CANADIAN SOLDIERS' CONSTRUCTIONS OF THEIR ROLE-SETS

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This study investigates how soldiers structure their status and role-sets within the military and society. Personal Construct Psychology repertory grids were used in focus groups of serving Canadian Army soldiers (n=16). Findings suggest that combat arms trades perceive a marked distinction between their role and support trades and civilians, whereas support trades perceived their role as closer to combat arms trades than civilians. Combat arms and support trades perceived deployment experience as a status legitimiser, and felt that combat arms personnel were more respected within the military and society; however they felt support trades would fit into society more easily.

Keywords: Repertory grids, soldiers, role-sets

A person's status is their position within a social system involving designated rights and obligations, and each person holds multiple statuses within society. For each status a person holds, such as that related to the professions of doctor, parent or soldier, there are a variety of connected roles, called a role-set, which relate the person to various others (Merton, 1957, p. 111). Role-sets are defined as a "complement of role-relationships in which persons are involved by virtue of occupying a particular social status" (Merton, 1957, p. 110). Status-sets denotes the multiple roles a person takes on, usually from different social institutions. Role-sets may conflict with one another (Merton, 1957), however individuals can possess contradictory constructs that may allow for successful integration of conflicting roles (Kelly, 1955).

Role-sets are an important consideration for effective group cohesion. Group cohesion is a topic that has gained a lot of attention from within the military and from scholars interested in military studies. Cohesion is thought to be the most important variable in small-group effectivenes (Golembiewski, 1962; Lott & Lott, 1965; Dion, 2000). For soldiers, cohesion between individuals within the group is paramount when on patrols where one must depend on trusting their coworkers with their life. Patrols conducted during operations are often comprised of personnel possessing various role-sets such as combat arms trades, which include infantry and armoured trained personnel, as well as support trades, such as communications, intelligence operators and medical personnel. The social dynamics at play between these role-sets may have an effect on group cohesion.

Understanding how soldiers structure their role-sets is important in military social structures as well as in civilian social structures. Within the military, an understanding of how soldiers construe role-sets can potentially increase effective group cohesion between soldiers at home as well as out on patrols during international coalitions where they will be required to work effectively with personnel from other trades as well as other nations. Within civilian society, how soldiers perceive differences or similarities between their status-set and civilians is important when soldiers must interact with civilians, which is especially vital during the first few months after returning from a combat deployment when disparities between soldiers and civilians may be more salient. The perceived disparities between civilians and soldiers may have an adverse effect upon soldiers who desire to retire from the military and enter civilian society.

In order to investigate how soldiers perceive their roles and status/role-sets, their constructs pertaining to different statuses within society were elicited using repertory grids, a technique from personal construct psychology (PCP). First

developed by George Kelly, PCP is centred upon the notion that humans construct personal theories to help them understand and make sense of the world around them (Kelly, 1955). PCP regards the participant as an observer trying to make sense of the world as they experience it, and able to make changes to their interpretations depending upon their observations and experiences, making the individual a personal scientist (Raskin, 2002). These theories (called 'constructs' in PCP) are constantly tested and revised by the individual in accordance to their efficacy to life events, and are organised by each individual differently (Kelly, 1955).

One of many techniques used within PCP to understand another person's constructs is repertory grids, which allow the researcher to obtain various perceptions from the participants without imposing the researcher's own bias and allows the participants to discuss what they feel is pertinent with regards to the subject matter (Kelly, 1955; Denicolo & Pope, 2000; Fransella, 2003). Repertory grid technique is a powerful tool that is capable of obtaining participants' core beliefs and values in a relatively short period of time. Repertory grid technique has been widely used in psychology studies on identity, self, and applied organisational psychology (Goffin, 2002; Baldauf, Cron, & Grossenbacher, 2010; Winter, Bell, & Watson, 2010; Cipolletta, 2011).

The repertory grid technique proposes that the interpretations, or constructs, people make of their world are created on a bipolar scale, what Kelly referred to as the dichotomy corollary (Kelly, 1955), for instance, 'hot' can really only be understood as it relates to 'cold', while what contrast label people provide tells more about the meaning of the construct, for instance using 'boring' as opposed to 'challenging' and 'boring' as opposed to 'lively'. These constructs then develop over time through a 'validation cycle', where constructs are tested and revised in accordance to a person's experience (Walker & Winter, 2007). There has been recent interest in using repertory grids in military specific studies, although these tend to focus on leadership and management issues within the military (Dunn, 2007; Woodward & Jenkings, 2011).

