

Diversity as Strategy: Democracy's Ultimate Litmus Test

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ABSTRACT *Advanced democracies' defence and security forces have the privileged task of upholding the democratic way of life and its underlying values. Why, then, are they increasingly unrepresentative of the societies they allegedly serve? These organisations widely see diversity as a liability. They appear to have good reasons to defend their reticence. Contra the prevailing logic, this article posits diversity as a strategic asset. However, rather than relying on normative theoretical claims, the article defends the merits of diversity in the security and defence sectors on functional grounds. Operational, demographic, economic, formal-constitutional, and political trends militate for a paradigm shift: diversity's payoffs for the organisations' functional imperative greatly outweigh perceived costs.*

The riots in suburban Paris in 2005 and 2007 were emblematic of one kind of challenge confronting the security sector in the twenty-first century: Caucasian law-enforcement officers confronting Arab and African youth. Similarly, in expeditionary missions such as Afghanistan, the composition of the local population looks nothing like the fairly homogeneous expeditionary forces that are drawn largely from advanced industrialised democracies. This raises the core puzzle of this volume: Why is it that security and defence organisations tend to be so relatively unrepresentative of the societies they ostensibly serve? One might be tempted to assert that diversity is good; consequently, these organisations should 'get with the programme' and simply recruit more broadly. Yet that sort of normative stance is misleading.

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It presumes that diversity is good for diversity's sake. Moreover, it makes primordial assumptions about identity. Rather than starting out with controversial assumptions, the lack of heterogeneity makes one curious: Is it the institutions themselves that are resistant to diversity? If so, why is that? Are un(der)-represented groups of the population even interested in joining?

This collection has as its premise that there is something distinctly unique about security and defence in general and about the mandate bestowed upon these organisations. Samuel Huntington (1957) famously referred to it as the 'functional imperative': these are institutions set aside from society for the particular purpose of defending democratic values and the democratic way of life. This mission imposes unique constraints on defence and security institutions because we would hardly want attempts at 'social engineering' to undermine their operational effectiveness.

At the same time, though, there is something deeply troubling about any organisation, let alone a public sector organisation, that is unrepresentative of the society it serves. This is especially true for democratic societies that tout freedom, equality and justice as their core and subsidiary values. Supposedly those values translate into equality of opportunity. Yet this is a case of 'do as I say, not as I do' as governments and their bureaucracies tend to be surprisingly unrepresentative of the populations they claim to serve. Arguably, there are limits on the extent to which an organisation can be unrepresentative of the society it serves before it undermines its legitimacy and ability to carry out its objectives. This holds especially true for the armed forces whose service is to populations at home and abroad.

Some excellent comparative sociological research on the cultural diversity in the armed forces has already been done (Soeters & van der Meulen, 1999, 2007; Soeters & Manigart, 2008). However, since these are not methodologically independent observations, that is, the conditions are contingent on time and space, such research is limited in terms of conclusions we might infer about vectors of diffusion of cultural diversity. Moreover, what actually constitutes 'culture'? The meaning that is commonly ascribed to the term today dates back to its appropriation by anthropologists in the nineteenth century which, following Merton, functionally equates culture with values. Yet, diversity transcends 'culture' thus conceived. While ethnicity is commonly thought of in terms of culture, that does not hold for women and sexual minorities, for instance. Insofar as women and sexual minorities constitute anthropological 'communities' at all, they are quite different from ethno-cultural ones. Is it even meaningful to refer to a part of the population that makes up half the planet as having an identifiable 'culture'? Similarly, women and racialised minorities (the UN's official term for what were formerly known as visible minorities) are, by and large, readily distinguishable whereas sexual minorities are not. Racialised minorities are further

subject to be broken down into at least three different categories which distinguish themselves by the claims they level against the state: national minorities (which were present at a state's founding), immigrant minorities (which arrived after the state was founded), and Aboriginals (who were present when a state was founded but usually excluded from the public sphere) (Kymlicka, 1995). It would be misleading to subsume these qualitatively quite different groups under the label 'cultural'. Furthermore, one runs the risk of misattributing to culture what may actually turn out to be socio-economic alienation, thereby unnecessarily complicating the situation by reifying identity cleavage: not all that glitters is gold. Although the two can admittedly be difficult to disentangle as causal variables, David Mason (2003) has shown incisively elsewhere that socio-economic disadvantage readily masks cultural marginalisation.

Ergo, this volume is concerned with diversity writ large. Its objective is to explore the limits and possibilities of diversity by subjecting propositions about distant and proximate causes of un(der)-representation in the security and defence sector to empirical scrutiny. Its overarching concern is not the way diversity plays out in different countries. It takes an interdisciplinary approach: how issues of diversity affect security and defence on the one hand, and to the case for (and against) diversity on the other hand.

