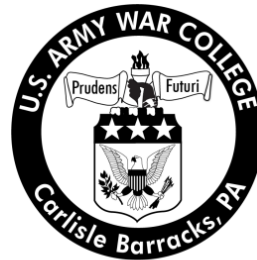


The Management of Ethnic-Cultural Diversity in Western Armed Forces

by

Colonel Raffaele Ferrillo
Italian Army



United States Army War College
Class of 2012

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE MANAGEMENT OF ETHNIC-CULTURAL DIVERSITY
IN WESTERN ARMED FORCES**

by

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ABSTRACT

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In the history of humanity, equality in society based on factors of diversity (i.e. race, color, religion) has often been limited because of discrimination and conflict. In more modern times we have witnessed a decline in societal barriers to diversity, due not only to greater recognition of fundamental human rights, but also to an appreciation of the value that diversity affords civil life. What has become possible for civil society with regard to being more inclusive also affects recruitment into the Armed Forces of the most important countries of Western culture. As an integral part of society, the diversification of Armed Forces contributes to the recognition, development and integration of disparate elements of the greater society. The management of diversity within the Armed Forces is identical to that which occurs within the whole society, whose composition is subject to continuous change. Examples of this socializing in the most important Western Armed Forces: the integration of minorities in the U.S. Army; the “Gurkhas” in the British Armed Forces; the French Armed Forces and Foreign Legion integration; and implications of managing ethnic-cultural diversity for Italian Armed Forces.

THE MANAGEMENT OF ETHNIC-CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN WESTERN ARMED FORCES

The belief of our soldiers in scrupulously equal treatment and the opportunity to achieve based solely on their skill and effort is essential in our Army. Like the Nation it supports, the U.S. Army is extremely diverse and draws its strength from the contributions of that ethnic and cultural diversity.

— General (retired) Eric K. Shinseki, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army, 2001-2003.¹

The human race is very unique, with varied yet rich multi-ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics. These differences are evidenced across the globe, and speak to how cultures develop over time and give us our special sense of self, belonging, and community based on how we speak, or look, and interact with others. Differences bring interest, and are accompanied by special characteristics and strengths. Yet these differences between societies have often been the cause of discrimination, of conflict and estrangement. In human history this has been encouraged by the so-called "survival of the fittest," or the pride and the will of the powerful to subjugate the weak. Yet now it seems that we are more accommodating, and realize that differences should be celebrated. By appreciating the power of diversity, through the recognition of fundamental rights of others despite differences, we can endeavor to create more peaceful yet more productive societies, despite differences.

So what has become possible, strengthening civil society through diversity, is also practicable for recruitment into the Armed Forces of the most important countries of Western culture. Historically, since the second half of the 18th century, the American, French, British and Italian militaries have the privilege of using a different approach.

The policies of the Western powers to conquer and subdue Third World (and also some European) countries had the effect of allowing them to come into contact with other peoples and their cultures. From this beginning began a process that recognized the value and usefulness of skills and knowledge previously unknown, and therefore unavailable, and an appreciation for how these added value and capability. European Armies began to recruit indigenous people to employ alongside their colonial troops. Examples are the Gurkhas for the British Army, the Senegalese, Magrhebini, the Congolese and others for the French and Belgian Armies, and the Askaris for the Italian Army.

This decision to employ indigenous troops was dictated mainly by the limited number of troops available from the home country. However another fundamental need stemmed from the requirement to understand the territory within which they were operating, and to gain some assistance in also navigating the cultural terrain. Undoubtedly, many Armies also benefitted from the contributions and courage of the natives they employed. We recall that at the beginning of the 17th century, because of the establishment of French colonial troops, part of their Navy was to explore, occupy, develop and defend territories that France was about to conquer.² Desmond Morton, of McGill's University in Montreal, writes about the enlistment of indigenous Indians in the Canadian Army and their abilities, arguing that the natives had "the quality of traditional hunters, the courage, endurance and precision shooting."

But, to continue examining the object of this research, we need to clarify "what is diversity," and what do we mean by managing diversity?

The meaning of diversity depends upon both the person and the context. In any group of several individuals, including those in the Armed Forces, we can expect diversity. Differences may be derived from an endless list of possibilities, including place of birth, social status, language, culture, height, weight, and age. Differences are often obvious, and part of life and conversation. For example, most members of the Italian armed forces have taken part in discussions regarding how soldiers from the “South” of Italy may have a perspective different than soldiers from the “North.” At times, we even make generalizations about individuals’ characteristics from particular states or even regions within states. The same is true when we compare life in a rural environment with life in the city.