In addition to using repertory grids, this project also employed, to a limited degree, the laddering technique, which is a hierarchical technique whereby the investigator elicits superordinate constructs at increasingly higher levels of abstraction by asking participants to explain why one pole of a construct is preferred over the other and then delving further step-by-step (Hinkle, 2010). Laddering can be used in conjunction with the repertory grid technique in order to obtain more detailed information on the participant's constructs associated with the project's specific focus. Laddering enables the investigator to begin with a diverse range of constructs and swiftly results in identifying superordinate constructs that are related to the participant's 'philosophy of life' (Bourne & Jenkins, 2005, p. 425). This allows for efficient use of time, an important factor when participants have very limited time available for lengthy interviews, as was the case in this project.

This study investigates the constructs elicited from 16 serving Canadian Army soldiers, when asked to compare the status within society of different categories of soldiers and civilians in order to understand the dynamics of soldiers' role-sets. It was anticipated that combat arms soldiers would perceive the largest difference between their role and civilians due to the unique nature of their job, which is to engage with the enemy, and support trades with no deployment experience would perceive the least amount of difference between their role and civilians. It was also anticipated that non-commissioned officers (NCOs) would perceive a large distinction between themselves and officers due to the differences in their job requirements that affect the mechanisms of their role-sets.

METHOD

Participants

The participants (N=16) for the study were all serving Canadian Regular Force Army personnel. Canadian National Defence allocated specific Regiments to this project on the basis of

operational commitments and participation in other research projects. Personnel within the chosen Regiments were informed of the project and volunteers were invited to participate. All of the participants were informed that they could cease participating in the project at any time. Due to operational and training commitments, a large sample size was not feasible for this project; however, a benefit of the repertory grid technique is that a large sample size is not required in order to achieve a level where data would become redundant from the addition of more participants (Frost & Baine, 1967; Downs, 1976).

The sample was stratified to include different categories of soldiers and included 6 combat arms officers with deployment experience, 3 combat arms officers without deployment experience, 2 combat arms Non-Commissioned Officers (NCO) with deployment experience, 1 combat arms NCO without deployment experience, 3 support trade NCOs with deployment experience, and 1 support trade officer without deployment experience. The participants' ages were between 19 – 43 years, and all were male.

In total, there were four focus groups consisting of 3-5 personnel per group that were arranged such that participants were grouped with their cohorts in order to reduce any adverse effects that may be experienced by grouping together participants from different ranks and trades. The exception to this was in instances where there was only one volunteer from a category, in which case they were grouped with similar trade, for example, a support trade junior officer was placed with support trade NCOs. The four focus groups were conducted throughout one day in October 2012, in a private meeting room in the Land Forces Western Area Headquarters, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Repertory grids

Repertory grids enable complex sorting of elements on the basis of elicited bipolar constructs (Adams-Webber, 1987). The bipolar scale is prompted through triadic elicitation, which involves presenting participants with three elements at a time and asking them which two are similar in terms of status and thereby different from the third. Repertory grids administered in focus groups were used to elicit the participants' constructs as they pertain to certain elements in relation to their status within society.

Individual repertory grids were completed by each participant within the focus group and a group discussion ensued while working through the entire grid. Laddering technique was used to a limited degree during the discussions in order to clarify mentioned constructs or to facilitate construct elicitation when the participants felt they could not elicit a new construct.

The elements in this study were supplied to the participants in order to assist in the efficiency of the elicitation process and enable the investigator to compare grids elicited from different participants, consistent with Fransella, Bell, & Bannister (2004), and were based on different roles within the armed forces and civilians (see below). The elements were chosen after two pilot studies with serving Regular Force Army soldiers, and were deemed the most meaningful to the soldiers. The original elements included various civilian categories such as police officer, teacher, and nurse; however the pilot participants felt that these categories were not required as the constructs were repeatedly the same for these elements and the pilot participants suggested that 'civilian' be used to capture these categories.