To this end, the collection started with contributions by David Last and Al Okros that laid out and clarified conceptual issues as they affect the armed forces in particular as a profession and the security sector more broadly. This conceptual and theoretical background set the stage for three country case studies by David Mason and Christopher Dandeker, Victoria Basham, and Karen Davis, to shed light on the glacial pace at which radicalised minorities, sexual minorities, and women have been making inroads into the defence establishment and the drivers of diversity in the United Kingdom and Canada. Whether under-represented racialised groups actually have an interest at all in joining the armed forces, the drivers of their (un)interest, and the conditions under which the armed forces might become an employer of choice are examined by Rudy Richardson and Jelle van den Berg in the context of the Netherlands. The following contributions deal with the tenuous balance between the functional imperative and diversity. How diversity plays out while deployed in the field on expeditionary mission was the subject of the contributions that follow. Liora Sion's case study of the Dutch deployment to the Balkans illustrates the perceived liability of women to the mission and its manifestation. Anne Irwin deconstructs this kind of misperception to show that it is based on a confusion between the attributes that are deemed to matter and those that actually matter for the purpose of operational effectiveness. The adverse operational implications of failing to address issues of diversity in an adequate and timely fashion

are exemplified in Joan Mars' study of Guyana. Conversely, Lindy Heineken and Noëlle van der Waag-Cowling show that diversity has its limits: social engineering can indeed compromise the institution's ability to carry out its functional imperative. Finally, Donna Winslow's contribution examines the manifestation of diversity in the form of international norms and their diffusion.

The collection may not deal with every conceivable dimension of diversity. It does, however, aim to facilitate a more informed debate on issues of diversity in the security sector. The contributions reinforce the need to tread carefully while being sensitive to the unique constraints and mission security and defence organisations have. At the same time, the facts are getting in the way of a good story, as summarised in this conclusion.

Initially, it lays out the core objections to diversity as commonly articulated by those who work in defence and security. These must be taken as legitimate concerns, especially by academics and others who have not themselves 'walked a mile in my boots'. Much of the rest of the conclusion shows that, empirically, these concerns are actually far more nuanced than critics assert and that there are a number of reasons why it is futile to resist diversity. Demographic trends are causing diversity to grow exponentially at home and abroad. Far from being mutually exclusive as posited by the critics, the compound effect of tightening labour markets, increasingly shallow recruit pools and declining recruit cohorts, the rapid rise in the salience of non-kinetic skills to mission success make diversity a complement to the functional imperative.

Aside from the demographic imperative for diversity as a functional complement to security and defence, several other factors to be discussed in this conclusion militate against institutional resistance to diversity. First, the diffusion of diversity as a national and international norm is making institutional aberration from that norm ever more apparent and subject to scrutiny. International norms transfer is critical here not only because they supersede jurisdictional sovereignty which makes them difficult to dismiss but also because their most fervent advocates are advanced industrialised democracies. Their legitimacy is thus closely tied to their practice by those who defend them: you need to practise what you preach. Second, shallower recruit pools and tightening labour markets are precipitating an economic imperative whereby the costs associated with failing to recruit more broadly and diversely are rapidly outpacing any benefits that may be reaped from institutional homogeneity. Third, populations in democratic societies through their governments expect their institutions of state to manifest society and its values. Failure to diversify thus puts the defence and security sector increasingly at odds with the society it serves, which has the potential to hamper its societal legitimacy and ability to implement government policy, and, in turn, undermines the institution's functional imperative. Fourth, societal as well as governmental

expectations as well as the diffusion of norms manifest themselves in a legal–constitutional imperative. Diversity in the security and defence sector has often been the result of legal decisions, political decisions, or both. Aggrieved individuals challenge the status quo with the result that other institutions impose solutions on the profession of arms. Since one of the hallmarks of a profession is the autonomy it enjoys in regulating itself by setting its own standards and expectations, outside intervention calls into question the professional status the armed forces and law enforcement enjoy. Every such legal and political imposition opens the door just a little bit wider to having outsiders tell the military and police how to do their job. An institution that regards itself as being set aside for a special purpose will want to relinquish as little latitude over its internal affairs to outsiders as possible. Legal and political decisions on how defence and security organisations are to deal with diversity curtail that autonomy; so, it is in the institution’s interest to adapt proactively. All the evidence suggests that being reactionary only forestalls the inevitable while severely constraining the institution’s latitude to adapt in the way it sees fit.

The compound effect of these demographic, economic, societal, legal–constitutional, and political imperatives in support of the argument of seeing diversity as complementing the functional imperative leads to a paradigm shift: diversity is not a ‘problem’ that somehow needs to be ‘managed’; rather, as society becomes more diverse, the pressure for institutions to adapt will only increase. Instead of a management paradigm with its integrationist undertones, the conversation to be had is one of mutual accommodation. There must be some give and take on both sides. The defence and security sector has little choice but to be more accommodating. It has to identify which integrationist aspects of the institution are indispensable to its ability to carry out its mandate and mission and which aspects are malleable and open to adaptation without compromising the functional imperative. Conversely, individuals who join cannot expect the institution to relinquish those aspects of its identity and culture that are integral to its *raison d’être*.

Diversity in the security sector is the ultimate litmus test of just how free, equal, and fair a democratic society really is. If security and defence organisations have as their purpose to defend democratic values in the form of a free, equal, and just way of life, then all members of society should have a stake in securing their defence. The citizen soldier is the ultimate manifestation of loyalty. Groups that are unrepresented, under-represented or even deliberately excluded risk being relegated to a lower status citizenship at best and to fifth pillar at worst. Greater diversity in the security and defence sector, then, is perhaps the single most important means of turning diversity from a security ‘problem’ – as minorities are widely perceived – and instead making them part of the solution.

Diversity: Asset or Liability?