This paper is concerned with the primary differences in people based on ethnicity, gender, and religion. Ethnic diversity issues are often derived from cultural differences that can lead to misunderstandings. In contrast, racial differences are usually based on physical and biological characteristics. Although two people of different races can have a similar culture, we often associate minority races with a stereotypical ethnic minority culture. In theory, racial differences should not lead to misunderstandings unless cultural or some other differences are also present. However, minorities in the Armed Forces often have a culture, or subculture, that differs from what we can call the “dominant military culture.” In cases where cultural differences between two people are insignificant, racial biases can still hinder the relationship.

But for the purpose of this study, it is convenient to lump ethnicity and race together rather than separate them. If we can make significant progress in understanding the three general areas of ethnicity, gender, and religion, then a second

order effect will be an increased appreciation of the many other differences in people that comprise diversity. So, when we talk about diversity, we are talking about relationships between individuals or between the individual and the institution, especially, in the case of the Armed Forces, where this institution reflects the attitude of its leadership. Diversity concerns are often associated with a minority population, although diversity does not always imply minority. Minority issues are derived from the concerns of or about racial or ethnic minorities. Therefore, when speaking collectively about those who are most affected by ethnic minority issues, we should refer to these groups as minorities.

Reflecting on the meaning of diversity and its components, we can also highlight the different approaches to building diverse environments. One way to handle diversity could be to treat everyone in the same manner. A statement very common in the military was that we do not have blacks or whites, or men or women soldiers, we just have soldiers—essentially implying that everyone should be looked upon as the same. Assimilation refers to the cultural absorption of a minority group into a larger body. This assimilation requires the minority group to abandon its culture in favor of the organizational culture. The success of assimilation depends on how well the minority group can adapt to and become the same as the main cultural group.

Another approach to diversity, instead, may be to focus primarily on individual differences. In the private sector, this notion is frequently driven by economics because it may be more profitable to ask a black or Asian employee to sell the company's products in a black or Asian community than it would be to have a member of the majority population (for example whites) go to those locations. Instead of considering

everyone to be the same, minorities are frequently thought of as being different. It may make good business sense to leverage differences and sponsor programs that will prepare organizations for the time when ethnic minorities, for example in Italy, will make up more than 50% of the work force. The success of an approach that focuses primarily on differences may depend on how well the organization can provide an environment in which minorities can be productive and continue to receive rewards and promotions.

A third way of encouraging diversity - perhaps the most effective, is to combine the two previous approaches and consider people “to be the same, but also different.” This approach endeavors to understand how people are the same, yet also how they are different in order to successfully manage diversity. But, we have to realize that military culture has evolved over many years. To every soldier who enlists, the Armed Forces are already a “work in progress” with an established culture — a culture that does not change quickly. It is up to the individual to make the adjustment to adequately conform to this dominant military culture. For some soldiers, the changes are comparatively minor. For minorities, however, the required adjustment is usually greater because of ethnic differences.

If we recognize that a dominant military culture exists, then minorities will conform to that culture to a certain extent in order to be successful, but they will also differ from that culture. It is not adequate simply to treat minorities the same as everyone else. It is also not enough just to look upon them as being different. If we treat every person the same all the time, on the surface it would seem as though we could never make a mistake.

However, in this type of reasoning, the first problem would be that everyone is not the same. The second problem would be that the objective of our dealings with others should not be simply to avoid mistakes or to protect ourselves. Similarly, if we only see others as being different, our approach will create its own set of problems. We will fail to create the best possible environment if, for the sake of efficiency and good order and discipline in our organization, we blindly insist that everyone is the same. Mostly, though, we miss the opportunity to capitalize on members' differences to actually strengthen the organization.

The Armed Forces, as an integral part of the larger society they serve, should contribute directly and indirectly to the integration of its members, and support the management of diversity to strengthen the social fabric. In fact, the management of diversity within the Armed Forces should be identical to, and complementary of, the effort of the society as a whole. Below are four examples of major western Armed Forces that utilized differing diversity management approaches to socialize and integrate their formations. In the specific case of Italy, discussion includes possible future lines of effort to manage diversity.

Integration in the United States Armed Forces

In all Western societies, the integration of diverse members of society, often linked to the recognition of fundamental rights, has been a slow process, hindered for different reasons. But over the years such recognition and inclusion has been possible both in American society, and in the U.S. Military.

