 2000). An interesting side-effect of such changes is that they appear to be self-reinforcing. The military offers itself as a 'job option' but "then wonders why the members of the profession are acting like employees" (Snider and Watkins 2000, 7).

As mentioned before, the core programs of the U.S. Army have not changed: since the end of the Second World War service has meant personal benefits in the form of educational grants, and skilled training. Furthermore, it is not at all clear whether the American Army has changed their internal processes to match their advertising (one suspects that this is not the case), or whether the new campaign has been effective. What it does show, though, is how a military was able to read the signs of social change, and adapt its message in an attempt to maintain its relevance. Old wine in new bottles maybe, but they gain full points for trying. Perhaps innovations such as these are possible in the Canadian context, and might be applied within the military as well as on the recruiting poster.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERS

The leadership models above offer a variety of methods for achieving collective action from individuals. They can be summarised and then analysed for their potential value to military leadership in a postmodern context.

Table 4: Selected Strategies from Leadership Models

Model	Selected Strategy
•Transactional	•Offer contingent rewards
•Transformational	•Be charismatic
	•Offer intellectual stimulation
	•Provide inspiration
	•Give individual focus
•Triandis' Cross Cultural	•Assign personal goals
•Meaning Generation	•Provide a narrative

Following from what we have seen, transformational models, with their individual focus and prospects of intellectual stimulation, appear to be the most suited to the new realities posed by postmodern society. Individuals do desire 'one on one' attention, tailor made to their ambitions and objectives. Challenging and rewarding work, with a high degree of mental activity, are meant to be the 'bread and butter' of the new generation (Wong 2000). Owing to the individual's prioritisation of personal goals above group goals, Triandis' strategy of assigning personal, rather than collective, responsibility can be seen as an essential component of facilitating group action. This defeats any 'free rider' or 'social loafing' problems that might otherwise prevail (1993, 56).

From transactional leadership theory, the most promising approach would seem to be the provision of contingent rewards[16]. The transformational model encourages leaders to be charismatic and inspirational. While these are no doubt effective when properly carried out, they seem slightly out of touch with the main theme of the postmodern shift in society: overarching and agreed upon frameworks of meaning are disappearing. Accordingly, it may not be apparent to leaders what constitutes a reward, charisma, or

inspiration. Without a metanarrative tying things together all of these concepts are infinitely contingent. Far from being a 'one size fits all' solution, this contingency means even 'off the rack' methods are insufficient. With an almost endless array of 'tailor-made' possibilities (complicated further if the needs and desires of 'sub-collectives' are taken into account), the fundamental question will be can any organisation, let alone a military, get on with its core business in the face of such individual demand?

Problem with Combat

It should be understood that military leadership stands apart from other kinds of leadership. Perhaps in peacetime, or in operations with low intensity or pressure, personal attention is possible. However, in times of combat or high-stress, there will be little opportunity to negotiate acceptable rewards or provide intellectual stimulation. During these episodes (as brief and as infrequent as they may be) leadership could be expected to concentrate on collective needs and immediate, harmonised response. Very little of the leadership literature focuses on these conditions. It is a theoretical gap that leaves practitioners with little guidance. If the results of the *Debrief the Leaders* report are a reliable indication of the degree of anxiety felt by operational commanders, it is a gap that needs to be addressed quickly and thoroughly.

CONCLUSION

These changes amount to no small obstacle to Western armies at the beginning of the 21st Century. As one commentator warns:

> Military institutions are being challenged at the very heart of their mission: they must decide how to strike a strike a balance…between individual advancement and the collective good as well as between the transmission and regard for the traditional values and the action necessary for change (Reynolds, cited in Gardam 1995).

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If the prognosis above is accurate, what can armies do to prevent their collapse? How

can the erosion of the collective be prevented? In order to halt this process, a change in

perspective is necessary. It is easy to examine the sides of this debate as the poles of a

dichotomy. It enables us to understand more clearly the contrasts between the two

positions. However, it can mask any hope of finding a way forward. The first step

towards preventing individualism-cum-chaos is to appreciate, as the First World War

Australian General Monash did, that

> The conception of discipline is, after all, only a means to an end, and that
> end is to secure the coordinated action among a large number of
> individuals…It does not mean…suspension of the individuality (cited in
> Kellett, para 381).

Understanding that individuality is not an evil, and realising that collective *action*, not

collective *dominance* is the endstate, it is easier to see ways that the two perspectives can

coexist.

It seems, then, that individualism and collectivism do not form a dichotomy, but

rather a dialectic. What is key, therefore, is to place the individual rights into a collective

context. Hegel highlights the dialectic relationship of the two positions:

> Particular interests should not, in fact, be set aside or completely
> suppressed; instead they should be put in correspondence with the
> universal, and thereby both they and the universal are upheld (Curtis 1981,
> 99)

It is this synthesis of two seemingly polar opposites that represents the way forward[17].

Policy makers want clear policy recommendations, not philosophy and theories.