Two core objections are commonly levelled against diversity in the armed forces: (1) diversity undermines cohesion and thus the organisation's functional imperative; and (2) minorities are not interested in joining the armed forces anyway. Both objections must be taken seriously. After all, members of the armed forces sign up for unlimited liability. It is the only (public) institution in democracies that requires this level of commitment from its members. In a democracy, members of all other public and security institutions have the right to refuse to engage in situations that they feel might pose a threat to their personal safety. Not so with the armed forces (and, to a lesser extent, security forces more broadly). To the contrary, members of the armed forces are professional managers of violence. One tool to this end is that they are trained to kill. As such, one situation for which they are trained is to confront other trained killers and neutralise them. In other words, members of the armed forces have signed up for a job where their lives are on the line. It is in the very nature of their line of work to minimise risk to their life and to optimise their chances of survival. Actually, that risk calculus is part and parcel of human nature, only that their line of work happens to amplify that aspect of human nature. Law-enforcement officers and soldiers are, after all, human beings.

As conceptualised in David Last's contribution to this volume, the work with which they are tasked requires them to act in groups (albeit of varying size and firepower). Groups face collective-action problems. One aspect of ensuring the functional imperative is thus to minimise collective-action problems through both training and – as is apparent by the institutional resistance to diversity (an issue to which I shall return below) – recruitment. In essence, they do this by minimising transaction costs. These transaction costs have different euphemisms, perhaps the most ubiquitous of which is 'cohesion'. Cohesion of the force is key to survival: the better the cohesion of a force, the lower its transaction costs and the better its capacity to fulfil the functional imperative. Survival is, of course, the ultimate key to the functional imperative; by definition, a dead soldier cannot complete her/his mission. Given the compound effect of both human nature and their job, it should come as no surprise then that members of the armed forces and law enforcement are apprehensive about anything and anyone that might possibly threaten cohesion.

This explains (at least partially) why institutional reluctance to change is so pervasive in the areas of defence and security. Change may lower transaction costs but, in the short term, it may actually raise them. That explains the institution's inherent conservatism: insofar as change is necessary, it should be organic and gradual. The fact that armed forces have been reluctant to

recruit more diversely is thus part of their institutional culture, for diversity per se is equated with change. Rather than treating human beings as equals by their very nature, differences matter, whether perceived or real: phenotype, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, etc. Of course, social identity theory posits that apprehension about the 'other' is itself part of human nature. As Konrad Lorenz (1966) and others have observed, human survival hinges on a collective existence. Psychologists refer to this as the dialectic between 'in-group' and 'out-group'. Survival is a function of lowering transaction costs among members of the group. The ability to communicate is one important mechanism to lowering transaction costs but so are other, more implicit, mechanisms, such as customs, religion, and so forth. In this regard, we can actually think of defence and security as quintessentially 'primitive' institutions, possibly the most 'primitive' of all public institutions: They lead a tribal existence.

Anthropologically, the modern euphemism for this tribal existence is that of a profession. Professions distinguish themselves by the autonomy accorded to them in setting their standards and in administering and managing themselves collectively, as Al Okros analyses so incisively with regard to the armed forces in his contribution to this volume. Yet, because of its mandate, the profession of arms arguably enjoys a greater degree of autonomy than any other profession. This is basically what Samuel Huntington (1957) famously argued: the military is an organisation set apart for a special purpose and, for that reason, must be spared from outside interference. Ultimately, that is the very definition of a profession.

The profession of arms also happens to set itself apart through a greater emphasis on cohesion than any other profession. In essence, cohesion is part and parcel of the profession. Diversity is perceived to threaten cohesion, thereby risking undermining the profession as a whole, its ability to carry out its functional imperative, and consequently its relative autonomy. Ergo, the armed forces define themselves by their homogeneity. Diversity viz. cohesion is perceived as a threat to the *profession* of arms.

Several of the contributions to this volume go to considerable lengths to show that the evidence does not support the claim that diversity – as understood by the profession of arms – threatens cohesion. As Anne Irwin documents in her contribution, the link is the result of a confusion of categories. Anthropologists such as Irwin distinguish between two neologisms: emic and etic. These categories refer to two different kinds of data concerning human behaviour. An emic account is a description of behaviour or a belief in terms that are meaningful to the actor. In other words, it is an insider's perspective. By contrast, an etic account is a description of a behaviour or belief by an observer as applied to other cultures. It is the perspective of a self-conscious outsider and endeavours to be neutral or objective. This

distinction matters because members of the armed forces clearly believe that diversity may have a detrimental impact on cohesion.

Yet in the time Irwin spent embedded with soldiers in Afghanistan she finds that what turns out to matter in the view of members of the armed forces is actually quite different from what they believe to matter. Once deployed in the field, it turns out that phenotype, religion, gender, sexual orientation and so forth are irrelevant. As Irwin's research shows, what counts is no different than what matters in any other job: whether someone 'gets the job done', whether someone whines and complains, whether someone is good at what s/he does, whether someone is risk averse, and so forth. But the facts get in the way of a good story. The misconception about the relationship between diversity and cohesion is a classic case of making what is measurable matter rather than, as anthropologists such as Irwin do so proficiently, identifying what matters and making it measurable. Phenotype, religion, and gender are relatively easy to measure, 'getting the job done', by contrast, is far less so because of its intrinsically subjective and qualitative characteristics. In short, there is no evidence in this volume to suggest that difference per se is a threat to the functional imperative – at least not the kind of difference the armed forces commonly associate with diversity.