The entry of African Americans in their militia dates back to the American Revolution. During this time black men were finally able to enter freely into the army; in

this initial period, about five thousand individuals served. But after the Revolution from 1783 to 1860, with the institution of slavery in the South and segregation in society, African Americans had a difficult life in the Armed Forces. For example, due to segregation laws, the system created units and parts of bases solely for black soldiers. This situation remained until the two World Wars.

But in the aftermath of World War II, the U.S. government began to speak “of integration and equality” and of the rights of black soldiers being coequal with those of their white comrades. This was ultimately possible due to the approval and signature of Executive Order No. 9981 by President Truman on July 26, 1948. This Executive Order, which was published in the New York Times of July 27, 1948, decreed the equal opportunity of enlisting in the armed forces for all Americans.³

But not everyone agreed. In fact, even before the promulgation of presidential decree No. 9981 General Eisenhower had clearly defined the point of view of the army: "There is race prejudice in this country. When you pass a law to get somebody to like someone you have disorder."⁴ In the field, the resistance on the part of officers and commanders was significant. Omar Bradley, Chief of Staff of the Army, said even if one used the army to create social justice, military efficiency would be in danger.⁵ In addition, to show their disapproval of the policy of integration of the Armed Forces by Truman, military authorities established their own internal council headed by Lieutenant General Stephen J. Chamberlin, who recommended the extension of the policy of segregation with the maintenance of the quota of 10% of black soldiers.

But when North Korean troops invaded South Korea, the United States was drawn into a war which was to accelerate the integration process and force the military

to put in place a policy of total desegregation. The Army, it must be stressed, became involved in the Korean War with its troops segregated, contrary to the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force whose commitment to the path of desegregation was already marked. The need for manpower to fill Army units for deployment, which had only recently been substantially reduced after World War II, worked in favor of black soldiers serving after the abolition of racial quotas. Integration was as much the result of need as of the legislative process. In part, this policy was enhanced in 1951 by the integration agenda of General Matthew G. Ridgway, who considered segregation as anti-American and anti-Christian, and who abolished the armed forces units reserved for African Americans.⁶

Later blacks were afforded the same full rights and privileges as other Americans, to include within the armed forces. *David Mckeeby* writes the words of President Truman, "There will be equality of treatment and privileges for all U.S. military personnel regardless of race, skin color, religion and national origin."⁷ So in July of 1953, integration was extended to units deployed not only to Korea, but also to those who were still in training in the United States. Since then, black soldiers have served in an integrated manner in all United States' wars.

The U.S. Armed Forces should not be considered a "racial utopia", as racial tensions persist. But, despite the racial tension, the Armed Forces stand out as an organization in which, for example, blacks succeed, and often surpass their white counterparts. These organizations, paradoxically, are the only place in American society "where whites are routinely bossed around by blacks."⁸ General Colin Powell's ascension to the leadership of the American Armed Forces has undoubtedly helped to

highlight the realization that integration has been achieved.⁹ But this example using the microcosm of the armed forces is underpinned by the election of President Barack Obama, evidence of the integration within the larger American society that the armed forces serve.

But, why has the U.S. military been able to integrate different racial, ethnic, religious, and national groups so effectively? Military scholars suggest several reasons. First, inter-group contact itself has eased inter-group conflict, as Samuel Stouffer's classic 1949 study "The American Soldier" demonstrated with regard to white-black relations. The more contact that white and black soldiers had with one another, Stouffer argued, the more favorably they felt about racial integration.¹⁰

Second, the military has, as Charles Moskos Jr. has written, "a bureaucratic ethos [and] . . . formality . . . that mitigated tensions arising from individual or personal feelings."¹¹ Third, the military employs powerful sanctions (not available in the civilian world) to implement integration. As Lt. Colonel Bruce A. Brant observes, "Commanders are held directly responsible for equal opportunity [and] the ability to deal with people of diverse backgrounds is an item on performance evaluations."¹² Finally, personnel needs have led military leaders to see equal opportunity as not only necessary, but as an essential component in creating the most effective military organization possible.

The Gurkhas in the British Armed Forces

The United Kingdom continued the earlier practice of recruiting foreigners during its campaigns of conquest in India in the eighteenth century. Specifically, since that time the famous Gurkha soldiers have remained an integral part of Her Britannic Majesty's Army. Who are the Gurkhas and what is their story?