What is helpful are measures that take philosophical stances as their starting point and

allow for real people to take positive steps forward. The first of these is to re-emphasise

the importance of the group, and begin to rebuild confidence in the military as a

worthwhile organisation. This, as paradoxically as it may seem, has to be done through improving the personal aspects of the armed forces that are causing individuals to lose faith. Pay must be competitive, working conditions must be equitable, and significantly, the particular needs of a growing number of non-traditional groups must be addressed. What is needed is a new, dynamic, healthy pride in a revamped and relevant collective, which is inclusive and diverse. Traditions or policies that exist merely to single people or out or exclude, or reduce someone's ability to fulfil complementary personal goals, should be abandoned immediately. In creating an institution that takes people's individual and 'sub-collective' needs into account, thereby realising the synthesis mentioned above, one creates a stronger more relevant organisation. More importantly, one creates an organisation to which people can identify, belong, and towards which they can feel loyal. The responsibility for realising this enormous challenge rests squarely on the shoulders of the military's leaders. Occupying a key position between the individual and the collective, they are charged with "meaning making…continually making sense of people's experience by putting it into a larger context: providing a sense of purpose, a story of why people do what they do…building a shared vision…appropriate to the demand of the new situations" (Higham and Pacquet 2000). In a world in search of, but at the same time wary of, grand narratives, this is a tall order indeed.

Notes:

[1] One of the key figures in individual-oriented thinking is John Stuart Mill (1993). The exceptions mentioned include Marx, and many nationalist writers, such as Mazzini. For an ambivalent view at once decrying individualism and acknowledging the need for individuals as leaders see Nietzsche (Clive 1965). Kymlicka (1990) believes that the debate between Liberalism and Communitarianism is *the focal point* in contemporary political philosophy.

[2] See Fukuyama (1999), Putnam (2000), Drucker (1993), and Van Crevald (1999) for the most popular expressions of this sentiment.

[3] Inglehart has reached this conclusion, not only in step with theory, but after extensive empirical research, covering a period of over 25 years, across over 130 countries. His World Values Survey indicates not only a perceivable shift, but links it to economic prosperity.

[4] Environics Annual Canadian Values Survey (since 1983), N=2500.

[5] The terminology of much of the literature varies from 'high-modern', to 'late-modern', to 'post-modern'. In fact, within Environics' findings themselves, modern and postmodern are used interchangeably. For a comprehensive list of the differences between modern and postmodern values see Weiss and Wesley (2001) and Irvine (2001).

[6] Based on a CF of 60,000 personnel taken out of a population of approximately 30,000,000 (0.2%). Actual figures (57,500 personnel out of 31,592,805 = 0.18%) would render the ratio much smaller, lending more credence to the point that the CF might be overwhelmed by the larger majority of society. Figures from CIA Factbook Online, July 2001 estimates (www.cia.org)

[7] For a wider look at the social pressures facing the CF, see Tesseron (2001).

[8] On this matter Cooper concurs, postulating that in postmodern states "foreign policy becomes the continuation of domestic concerns beyond national borders" (2000, 32).

[9] A group of over 40 recently released junior officers responded to a questionnaire and some were then interviewed in a semi-structured manner. The questions revolved around issues of retention in the Canadian Forces. The results were reported in Ankersen and Tethong (2001; 2001a).

[10] The British military sociologist Christopher Dandeker concurs with this trend and argues that trying to resist this convergence is problematic: "when you start thinking about the relationship between the armed services and society in terms of the armed services needing to be different…I think that is unwise" (United Kingdom 2000, response to question 2).

[11] Indeed some commentators avoid the issue of defining the causal links altogether "Warlessness is the product of developments that have their origins in the West over the last two hundred years and that have gained in strength in recent decades…It is not the result of any single thing. It is the consequence of many things characteristic of Western society at the end of the twentieth century" (Mandelbaum, cited in Coker 2001).

[12] Triandis investigates these syndromes cross-culturally, by which he usually means across geographies. However, he does allow that these tendencies can co-exist within a single 'culture'. It is in this way that I mean to apply them. Indeed, it is precisely this kind of cultural coexistence that is the background to the study.

[13] See, as one example, the issue of gender in the discourse of development in large organisations such as the United Nations Development Program and the World Bank (http://www.undp.org/gender/guidance.html and http://www.worldbank.org/gender/overview/mainstreaming.html). See also Walker, Iladi, McMahon, and Fennell (1996) and Billing and Alveson (2000) for other gender-leadership issues.

[14] His factors included the need for social distance between leader and followers; the problem of the 'seriously maladjusted'; lack of subordinate desire, due to selective interests, differential experience and expertise, and apathy; as well as poor leader quality in terms of communication skills, and management of the reward-punishment system. (pp.18-19)

[15] See http://www.goarmy.com (accessed December 22, 2002).

[16] Indeed, it seems as if, with the large retention and recruitment bonuses now under offer by the CF, this strategy has been broadly applied See http://www.dnd.ca/menu/Feature_Story/2002/feb02/22feb02_f_e.htm (accessed February 22, 2002) for further details.

[17] Dialectics may well seem overly 'modern' and contrary to a postmodern ethos, but a blended approach that allows escape from 'binary thinking' certainly fits in with the ideals of 'combination' and 'contingency'—both highly postmodern attributes.

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