Notwithstanding Lindy Heinecken and Noëlle van der Waag-Cowling's South African observations about the very real limits to diversity and the consequences of diversity for diversity's sake, time and again the contributors to this volume document diversity as an asset. Analogous field research in business administration and management of the impact of a culturally diverse workforce on organisational performance has consistently shown diversity to add value and contribute to the organisation's competitive advantage (e.g. Richard, 2000). Racial and gender diversity has been shown to correlate positively with financial performance (Erhardt *et al.*, 2003). Notwithstanding the complexity of the relationship between diversity and performance (Blau, 1977), the impact of diversity on performance has consistently been shown to be either positive or neutral (depending on the conditions and context). The onus, then, is on the detractors of diversity to prove their case; for reversing the burden of proof provides ample evidence to the contrary. Frederick the Great already realised the positive effects of diversity and of recruiting the best talent as broadly as possible when he warmly welcomed the Huguenots. Similar examples from military history abound.

The other ubiquitous objection to diversity in the armed forces is that minorities do not want to join. First, the fact that minorities do join belies that claim. Survey research, such as that conducted by Jelle van den Berg and Rudy Richardson for this volume, does show a disproportionately lower rate of interest in the armed forces among non-traditional populations (women, after all, are not a minority!) than among Caucasian males. Van den Berg

and Richardson find there to be any number of reasons to account for this result, including immigrants' negative perceptions and low standing of the security sector in their country of origin, an occupational desire to join one of the professions (and failure to recognise the armed forces as such), parents' disproportionate influence over their children's choices, conservative family values that prize geographical proximity (whereas the armed forces have bases across the country, usually away from urban areas where much of the diverse recruit pool is concentrated and deploy far afield), and unfamiliarity with the organisation. Insofar as respondents express interest in the armed forces, the research nonetheless reveals a serious disconnect: the level of interest vastly surpasses minorities' actual representation in the armed forces. Far from inferring that non-traditional populations are disinterested, the more appropriate question to ask is why some people are more prone to sign up, follow through on signing up (and subsequently not leave) than others. As follows from David Mason and Christopher Dandeker's contribution, answers to those questions are to be sought with the institution and its culture, recruitment, retention, promotion, and remuneration practices. They make a point of showing that these are difficult and complex questions, many of which warrant much greater attention in the literature than researchers have thus far accorded them. In the end, however, the blanket assertion that minorities have no interest in joining is patently false and belies empirical evidence to the contrary.

The Demographic Economy of Security and Defence

Rarely can analysts claim to be documenting new phenomena. Population ageing, however, provides a revolutionary variable. Never before has humanity witnessed such dramatic, widespread ageing among the world's most industrialised and powerful democracies. Two long-term demographic trends coincide to produce population ageing: decreasing fertility rates and increasing life expectancy. Fertility rates refer to the average number of children born per woman in a given country. For a state to sustain its population (assuming zero net immigration), fertility levels must exceed about 2.1 children per woman.

Today the United States is the only developed great power that comes close to meeting this requirement. As detailed in Table 1, the proportion of the population that resides in advanced industrialised democracies is projected to continue to erode: from 24 per cent in 1980, to 18 per cent today, and 16 per cent by 2025. Owing to declining and below-replacement fertility, the deck of the world's most populous countries is being shuffled like never before (see Table 2). Due to steep declines in fertility rates over the past century and substantial increases in longevity, allied democracies are ageing

Table 1. Population by continent, in millions and proportion, 2000–2050

Year	World	Asia	Africa	Europe	Latin America	North America	Oceania
2000	6,115	3,698 (60.5%)	819 (13.4%)	727 (11.9%)	521 (8.5%)	319 (5.2%)	31 (0.5%)
2005	6,512	3,937 (60.5%)	921 (14.1%)	729 (11.2%)	557 (8.6%)	335 (5.1%)	34 (0.5%)
2010	6,909	4,167 (60.3%)	1,033 (15.0%)	733 (10.6%)	589 (8.5%)	352 (5.1%)	35 (0.5%)
2015	7,302	4,391 (60.1%)	1,153 (15.8%)	734 (10.1%)	618 (8.5%)	368 (5.0%)	38 (0.5%)
2020	7,675	4,596 (59.9%)	1,276 (16.6%)	733 (9.6%)	646 (8.4%)	383 (5.0%)	40 (0.5%)
2025	8,012	4,773 (59.6%)	1,400 (17.5%)	729 (9.1%)	670 (8.4%)	398 (5.0%)	43 (0.5%)
2030	8,309	4,917 (59.2%)	1,524 (18.3%)	723 (8.7%)	690 (8.3%)	410 (4.9%)	45 (0.5%)
2035	8,571	5,032 (58.7%)	1,647 (19.2%)	716 (8.4%)	706 (8.2%)	421 (4.9%)	46 (0.5%)
2040	8,801	5,125 (58.2%)	1,770 (20.1%)	708 (8.0%)	718 (8.2%)	431 (4.9%)	48 (0.5%)
2045	8,996	5,193 (57.7%)	1,887 (21.0%)	700 (7.8%)	726 (8.1%)	440 (4.9%)	50 (0.6%)
2050	9,150	5,231 (57.2%)	1,998 (21.8%)	691 (7.6%)	729 (8.0%)	448 (4.9%)	51 (0.6%)

Source: UN World Population Prospects (2008) estimates and medium variant projections.

at unprecedented rates and to an unprecedented extent. As Table 3 illustrates, the scope of the ageing process is remarkable.

These projections are very unlikely to be wrong. And the trends are largely irreversible. The reason for this certainty is simple: the elderly of the future are already born. Anyone over the age of 41 in 2050 has already been born! Absent some global natural disaster, disease pandemic, or other worldwide calamity, the number of people in the world who are over 65 will grow exponentially over the coming decades. Even in democracies with comparatively good demographic prospects such as Canada, the proportion of that cohort is projected to double by 2040.