The Gurkha soldiers were members of the Khasi Rajput Clan of Northern India. They had migrated from Rajasthan to the current territory of Nepal in the sixteenth century, after being expelled from their territory by Muslims. Their mother tongue is "gurkhali," a dialect of Indo-European.¹³

The Gurkhas opposed the interests of the British in Eastern India, sparking a war between the British and Gurkhas (1814-1816). The Gurkhas were defeated and signed the Treaty of Saugali in November 1815. They rebelled again, but they were crushed in Makwanpur in 1816. Impressed by the value of the Gurkhas, and with the consent of Prime Minister Shree Teen Maharajah Jung (father of modern Nepal), the British began enlisting and integrating Gurkhas into Her Britannic Majesty's Army.¹⁴

From the eighteenth century to the present day, Gurkhas have been a fundamental component of the United Kingdom Armed Forces, including employment in every theater of war where the British were involved. Their contributions in the war campaigns in Burma, Singapore, and in the Falklands, not to mention their participation in the two World Wars, are very noteworthy.

The Gurkha soldiers have been part of the British Army for nearly 200 years, and are known for their traditional weapon the kukri, a large and bent knife, highly effective in close combat.¹⁵ 200,000 Gurkha soldiers served in World War I; while 20,000 died, approximately 2,000 received decorations for bravery. In World War II, 250,000 Gurkhas served, with 32,000 losses and more than 2,700 decorations for bravery.

After Indian independence and partition in 1947, the fate of the Gurkhas was resolved by a tripartite agreement between India, Nepal and the United Kingdom. Under the agreement, six Gurkha regiments joined the Indian Army and four others were

transferred to the British Army. In 1948, these four Gurkha regiments grouped in the “Gurkha Brigade” were deployed to the Far East where, along with other units, they worked for ten years in Malaya.¹⁶

Later stationed in Hong Kong along with some battalions of the United Kingdom and Brunei, changes to the objectives of national defense and the reorganization of the British Army resulted in a reduction of actual soldiers in the Gurkha Brigade. Gurkha soldiers deployed in defense of the British Sovereign Base during the Turkish invasion in Cyprus, and subsequently were used in the Gulf War, Bosnia and Kosovo. As a result of further reorganizations, four regiments of riflemen still exist, called *Royal Gurkha Rifles*.

British colonial history recognizes the contributions and the abilities of these soldiers, recruited from afar, as an added value for the British Army since the 18th century. However the British Armed Forces, long a professional force, faces challenges with regard to recruiting a diverse force. It has set “ethnic” recruitment targets so that the composition of its ranks meets national goals and requirements, since only 1.3% of those joining the armed forces are from minorities, while minorities make up 8% of the national population. The British Armed Forces’ recruiting goal is to mirror-image the nation’s demographics. In recent years the British Ministry of Defense has taken measures to increase the representation of minorities by 1% each year, until it reaches the proportion minorities make up of the British population.

This situation in Britain demonstrates the specific problems associated with an institution whose performance depends on its ability to attract minority communities. According to a study conducted among 300 Hindus in the West Midlands and South-

East England, only 20% of those interviewed thought that “the Armed Forces have tried to improve race relations” and 89% thought that in the military it was “not possible to practice one’s religion.”¹⁷ A similar study among the Sikh minority revealed that 31% did not intend to join the armed forces due to racism in the Army.¹⁸ While the British Armed Forces are heavily involved in fighting for equal opportunity, the recruitment of minorities has remained weak. The British armed forces’ experience with diversity management continues. The Gurkhas were readily included in the force for their skill sets, yet were maintained as a separate, segregated entity. That legacy and the current disproportion of minorities in the force argue that there remains much to be done to achieve a force composition resembling the nation’s ethnic-cultural make-up.

The French Armed Forces and Integration

When we speak of multi-ethnic or cultural and religious diversity in the armed forces, France comes quickly to mind. The parade on July 14, Bastille Day, reveals the diversity of the members of the Armed Forces. The real peculiarity is found in the Foreign Legion (*la Légion étrangère*), a historical military unit founded on March 9, 1831 by King Louis Philippe of France.

It is comprised of more than 7,500 men, divided into officers, noncommissioned officers and legionnaires. These are grouped in 11 regiments, of which eight are located in France (headquarters, training, recruitment, cavalry, engineers, infantry, paratroopers), and 3 in the French Overseas Departments and Territories (*Départements et Territoires d’Outre-Mer*, DOM-TOM;¹⁹ infantry, Brigade of the Legion, Detachment of the Legion).