The following elements were chosen by the pilot study soldiers as the most meaningful to the soldiers in terms of status within society:

- Civilian
- New recruits, not yet trained
- Combat Arms (such as Infantry or Armour) Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs), with no combat experience
- Combat Arms NCOs with combat experience
- Combat Arms Officers with no combat experience
- Combat Arms Officers with combat experience
- Support Trade (such as Logistics or Medical) NCOs with no combat experience

- Support Trade NCOs with combat experience
- Support Trade Officers with no combat experience
- Support Trade Officers with combat experience

At the beginning of each focus group the element labels were explained so that each participant understood their meaning. For example, 'Combat Arms' represented infantry, cavalry or armoured personnel, while 'Support Trades' referred to logistics, engineers, medical, and intelligence personnel. 'Combat experience' referred to personnel who had been deployed in Afghanistan or a similar conflict zone.

The participants were instructed to think of a person they know for each element who characterises that element or role, and to write their initials in the element box, which would assist them in eliciting constructs related to that specific role.

The participants were asked to compare three of the supplied elements at a time and asked to identify which two elements they felt were similar in terms of status within society, and thereby different from the third element, and then they were instructed to write what made those two elements similar in a column on the grid titled 'similar'. The pole construct, what made the third element different, was then written in a column titled 'different'. The words the participants provided on what made the elements the same or different are the participants' constructs. The participants then rated each element on a score of 1 to 5, where 1 was closest to the 'similar' construct pole and 5 was closest to the 'different' pole. After rating the three elements they had compared, the participants then rated all the other elements using the elicited construct. Once this was completed the participants then moved onto another triad of elements, eliciting further constructs and following the same steps until the grid was complete and approximately 16 triadic elicitations had been conducted, although each individual will differentiate aspects of their world using a small or large number of constructs depending on their interest, experience, etcetera.

The participants were asked to place an asterisk beside each construct pole that they considered a positive attribute. A group discussion then followed on how their constructs were used.

Analysis

The group discussions were recorded, transcribed, and coded using NVivo 10 qualitative analysis software to conduct content analysis on the discussions and the comments written on the back of the grid sheets (QSR International Pty Ltd, 2013) .

The completed grids were analysed using RepGrid 5 V1.04 software, developed by Gaines and Shaw (2010). Spatial representation, which RepGrid 5 V1.04 produces with PrinGrids, uses factor analysis of the elicited repertory grid and plots the constructs and elements that are the most similar closer together, and plots those that are unalike further apart. The spatial representation graph also shows the range of convenience of constructs as they relate to the elements, as it plots both on the graph, creating two-set principal component representations of the elicited grids (Bell, 1988; Gaines & Shaw, 2010). Dendrograms are produced by RepGrid 5 V1.04's Focus Grid output, to show the level of similarity between constructs as they relate to the elements (Bell, 1988). Both of these outputs were used in the analysis of the participants' constructs.

RESULTS

Constructs

The repertory grids generated a total of 437 statements from the participants, with approximately 10-16 bipolar constructs elicited from each participant. The following tables provide a sample of common constructs elicited from the focus groups; with an asterisk beside the perceived positive construct (not all participants included an asterisk).

Canadian Combat Arms NCO Constructs	
Non-frontline soldier	Supposed to be combat leader *
Combat arms more dangerous *	Desk job
More chances for front line service *	Less chance of combat or danger
Education/experience *	Not tested in combat
Serves country maybe willingly *	Doesn't serve country
Demonstrates ability to act *	Doesn't understand what combat is
Willingness to go to combat *	May not be willing
Most chose to stay home	Chosen to go fight *
Willing to pass on knowledge *	No knowledge to pass on
Belong to a combat arms trades	No commonality of experience
Combat experience * will change somebody's perspective. Understands hardship that fellow man has to go through. Appreciates things that he has. Brothership.	No combat experience
Long deployment under difficult conditions, dangerous	No common experience with people who have been deployed
No, or negligible military experience	Seasoned member of the military

Canadian Combat Arms Officer Constructs	
Lack of understanding of military ethos/values/sacrifice of service	Better understanding of military ethos/values/sacrifice *
Service provider attitude	Warrior attitude *
Officers/leader *	Soldier, non-commissioned Member
Lack of understanding of military and tactical leadership	leadership level in high levels of stress
Command presence	Technical understanding
Theoretical understanding	Practical understanding
Tactical leadership	Technical advisor
Focused *	Difficulty with stress
Conforms *	Relaxed
Resourceful *	Cannot multitask
Management skills *	Lacking authority
Multitask skills *	Unorganised
Lacks fitness	Hardened fitness *
Requires supervision	Determined *
Learning leadership	Referent leadership *
Inexperienced military	Robustness *
Flexibility *	Rigid
Spins	Patient *
Commissioned with operational experience *	No operational experience, no commission
Concerned with logistics	Concerned with engaging threats
Training complete, responsibilities of leadership	No training, no responsibility
Little military training, no combat experience	Leads soldiers in engagements with enemies of Canada *

