


**Publications**


Abstract
This study examined the application of conflict resolution programs in three high security organizations. In contrast to most civilian institutions, high security organizations such as the Canadian Forces, are characterized by strong organizational cultures, with firmly embedded behavioural repertoires designed to manage complex, tightly coupled, functions in situations of imminent danger. Conflict resolution as practiced by the Alternate Dispute Resolution (ADR) program in the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Forces (DND/CF) has proven successful in many civilian settings, however, no significant literature examines its effectiveness in a military environment. The nature of military service suggests it may not always be the optimal approach in a military environment that depends heavily on relationships capable of reliably sustaining significant pressure. In order to determine how institutionalizing this function in non-military cultures affected their operations, the study compared those results with the introduction of conflict resolution in the Office of the Veterans Ombudsman, and the Office of the Correctional Investigator.

The DND/CF conflict management program demonstrated that parties were highly satisfied with the overall outcome of mediation, its fairness and the amount of control they exercised over the outcome. The parties would recommend it to others and would use the program again. The DGADR conflict management program demonstrates successful outcomes, is clearly accepted and strongly endorsed by participants, and is likely to engender ongoing support for organizational mandate and objectives.

All three case study organizations encountered normative embeddedness, which tended to resist efforts to introduce new information and adjust behavioural repertoires. Resistance to change and the forces of institutionalization appeared with challenges to the legitimacy and credibility of these new approaches. Each had to remain vigilant in protecting their mandate against erosion or constraint, and in the absence of legitimacy clearly defined by statutory authority, they had to rely on the active support of senior leaders.

Although the data generated by this study provided insight into a number of new research areas, the analysis also identified limitations related to the impact of mediation outcomes and skills training on participants’ future behaviour, potential effects of mediation style on outcome, and the application of organizational justice beyond the conflict management program to investigations conducted in ombudsman settings.

The results of this study indicate that it is possible to integrate conflict resolution into high security organizations, and that organizational justice constructs can accurately describe and serve as the basis for measuring the intervention process and related outcomes. This research approach has the potential to serve as a model in a broader range of settings such as provincial and organizational ombudsman offices, police and fire departments, and emergency health organizations.

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Presentations