Various ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic origins represent the Legion's diversity. In fact, the volunteers of the Legion come from Africa, Latin America, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East as well as France itself. Another aspect of diversity is evident in the criteria for recruitment of volunteers. In the past, the foreign legion had a reputation for attracting criminals and would-be mercenaries, but the admissions process is now severely restricted, and background checks are performed on all applicants.

Generally speaking, convicted felons are prohibited from joining the service. Legionnaires were, in the past, forced to enlist under a pseudonym ("declared identity"). This disposition exists in order to allow people who want to start their lives over to enlist. French citizens can enlist under a declared, fictitious, or foreign citizenship (generally, a francophone one, often that of Belgium, Canada or Switzerland). After one year's service, legionnaires can "regularize" their situation under their true identity. After serving in the Foreign Legion for three years, a legionnaire may apply for French citizenship,²⁰ without paying incidental expenses. He must be serving under his real name, must no longer have problems with the authorities, and must have served with "honor and fidelity." Furthermore, a soldier who becomes injured during a battle for France can apply for French citizenship under a provision known as "Français par le sang versé" ("French by spilled blood").

While the Foreign Legion is an integral part of the French Army, the distinctive uniform consists of a white kepi, green tie and beret, traditional shoulder pads, *plis* legion, and a blue belt. The reasons that led immigrants to join the Foreign Legion vary, but a theme is evident in the answers of these legionnaires: "strong attachment to

republican and democratic values (equality, fraternity, secularism, respect for others and freedom of conscience); military values: discipline, loyalty, courage, patriotism."²¹

As part of the French Army since 1831, the Legion has participated in numerous consequential battles, including Magenta, Camerone, Valmy, Monte Cassino, Dien Bien Phu, plus service in Algeria and Afghanistan.

It is clear that the recruitment and integration of Africans, Latin Americans, Asians and other European people into the Foreign Legion has been successful. A major example of this is the very effective, famous, black historical French soldiers, the so-called "Tirailleurs Sénégalais" (*Senegalese Shooters*). The success stories of integration and diversity management in the Foreign Legion served as a prelude to the path to manage the multi-ethnic culture and various religions in French society, and in particular in the larger Armed Forces.

In fact, French Armed Forces – proven in the Battle of Valmy in 1792 to be a diverse “armed nation”²² – have been built since 1905 on compulsory conscription and are perceived as a force for the integration of the French population. This is only possible due to the requirement to recognize individuality and to being blind to the issue of ethnicity. Since the Armed Forces serve the nation, republican Armed Forces aim to be an institution focusing on integration, which is blind to ethnic difference.

But, this type of setting brings up the problem of cohesion in the French armed forces. As an institution, the armed forces face the need to deal with diversity management in a better way in order to continue attracting young French people of foreign origin into the profession. It requires these young people due to its professionalization, which led to the need to replace conscripts after compulsory military

service was ended in 1997. However the French armed forces also need to attract young people in order to enhance effectiveness, and to show openness to ethno-cultural and religious diversity in order to present itself as a model institution based on the Republican principles of citizenship and secularism.²³

Diversity in the Italian Armed Forces of Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

For Italy's colonial past on African soil, an important chapter in the history of the Italian Army, it is important to refer to the very first expedition. In 1885, in East Africa, Italian Colonel Saletta Tancredi and the "Ascari" were the key players. Originating in the eighteenth century, the Ascari ethnic group was in the majority of Eritrean origin.

The Ascari were enrolled in the Italian formations in Africa and put in the service of the "Ministry of Colonies." Etymologically the word derives from the Bantu-speaking Swahili "Askari," which means "military." Declared by the Italian General Baldissera as regular soldiers in 1887, they officially became part of the Italian Army in June 1889 and were organized into four battalions, called "Ascari." At the end of that year their strength was 1,900 men.