Most likely removed from direct contact	More exposed to threats *
Perceived as 'Real Soldier'	'Not a Real Soldier'
Shared experience / hardship, leading soldiers in combat *	No experience leading soldiers or living in cbts/field
Experience as an NCO/time in ranks *	Lack of experience 'on the shop floor'. Probably more formal education

Canadian Support Trade Constructs	
Logistical training	No logistical training
Combat education	No combat education
Officer/commission	Worker
Rounds down range	Management of rounds
Spins out of control	Calm collect
Makes a lot of speeches	Deeds not words
Just a paycheque	Lifestyle
By the books/rules	Free thinking
Push paper	Kinetic op, face to face
Physically fit	Not fit
Military NCO	Less ‘army like’
Military members	Civilians - different laws
Work endurance	No work endurance
Enduring poor living conditions	Unable to endure poor living conditions
Perception of danger	No perception of danger
Calming demeanour	Inability to provide a calming demeanour
unique solutions for problems	Unable to have unique solutions for problems
Ability to deal with death or grave injury	Inability
Written communication	Unable to communicate written
Communicating oral	Unable to communicate orally
working under extreme pressure	Inability to work under extreme pressure

Both support trades and combat arms trades made a distinction between those who have been deployed and those who have not been deployed, however support trades rated their own element closer to combat arms trades than to civilians, while combat arms trades emphasised a distinction between themselves and the other elements. Combat arms trades placed support trades with no deployment experience closer to civilians/new recruits.

All participants, except for one, placed officers and NCOs of similar trade and deployment experience closest together. Officers were more likely to emphasis rank and leadership. Indeed, after constructs pertaining to military service/training, the second most common construct theme elicited from the officers was whether a person was an officer or a leader. Interestingly, rank was never mentioned by the combat arms trade NCOs who had been deployed; instead their constructs emphasised knowledge and experience from military service/training and deployments.

One combat arms NCO drew a table at the bottom of his repertory grid to explain the status relationships within the military. The table was as follows:

Most Military		Least Military
Combat Arms NCOs Combat Experience	Logistics [Support Trades] Officer No Combat Experience	Non-Military

This table summarises the data collected from the combat arms trade personnel, however it does not reflect how support trades perceive statuses within the military. The repertory grids showed that support trade personnel who had been tasked with infantry units in Afghanistan and subsequently spent more time on patrols outside a base, tended to rate support trade NCOs with deployment experience closer to combat arms trades with deployment experience.

Focus group discussions

Defining 'civilian'

The 'civilian' element presented a problem for the participants. The majority of the participants expressed that they did not think civilians could be compared to soldiers. One participant stated, "personally, I don't think civilian and new recruit should be on this paper. That's what I think" (CDN SUPP NCO 3).

During the pilot tests, the 'civilian' element had been broken down into separate categories to include the various roles civilians can hold such as police officer, nurse, and teacher; however the pilot participants had stated that it didn't make sense to them to include extra roles for civilians. During the actually focus groups only two participants mentioned that civilians need to have more categories to reflect their different roles.

> CDN CA Off 5: *The problem I have with civilian is I'm just thinking general public. But there are a lot of aspects in civilian world, like policing, fire-fighting, that are very similar, but… I'm thinking the [civilian] people I know… are just general civilians: accountants, businessmen, you know. They are definitely different… If it was a police or fire-fighter, prison guard, it would definitely have changed how I would have evaluated it…. Some of the words I've used for civilian… there are some pretty strong civilians out there who could do very well in the military.*

Society does not understand

The initial aim of the project was to investigate how soldiers perceived they fit into society. During the discussions, participants from each focus group mentioned that they found it difficult, if not impossible, to articulate how society perceives the different categories of soldiers. Typical responses included:

> CDN CA NCO 1*: I don't think society recognises the infantry soldier who goes on patrols* every *day, twice a day and the supply tech that just went overseas and didn't actually go anywhere besides be in the same country. Society in general can't tell the difference.*

> CDN CA Snr Off 1: *I have relatives who have known that I am in the Infantry for however many years and they still don't know the difference between an infantry officer and an artillery officer, no matter how many times I explain it to them. They are just like, 'you are wearing green and that is all that matters.'*