These developments and shifts from high to low birth and death rates are a function of the demographic transition (as depicted in Figure 1). In pre-industrial society, both the crude birth rate (CBR) and the crude death rate (CDR) are high and essentially balance each other. As a result, population size remains largely constant. This stage has now been superseded by almost all countries and population groups. Most developing countries are

Table 2. Largest countries ranked by population size, 1950, 2005, and 2050

Ranking	1950	2005	2050
1	China	China	India
2	India	India	China
3	United States	United States	United States
4	Russian Federation	Indonesia	Indonesia
5	Japan	Brazil	Pakistan
6	Indonesia	Pakistan	Nigeria
7	Germany	Bangladesh	Bangladesh
8	Brazil	Russian Federation	Brazil
9	UK	Nigeria	Ethiopia
10	Italy	Japan	DR Congo
11	Bangladesh	Mexico	Philippines
12	France	Vietnam	Mexico
		(14) Germany	(18) Japan
		(20) France	(26) Germany
		(21) UK	(27) France
		(23) Italy	(32) UK
			(39) Italy

Source: Adapted from Jackson & Howe (2008); future rankings for select developed countries which are projected to fall below 12th place are indicated in parentheses.

in stage two or three. In stage two, improvements in public health and food supply cause death rates to drop and life expectancy to rise. At this stage, fertility exceeds mortality and longevity rises; consequently, countries experience a large increase in population. In stage three, natural increase levels off as the differential between fertility begins to narrow. By stage four, sometimes known as the Second Demographic Transition, fertility drops below replacement level and is exceeded by mortality. Initially, this leads to slowing population growth and eventually to population decline.

The same model can be applied not only to countries but also to population groups. The West's European and European-settler populations (as well as some others such as Russia's, Japan's and soon China's) have all reached the stage where fertility is below replacement level and the CDR exceeds the CBR. Yet immigration as well as above-average total fertility rates among some racialised minorities, immigrant groups, and indigenous populations moderate an otherwise precipitous population decline across mature democracies.

Owing to immigration the proportion of the foreign-born population across industrialised democracies is on the rise (currently peaking at around 20 per cent in Australia, Canada, and Switzerland, for instance). Immigrant populations tend to have above-average total fertility rates; consequently, their population structure is younger than that of the traditional Caucasian

Table 3. Countries projected to have declining populations, by period of the onset of decline, 1981–2045

Already declining	Onset of decline: 2009–2029	Onset of decline: 2030–2050
Hungary (1981)	Italy (2010)	Azerbaijan (2030)
Bulgaria (1986)	Slovakia (2011)	Denmark (2031)
Estonia (1990)	Bosnia & Herzegovina (2011)	Belgium (2031)
Georgia (1990)	Greece (2014)	Thailand (2033)
Latvia (1990)	Serbia (2014)	North Korea (2035)
Armenia (1991)	Serbia (2014)	Singapore (2035)
Romania (1991)	Portugal (2016)	Netherlands (2037)
Lithuania (1992)	Cuba (2018)	Switzerland (2040)
Ukraine (1992)	Macedonia (2018)	UK (2044)
Moldova (1993)	Spain (2019)	Puerto Rico (2044)
Belarus (1994)	Taiwan (2019)	Kazakhstan (2045)
Russian Federation (1994)	South Korea (2020)	
Czech Republic (1995)	Austria (2024)	
Poland (1997)	Finland (2027)	
Germany (2006)	China (2029)	
Japan (2008)		
Croatia (2008)		
Slovenia (2008)		

Source: Adapted from Jackson & Howe (2008); excludes countries with populations less than 1 million.

population. Similarly, in countries with national minority populations, such as African-Americans and Hispanics in the United States, these population groups often register above-average fertility.¹ Indigenous groups, finally, have some of the highest fertility rates in the world. The greater a population's total fertility rate (TFR), the greater its proportion of women of childbearing age which, in turn, explains and sustains an excess in the CBR over the CDR.

This development hails two salient consequences for security and defence recruitment. First, the proportion of the recruitment cohort relative to the population as a whole starts to wane (although the actual cohort size may continue to expand for a while yet). Second, within the recruitment cohort the proportion of the Caucasian cohort contracts while the proportion of the non-Caucasian cohort expands.

The Canadian experience is telling here. Figure 2 depicts the degree to which the proportion of Canada's Caucasian and francophone populations is diminishing relative to the growing proportion of self-identifying racialised minorities. By 2011, below-replacement rates of fertility and allophone immigration – immigrants who employ neither official language (English or French) as their vernacular – will have reduced francophones to 14 per cent

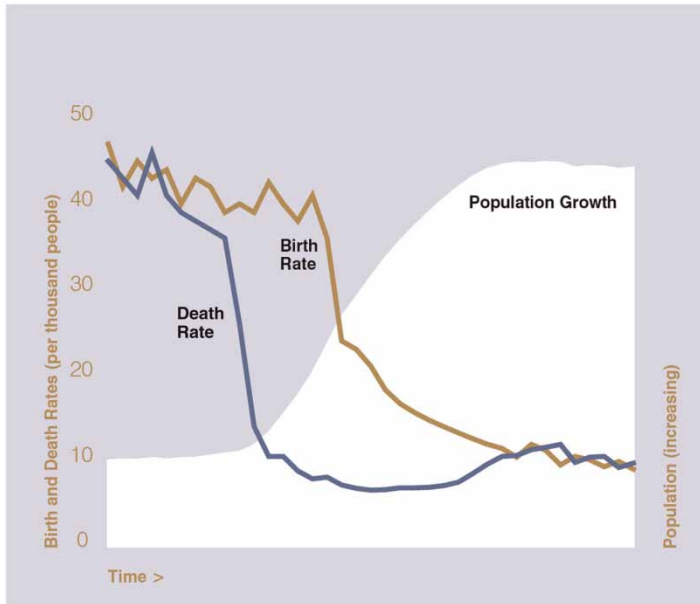


Figure 1. The demographic transition.