The Africans wore Italian Army uniforms, including a red fez with a band displaying the colors of the battalion. They participated in battles in the Horn of Africa, and at Adowa and Mecalle', where the Italian army fielded about 4,000 of these men. A thousand of them lost their lives; thousands more were wounded and 800 taken prisoner.²⁴

Of them, Alessandro Volterra writes: "The Eritrean Ascari, already in Libya from 1912 to 1934, taking a legendary 'aura' during the War in Ethiopia, for the nineteenth-century appearance, and because during the conquest and pacification of the country

proved the most suitable instrument for counter-insurgency operations. Divided into small craft, on the move they proved to be the only ones capable of embarrassing the many hotbeds of resistance."²⁵

While the focus here is on the Ascari, it is important to note the contributions of the Libyan colonial troops, too, that in 1914 became part of the Italian Army. In fact, the various units of *Mehari*, of *Savari* and *Spahis* (all cavalry troops), together with the Libyan infantry and artillery, were part of the Royal Corps of the Italian colonial troops. They took part in all military operations in Africa from the date of their creation to 1942.²⁶ One such operation was the first launch of 800 Libyan colonial paratroopers in 1938, who had been trained in the new specialty in the same year that the Governor of Libya, Italo Balbo,²⁷ had set up in Tripoli. In 1939, Italo Balbo granted special Italian citizenship and distinctive insignia for their uniforms (the stars²⁸ of Italian troops)²⁹ to Libyan colonial troops, as both symbols of their value and as a policy of rapprochement with the Muslims of Libya.

From this quote we realize that the Ascari were soldiers of the Italian Army for all intents and purposes: men in uniform who fought under the Italia flag and to defend the interests of Italy from 1889 to 1941, and who were part of various departments of the armed forces. In terms of merit, Amedeo Guillet says: "The Eritreans were beautiful. All that we can do for Eritrea will never be what Eritrea has done for us. The real contribution of the brave dark-skinned Italian soldiers to the Italian colonial history has never been ignored."³⁰

Considering the historical period of the first Italian "black skin" soldiers, it is clear that "the local troops made a significant contribution to Italian colonial history, also in

terms of lives: 5,000 deaths in the countryside against Abyssinia from 1890 to 1896; reliable data are lacking for those who died fighting against the Turks in Libya in 1911 and against the Senussi in the '30s, while 4,500 fell on battlefields in the Ethiopian campaign of 1935 - 37; uncertain how many, but certainly very high, were the numbers of Askaris who fell during the Second World War in Eritrea, Somalia, East Africa and Libya."³¹

Another confirmation comes from the honors that the African soldiers of the Italian Army received: 4 Gold Medals for Military Bravery to the Flags of the Royal Corps Colonial Troops; 2 Gold Medals for Military Bravery to the Banner of the Fourth Battalion Eritrean "Toselli"; and 1 Gold Medal for Military Bravery to the Memory of Mohammed Ibrahim Farag.

The independence of African countries has had different effects on former colonial forces. For example, while in the French Armed Forces the number of soldiers of foreign origin continues to increase, in the Italian Armed Forces recruitment of the "new Italians" is not yet a priority.

In fact, the Italian Armed Forces are the last among the great Western Armed Forces to cope with the challenges represented by multi-ethnic enlistees. For example, to wear the Italian uniform one must have Italian citizenship, while for decades Paris and London have recruited personnel from former colonial empires, to include an entire operational brigade of Nepalese Gurkha. Foreigners in these two countries constitute more than 15% of armed forces personnel. Recently, Spain has embraced a similar idea by enlisting volunteers from some South American countries, and in return offering favorable conditions towards naturalization.

In the U.S., the Armed Forces have long been racially diverse and multi-ethnic and, since 2004, the opening of barracks to immigrants in return for benefits in obtaining citizenship yielded important results. This is especially true when the war in Iraq and economic realities restricted enlistments of U.S. citizens. Similarly for Italy as a nation, and consequently its Armed Forces, fully considering the possibility of service-for-citizenship would be of considerable utility and a unique opportunity.

Italy, as is true in many other Western European Countries, is experiencing an important demographic change. Among the many negative implications of this demographic shifting for Italian society is that it presents the challenge of meeting future military recruitment goals.

In addition to the combination of very high longevity rates and very low fertility rates of its citizens, Italy has become in only the last two decades the center of human migratory flows in the Mediterranean area. This is true both as a country of destination and as a transit point to other European Union countries. Related to this phenomenon is that over time, the number of immigrants in Italy has undergone exponential growth. It is estimated that the number of foreigners in Italy is around 5 million.³² These immigrants represent many different ethnic groups, significant in a country traditionally homogeneous.