Civilian society

With regards to fitting into society, the majority of participants felt that combat arms personnel would find it more difficult to readapt to civilian society:

> CDN CA Off 5: *Combat arms have a harder time fitting back into society. No matter what their combat experience is, or the combat experience of a logistics trade. Because I* believe *inherent to the mind-set of a logistical officer and NCO is a service provider mentality. Versus a warriors attitude. Warriors don't do well as bankers.*

A few participants mentioned that new recruits would have the easiest time fitting into civilian society because the new recruit had not spent enough time in the military to become used to the 'comforts' of the military:

> CDN CA NCO 2: *The new recruit [would fit back into society easier]. Because he hasn't* been *institutionalised. He doesn't know the comforts of what the army gives you… the comforts: It's a secure job. I have a secured salary. Whereas the civilian market you don't know what you're gonna make… In civvy world you want to try to make that same amount of money, but you gotta work three times as hard to get it.*

Defining 'combat'

While comparing elements with 'combat experience' a group discussion ensued in each focus group regarding how combat was being defined in the grid. There was a difference between how the combat arms and support trades defined combat. Combat arms placed an emphasis on not only going off the Base and conducting patrols, but also returning fire when engaged with the enemy. Support trades had a more complex definition of combat experience, as the following conversation shows between two support trade NCOs – one who had conducted patrols outside Base and one who stayed on Base the entire tour:

> CDN SUPP NCO 1: *I went* out *every day, for nine months.*
>
> CDN SUPP NCO 2: *And I watched my friends come back.*
>
> CDN SUPP NCO 1: *We were on the same tour, but in our minds it doesn't count as the same… went out meant went* outside *the wire. For repeated times. Not just drove out from point A to point B and stayed there for three months then drove back. Going outside the wire twice doesn't count. There's logistics people who go outside the wire all the time because resupply and delivery, they are out there all the time. We'd consider that combat experience.*

While the combat arms trade personnel were more likely to emphasis the differences between their trade and support trades, the support trade NCOs were more likely to emphasise the 'Big Green Machine' of the military and say that their primary roles – that of an Army soldier – were all similar.

DISCUSSION

Some of the participants expressed having some difficulties when completing the repertory grid, however these difficulties help illustrate their role-set constructs. For instance, participants found it difficult to rate the elements when an element lay outside the range of convenience for an elicited construct. This was often the case when asked to rate the element 'civilian' after a construct and its pole had been elicited that were purely military in the minds of the participants. The ratings applied to the element 'civilian' are not necessarily accurate, as there was confusion by most participants on how to rate civilians for the 'military' constructs. However, this confusion in itself can be regarded as a construct, as the participants who found it difficult to relate certain constructs to the 'civilian' element obviously hold other constructs which impede this comparison. This can be seen in the actual grids where participants scored civilians with middle-ground ratings, such as '3' – perhaps to allude to a 'neither agree nor disagree' rating – for con-

structs that generated ratings that included 1 to 5 for the different soldier elements.

The participants expressed difficulty in articulating how different soldiers fit into society, as they felt that civilians were unable to differentiate between soldiers who had been deployed or who were from specific trades. Combat arms soldiers expressed concern regarding civilians not being able to differentiate between trades, whereas all trades expressed concern regarding civilians not understanding that some soldiers do not deploy. One soldier even stated that as a soldier with no deployment experience 'I receive FAR more respect than I deserve'. There was a lot of discussion focussing on the issue that civilians will pay respect to soldiers regardless of what job they actually did while deployed. This seemed to be most important to the participants in terms of receiving respect from other soldiers and civilians.

The majority of the participants felt that combat arms trades with deployment experience would have the most difficulty fitting into society, a point emphasised with the constant extreme rating of combat trades against civilians. Almost all participants rated combat arms trades on the extreme opposite pole from civilians, consistently throughout the repertory grid, whereas support trades were often rated in the middle between combat arms trades and civilians. In addition, elements that had deployment experience were rated the most different from civilians.