Source: Leahy *et al.* (2007: 17).

of the Canadian population and anglophones to 47 per cent, with the remaining 39 per cent of the population being comprised of people who do not identify as anglophone, francophone, or Canadian. That is more than twice that in 2001, when the combined proportion of this population approached 18 per cent of the Canadian population. At current recruitment patterns, the rate at which the Canadian armed forces' composition will continue to diverge from the ethno-demographic composition of Canadian society will actually accelerate.

This trend poses a challenge for the Canadian armed forces' legislated mandate to sustain themselves as a genuinely bilingual institution. With the proportion of francophones on the wane due to low fertility, the fastest-growing French-speaking population is found among visible minorities. Far from being mutually exclusive, the CF's bilingualism and diversity mandates are thus complementary: bilingualism becomes a function of diversity.

Demographically, then, recruitment to defence and security forces can either depend ever more heavily on a shrinking Caucasian cohort or recruit more broadly from the population as a whole. However, a number of variables intervene that militate against the former option. David Mason and Christopher Dandeker document these developments in the form of what

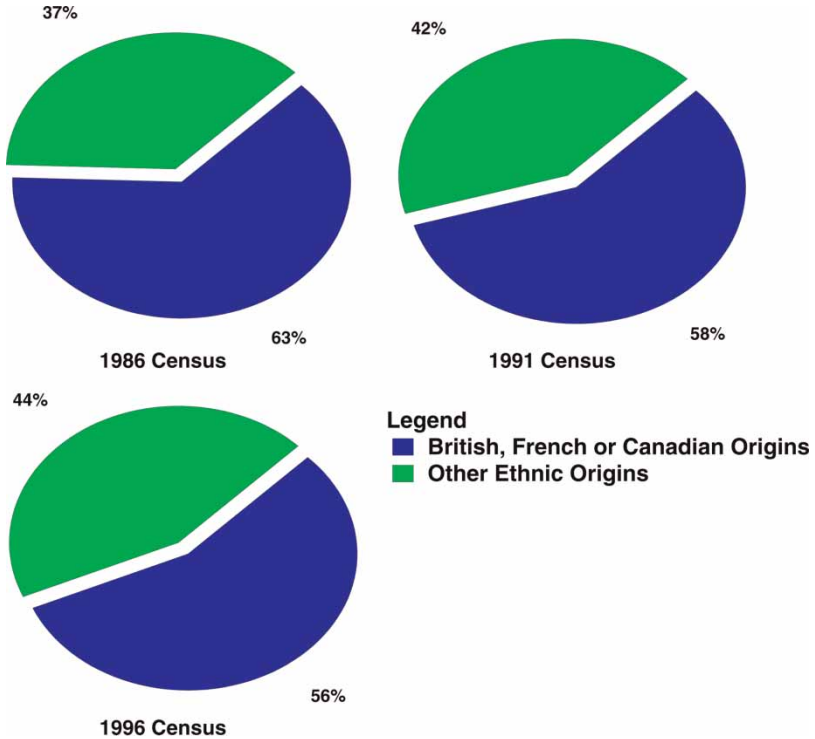


Figure 2. Population reporting at least one ethnic origin other than British, French or Canadian, 1986, 1991 and 1996 censuses.

Source: Department of Citizenship and Immigration (2002).

the British in their White Paper on defence have referred to as the ‘business case’ for diversity: The opportunity cost of not recruiting more broadly from the recruitment cohort is growing exponentially. Maintaining and optimising the armed forces’ functional imperative suggests maximising value for money and recruiting the best talent possible. Failure to recruit more diversely leads to sub-optimal outcomes on both counts. Moreover, it has negative implications for the functional imperative.

The Functional Imperative

As populations age, the proportion (and eventually the size) of the youth cohort shrinks. In and of itself, this development is not yet problematic because the armed forces can compensate to some extent by substituting capital for labour. Of course, this is precisely what is happening in

contemporary fourth- and fifth-generation warfare (Moskos *et al.*, 1999: chapter 1). However, substituting capital for labour requires ever more highly qualified, trained, and skilled operators. Morris Janowitz (1960) anticipated this development in his observation that military organisations are becoming less distinct and looking increasingly like any other large, bureaucratic, technologically advanced organisation. This development is theorised further in Moscos' (1977) institutional/occupational thesis which posits the military moving from an institutional to an occupational format that is driven by self-interest and a free market. As a result, the security and defence organisations are now competing for the same limited talent pool of highly qualified personnel. In the post-industrial economy, demand for this labour pool grows exponentially (Bell, 1973); consequently, demand not only outstrips supply but the differential between demand and supply widens. The pressure on salaries rises as a result. To meet demand, the private sector enjoys greater latitude in adjusting salaries than the public sector. Public-sector remuneration thus becomes less attractive. Under these conditions, armed forces must recruit as broadly as possible to harness the best return on scarce funds and recruit the best talent available. The lower the quality of recruited personnel, the more the armed forces have to invest in 'training up' and 'educating up' that individual, thus imposing an unnecessary strain on scarce resources.