A possibility for Italy to mitigate the decreasing numbers of young people available or willing to join the military could be to turn to immigrants. The responsibility of the State towards foreigners living within the Italian territory consists of promoting rules that ensure all integrate and participate in the life of the country - regardless of ethnic origin and membership of a particular culture or religion. Secondly, the state must

ensure measures to prevent and eliminate any prejudice or discrimination based on racial and/or ethnic backgrounds. Similarly, the Italian Armed Forces must become a model of a multi-ethnic organization, with fundamental values that are shared by different ethnic groups that live and work together. What is more, the Italian Armed Forces have experience in this to some degree, having historically played a role of unifier by forcing Italian citizens of Southern and Northern Italy to interact and work together despite differing and deeply held customs and traditions.

A realistic goal for increasing diversity in the Italian Armed Forces is to achieve true integration over the next ten years. The approach to increasing diversity should be based on the concept already mentioned earlier of “same but different.” The Italian Armed Forces would work to ensure service members are socialized to “become the same” within the organizational culture, while also recognizing and allowing that individuals need to maintain some of their differences, precisely the special characteristics that allow them to add value to the organization through their uniqueness. This concept will enable the Italian Armed Forces to continue to build ever more effective military organizations as the breadth and depth and richness of diversity manifests itself as part of the organizational culture.

So, we must develop a clear understanding of how we are the same and how we are different. We must complement that understanding with knowledge of when individuals should be treated the same and when they need to be treated differently. We need to understand our organizational culture and the extent to which we want those who are different to adapt to that culture.

If the Armed Forces ask for 100% adaptation or assimilation, they are asking some individuals to give up all of their past. If they ask for no adaptation, then these organizations have no culture of their own and they fail. This balance between the individual's need to align with the military organizational culture and the military organization's need to recognize individual differences leads to success in managing diversity.

In other words, individuals must join together and be the same for the sake of the military organization, while the organization respects individual differences and allows those differences to be visible. So, the balance of "same but different" could create an environment in which each soldier can excel by working to his full potential, with the organization benefitting from the special talents and perspectives that spring from their diverse backgrounds.

As Italy becomes more diverse, the Italian Armed Forces will also become more diverse. In the next 20 years, minorities in Italy will likely increase from the current 8% to approximately 16% of the Italian population. Currently, there are only about 1,500 soldiers of foreign origin in the Italian Army, which has a total of 108,000 men and women. Certainly, the presence of minorities will increase considerably and will play a major role in the Italian Armed Forces of the future. This implies that leaders of the Italian Armed Forces need to learn more about diversity management now so that institutional effectiveness will not be inhibited by changing demographics, but rather be enhanced instead.

The Italian military's efforts should encourage the emergence of a future in which diversity is an effectiveness multiplier instead of a problem to be managed, as pointed

out recently by the former Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Navy Admiral Mike Mullen. “Diversity is all about opportunity ... This is not about bias or anything like that. This is: ‘Here’s the job, here’s your opportunity -- sink or swim.’”³³

Conclusion

Diversity management in society is universally desirable; it also is inherently difficult. While no less important, diversity management becomes even more difficult when it comes to the Armed Forces.

The mentality and the living conditions of society are subject to constant adjustments. The acceptance and integration of other people into society, with their various races, ethnicities, religions, cultures, and values seem to be far less a problem to resolve in a globalized world as compared to the past when nations were more insular. But it is still very difficult work. As societies evolve in their inclusiveness, their public and private institutions, including the Armed Forces and police, must adapt to changing times and become more inclusive as well. The end-state is to build organizations that are appropriately representative of the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural societies they serve.

Even more than other state and private institutions, the Armed Forces may be an optimal vehicle for the acceptance of minorities into the “social fabric” of a people, and to encourage multi-ethnic tolerance. Managing diversity in the Armed Forces, as in civil society, demands more than good will or good intentions. More necessary are the laws and policies enacted to ensure protections and implementation. These guarantees codify the rights and responsibilities of individuals, regardless of their origin, and ensure

mutual respect of one for the other, promoting the accountability of individuals and the institutions they serve.

In the United States in 1948, for example, the Executive Order to ensure the equal treatment of all persons in the Army regardless of their race, color, religion or national origin was signed to avoid all forms of discrimination and ensure equal treatment to all. In the United Kingdom in 2000, an official policy was launched "for equal representation" of national minorities in the Armed Forces.