Combat arms NCOs with deployment experience are perceived as the most respected within the military. Conversely, while acknowledging that the rest of the military views combat arms personnel as the epitome of 'soldier', support trade personnel made attempts to legitimise themselves within the military system. This was evident during the support trade personnel focus group discussions where those participants who had been deployed and participated in patrols outside of the base mentioned a number of times that although they were in a support trade their tasks and experiences while in Afghanistan were similar to the combat arms trades. According to support trades, it was only while engaging in their secondary duties that differences emerged between combat arms trades and support trades. Canadian support trade soldiers are told during their training that their primary role is that of a soldier, their secondary role is their trade, which may be a medical assistant, intelligence operator or communication technician. Some support trade participants emphasised that there is a distinction between those support trades who deploy and stay on base, and those support trades who deploy and go out on patrols with the combat arms, as shown in the repertory grids of support trade personnel who had been deployed to Afghanistan, who tended to rate support trade NCOs with deployment experience closer to combat arms trades with deployment experience and rated all other categories – those with no deployment experience – similarly to civilians and new recruits.

It had been hypothesised that combat arms soldiers would perceive the largest difference between their role within their role-set and civilians due to the dangerous nature of their job, and support trades with no deployment experience would perceive the least amount of difference between their role and civilians. This was found to be partially correct. Combat arms soldiers did place a large distinction between the roles of combat arms personnel who had been deployed and all other categories. Although combat arms personnel placed support trades who had been deployed and combat arms trades who had been deployed separate from those who have not been deployed, they still emphasised a difference between combat arms and support, placing support trades closer to civilians. Support trades made a distinction between those who had been deployed versus those who had not been deployed, but placed support trades and combat arms closer together.

The hypothesis also anticipated that NCOs would perceive a large distinction between NCOs and officers due to the differences in their job requirements that affect the mechanisms of their role-sets. Interestingly, this was not the case and there was almost no mention of rank. The participants who did place a distinction on rank were the combat arms officers, however there were not enough support trade officers (N=1) in the study to determine whether this is purely a combat arms officer construct or

whether it is a more generalised construct for officers.

CONCLUSIONS

Role-sets serve to reduce conflicts that may be raised due to being an occupant of a specific status. Role-sets provide a means of identifying the social mechanisms that express the expectations of other people within the role-set of the status occupier (Merton, 1957, p. 111). A soldier holds a specific status within society and tends to perceive that society views all soldiers as one type. In addition, soldiers of different trades and experiences hold differing statuses within the military. Thus, a support trade soldier who has not been deployed may behave in a different manner when interacting with the rest of society than he/she would behave when interacting with a soldier of a higher status within the military. The issue that soldiers perceive the rest of society as unable to identify the different statuses of soldiers may lead to potential role conflict, as was the case with one participant who stated that he felt that he did not deserve the respect society was giving to him. This possibly leads to negative interactions between soldiers – since society is perceived as not acknowledging important differences. The participants in the study were adamant that there is a 'big difference' between trades and combat experiences, which is fundamental to the social stratification within the military.

It is notable that soldiers felt civilians viewed all soldiers in the same way. This is interesting, as it is how the participants – all soldiers – perceive they are construed by society. The participants did not think that civilians could differentiate between the different trades, ranks and experiences within the military, all of which are very important for the participants as status legitimisers for their role-sets. Although the participants felt that support trades would find it easier than combat arms trades to fit into society, this is an issue of their own perceived self-efficacy with regards to fitting in, not how society will accept them, since they all felt that society cannot differentiate between them. Similar to findings from British soldiers (Dentry-Travis, 2012), the participants all felt that society values and respects 'soldiers' – regardless of specific trades, ranks and deployment experience.

In terms of group cohesion, the findings pertaining to the soldiers' role-sets show that the large distinction combat arms soldiers place between themselves and the other trades potentially increases friction within the military role-set. While combat arms NCOs with deployment experience enjoy high-status within the army, it was generally felt amongst the project participants that this group would be placed at the low-end of the social stratification system within the rest of society. Conversely, it was felt amongst the participants that support trade personnel with no deployment experience, while experiencing low-status within the military, would fit into the rest of society better than the combat arms trade personnel. This may lead support trades to feeling a need to legitimise their status of 'soldier' in reflection of their perceived non-valued role within the military structure, when compared to combat arms trades.

Although the participants' statements in the study became repetitious, the disproportionate stratification of participants within the categories inevitably raises the concern of the project's generalisability to all soldiers. The present investigation was designed as an exploratory study and subsequently further research will be conducted to investigate the generalisability of the findings.

Future directions stemming from this project will include collecting data from Land Force Central Area (LFCA) and Land Force Atlantic Area (LFAA), French Canadian soldiers and female soldiers in order to make comparisons between LFWA, LFCA and LFAA soldiers, English Canadian soldiers and French Canadian soldiers, as well as male and female soldiers in Canada.

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