The matter of resources becomes apparent during the new missions of peace enforcement, stabilisation, and counter-insurgency. Successful conduct of such missions requires a high degree of civil–military cooperation in the form of civil affairs and psychology operations. The expansion of civil affairs and psychological operations units in recent years testifies to this claim. Under these conditions, soft, non-kinetic skills, such as linguistic competence, religious practice, and familiarity with local customs are proving indispensable to mission success (Leuprecht, 2005).

Yet there is an even more straightforward argument for greater diversity among the troops that are being deployed abroad. For the most part, they are being sent abroad to help diverse groups cohabit. If ethnic cleavages are a major source of conflict in the world and one of the premises of intervention is to have competing ethnies cooperate, then the intervening countries and their forces need to practise what they preach and model that to the people on the ground. As many law-enforcement organisations have come to know, a diverse organisation is a good way to model inter-cultural cooperation.

With the ease of communication and the dispersal of diaspora communities across the globe, even people in the most far-flung places on the planet know that the states the intervening forces represent are heterogeneous (given that they are likely to have seen American television at some point) with legislation to protect people from discrimination on the one hand, while

encouraging diversity and pluralism to flourish on the other hand. So, when the security and defence forces deployed look suspiciously homogeneous, that is bound to raise eyebrows amongst the locals. If nothing else, it risks leaving a bad neo-colonial aftertaste in their mouth.

The Citizen Soldier

The armed forces like to think of themselves as turning citizens into soldiers; but they play just as important a role at turning soldiers into citizens. Through their training regimes, armed forces have an unparalleled capacity to generate uniformity. The institution socialises them into its predominant norms, it is able to train a high degree of uniformity in responding to specific situations, and it has to teach soldiers a common vernacular to ensure that they understand commands as given. France is the quintessential example of a country where the institutions of the state built the nation by turning the peasants into Frenchmen (Weber, 1976; Brubaker, 1992; Bobbitt, 2003; Weil, 2008). Faced with drawing on an increasingly diverse society, armed forces are, as Mason and Dandeker's contribution suggests, re-learning that task.

In light of the aforementioned labour market trends, the armed forces will also end up taking on a greater role in facilitating social mobility. The bridging hypothesis initially posited the armed forces as a bridge from adolescence to adult life (Browning *et al.*, 1973). It has since been refined to argue that minorities are particularly likely to benefit from military service as a bridge to enhanced opportunities in life (Gade *et al.*, 1991). The armed forces especially, but the police – like other administrative institutions of government – as well, have long been essential to facilitating social mobility through equality of opportunity.

When testing the bridging hypothesis in the US context during the Vietnam war, for example, Shields (1980, 1981) found that the burden of conscription fell disproportionately on young African-Americans with a high-school education. Armed forces have a propensity for recruiting disproportionately from the lower quintiles of the population. Due to demographic change, the character of that economic strata is changing. While in the US African-Americans and Hispanics continue to predominate in that strata, in much of the rest of the democratic world it is increasingly populated by racialised minorities. So, much of the rest of the democratic world is facing recruitment dynamics that are starting to approximate those in the United States – but without the US approach to diversity. President Truman's proactive policy with respect to mainstreaming African-Americans in the US armed forces inadvertently ended up moderating recruitment problems that the US armed services would have faced as the result of declining fertility among the USA's Caucasian population.

Had the armed forces opted to recruit ever more aggressively among the shrinking Caucasian cohort, the costs of doing so would have climbed exponentially. Both the cohort itself and its representation among the socio-economic strata from which the armed forces tend to draw disproportionately are on the wane. In its stead, it is being populated by racialised minorities. So, the 'business case' for recruiting more diversely is two-fold. On the one hand, the proportion of racialised minorities among the recruitment cohort is growing; on the other hand, so is their representation among the socio-economic strata from which the armed forces tend to recruit. The US military is more diverse not because of race and diversity per se but because racialised minorities have always made up a greater proportion of the armed services' traditional recruitment pool in the US than in just about any other advanced democracy.

Greater involvement by minority groups in the armed forces will also help to legitimate the institution, its missions, and government policy. As missions become more difficult and controversial, the armed forces stand to benefit from building as broad a base of support among the electorate as possible. The same holds true for a government looking to legitimate its policies. When a key institution of the government is unrepresentative of the population it serves, chances are that population will have an ambivalent relationship with that institution. Funding for the armed forces is one concrete example. Since armed forces are consistently concerned about the scarcity of funds they are being allocated by governments, failure to ensure that the institution which receives what is usually one of the top three budget items in any democracy (i.e. defence spending) is representative of the population as a whole is unlikely to help the case for bolstering its resources.

Similarly, democratic governments like to portray themselves as representing the people. To this end they enact both negative rights legislation to protect citizens from discrimination of various sorts and positive rights legislation to rectify past wrongs and proactively increase the representation of under-represented groups. Why, then, are governmental bureaucracies consistently among the least representative institutions in democratic societies? And among these national institutions, the security and defence sector is usually even less representative of the population as a whole than the rest of government. This is an inherent contradiction for all democratic governments: They claim to govern societies that allegedly prize equality of opportunity yet they themselves trail the curve.

This is not an abstract normative or moral claim. There is ample evidence that armed forces are not in tune with societal expectations on diversity issues. As evidenced in this volume by Karen Davis and by David Mason and Christopher Dandeker, human rights commissions and the European Court of Human Rights have been instrumental in opening or improving access to

the armed forces in countries such as Canada, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Gender has figured particularly prominently in these decisions but, as documented by Victoria Basham, gays and racial minorities have benefited from them as well. In other words, courts in democratic countries have clearly established a societal, legal, and constitutional imperative for diversity in the armed forces – and they have decided that this imperative supersedes any possibly adverse effects these injunctions might have on the armed forces' functional imperative. This leaves the armed forces with only two choices in the diversity debate: Be proactive or learn to live with courts and other bodies telling the armed forces what to do about diversity.

Unlike other national institutions, the armed forces benefit from a stringent hierarchy which facilitates the prompt execution of decisions, irrespective of how un/popular they may be with the members. As a result of this hierarchy, the government arguably has greater control over the armed forces than over any other national institution and should thus, in theory at least, be able to implement its decisions quickly. The precedent set by President Truman suggests that once a decision with respect to diversity is taken, the armed forces have the capacity to implement it quickly. Of course, the concerns raised at the time were similar to those being raised about diversity today (cf. Huntington, 1957). Nowadays, however, no one thinks of African-Americans as having compromised the functional imperative. Quite to the contrary, some of the country's most distinguished military leaders are African-Americans.

Truman's decision may actually not be very instructive. African-Americans and Hispanics in the United States are a special type of minority group. Hispanics are a national minority of sorts although their presence had historically been limited to specific swathes of the country. African-Americans, however, are not really a national minority in the classic sense, nor are they an immigrant minority (cf. Kymlicka, 1995: chapter 1). Whereas Americans are unlikely to question an African-Americans' loyalty to the US, the same does not obtain in many other advanced industrialised democracies where minorities are regularly regarded as a potential fifth column. And so it should come as no surprise that Truman's decision could be implemented with relative ease.

Conclusion

Advanced industrialised democracies have been subject to a demographic transition which is engendering unprecedented changes in population size as well as composition. The extent to which their populations are ageing is without historical precedent. This apparent 'demographic decline' and its alleged implications are well documented (e.g. Eberstadt, 2009; Jackson & Howe, 2008). However, populations within countries are not ageing uniformly.

As a matter of fact, the differentials are considerable: Whereas in most mature democracies fertility among Caucasians has been below replacement levels (about 2.1 children per woman) for decades, fertility among racialised minorities, immigrants, and indigenous groups remains not only strong and sustainable but, in the case of indigenous groups, is consistently among the highest in the world.

Yet, looking at most armed forces, one would be hard pressed to notice. The face of Western society may be undergoing dramatic change but the armed and security forces stand out as a relative bastion of homogeneity. There are three puzzles here: first, why that is the case; second, why that observation is fairly consistent across advanced industrialised countries – the same countries which tout freedom, equality, and justice as their core values and which talk up human rights; and, third, why change and reform in the defence and security sector have been so elusive. These puzzles are being dealt with in a research project, the results of which are beyond the scope of this volume. Suffice it to observe that the cleavage of composition between armed and security forces on the one hand and, on the other hand, the societies from which they are drawn is growing.

This is a problem on at least three levels: demography, function, and legitimacy. First, demographic projections show a sustained trajectory towards greater diversity. As a result of population ageing, the overall pool of potential recruits relative to the population as a whole is growing shallower. The overall trend, however, is marked by considerable distortions: the Caucasian cohort is declining disproportionately while the cohort of racialised minorities, immigrant groups, and indigenous people is expanding rapidly due to both higher fertility rates and sustained immigration. Moreover, population ageing is projected to precipitate a tightening labour market with growing competition for a contracting talent pool.

Second, were armed and security forces not to step up recruitment from that cohort, they are bound to face increasingly sub-optimal human resources outcomes with detrimental implications for their functional imperative. Furthermore, both the locations where expeditionary forces are being deployed and the nature of missions to which civil affairs and psychological operations are integral necessitate soft skills as a force multiplier.

Third, if among the core purposes of armed and security forces in mature democracies is to defend the democratic way of life and the core values that underpin it, then should security and armed forces not practise those same values? Ironically, the same governments that legislate and preach employment equity and equality of opportunity are remarkably poor at reflecting diversity. So, this issue is not limited to the defence and security sector. Rather, it affects government as a whole: how can a government and its security sector be deemed legitimate when it is perceived as preaching rather than

practising equality of opportunity and when public institutions are increasingly unrepresentative of society at large? Might an unrepresentative public and security sector make it increasingly difficult to legitimise government policy? Whether in the United States of President Truman, the British Empire, or the French Republic of Jules Ferry, the armed forces have long been integral to nation-building. Conversely, in light of Joan Mars' analysis of Guyana's security sector, there appears to be a correlation between how politically stable and economically prosperous countries are, and how representative their security and defence sector is of the population it serves: the more homogenous its composition, the less stable and prosperous. Of course, this must not be mistaken for a causal relationship. But it does provide food for thought: what prospect does a widening gap between representation in the defence and security sector on the one hand, and demographic developments in society at large on the other hand, hold out for the future of democracy?

The basic premise of this collection is that the notions of the functional imperative of the armed forces and of the citizen soldier, far from being at odds, are but different sides of the same coin. Military officers tend to claim that their job is to defend democracy, not to practice it. The evidence presented in this collection, however, leads to a different conclusion: the defence of democracy is inexorably linked to its practice.

Note

1. National minorities differ from immigrant groups in that the former were present on a state's territory prior to its founding.

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