Earlier this paper identified a possible goal of achieving integration in the Italian Armed Forces within ten years. Perhaps this is too ambitious, or it could be used as a stretch goal. The point is that some good metrics must be established now to determine where we are, and where we need to go to enable the measurement of progress. Other efforts might include senior officers and civilian officials reinforcing the importance of working towards these goals, and embedding them in senior level conferences and speeches. The goals can be reinforced through policy efforts like mandatory training of managers and supervisors, counseling of subordinates on opportunities to advance, considering armed forces service as a route to citizenship, adjusting promotion goals to have minimums by ethnicity/race, and ensuring members of all backgrounds enjoy equal promotion opportunities and access to career enhancing positions. It would be useful to adjust human capital strategy documents to formalize the intended progress and metrics, and require the reporting of accomplishments to the highest levels of command, perhaps even tying success to the evaluation system.

Ultimately, despite the challenges in the recruitment and integration into the Armed Forces of men and women of different ethnic-cultural origins, we must persist in

accomplishing the task. Not only does the proper management of diversity result in stronger military organizations, but these efforts are complementary of larger societal diversity management initiatives. For the Armed Forces – as highlighted by General Shinseki in the paper’s introductory quotation – embracing the management of diversity results in Armed Forces that are better postured to support society. Specifically, this is made possible by accomplishing assigned missions with units whose capabilities are enhanced, and whose members’ differences in terms of ethnicity and culture provide more diverse perspectives and skill sets. It is true that the effects of diversification on some individuals, as ethnic-cultural newcomers to military service, may simply be that they enjoy serving their new nation, while also securing a livelihood for themselves and their families while attaining a level of social dignity they may have never had. But in the larger sense, successfully managing diversity in the Armed Forces strengthens their organizations while also contributing to and progressing diversity management as a resource throughout society. Diversity management in the Armed Forces not only affirms the principle that the rights of the minority must be protected, respected, and upheld just as those of the majority, but that ethnic-cultural diversity should be promoted in order to develop and field the most highly capable forces possible.

Endnotes

¹ This statement by the former Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army speaks directly to the positive outcomes of a diverse Army, and significant steps have been taken by the Army that signal its renewed focus on improving diversity. *General Eric K. Shinseki, e-mail message to General Kevin P. Byrnes, subject: Representative Leadership across the Force, April 30, 2003.*

² Alban Sumpf, “*Les soldats indigènes dans les troupes coloniales,*” linked from 1789-1939 *L’Histoire par l’image*, http://www.histoire-image.org/site/etude_comp/etude_comp_detail.php?i=1004 (accessed December 3, 2011).

³ Françoise Clary, "L'intégration des Afro-Américains dans les F.A. des Etats-Unis l'impact des guerres," in Cynos, Volume 21 No. 2, posted October 12, 2006, <http://revel.unice.fr/cynos/index.html?id=389> (accessed December 4, 2011).

⁴ Richard J. Stillman, *Integration of the Negro in the US Armed Forces* (New York: Praeger, 1964), 39.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁶ Gary A. Donaldson, *The History of African-Americans in the Military* (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1991), 146.

⁷ David Mckeeby, "L'histoire du service militaire des Afro-Américains est liée à la lutte pour l'égalité", in Pyepimanla, posted December 2008, <http://www.pyepimanla.com/decembre-2008/articles/La-d%E9s%E9gr%E9gation-de-l-arm%E9e-des-%C9tats-Unis.html> (accessed December 4, 2011).

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Joseph Soeters and Jan van der Meulen, *Cultural Diversity in the Armed Forces, An International Comparison* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 17.

¹⁰ Samuel Stouffer, *The American Soldier* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1949), 146.

¹¹ Charles C. Moskos Jr., "Minority Groups in Military Organizations," *The Military in American Society* (New York: Free Press, 1972), 192-201.

¹² Bruce A. Brant, "Vanguard of Social Change?" *Military Review*, no. 73 (February 1993): 12-19.

¹³ *Histoire du monde Home Page*, <http://www.histoiredumonde.net/Gurkhas.html> (accessed January 25, 2012).

¹⁴ Tomas Pekish, "Les séparatistes Gorkhas entament un blocus général," June 11, 2008. <http://inde.aujourdhuilemonde.com/les-separatistes-gorkhas-entament-un-blocus-general?page=7> (accessed January 25, 2012).

¹⁵ "Histoire du monde Home Page, <http://www.histoiredumonde.net/Gurkhas.html> (accessed January 25, 2012).

¹⁶ *Histoire du monde Home Page*, <http://www.histoiredumonde.net/Gurkhas.html> (accessed January 26, 2012).

¹⁷ Ahmed Hussain and Matar Hishaq, "The British armed forces and the Hindu perspective," *Journal of Political and Military Sociology* 30, no. 1 (2002): 67-90.

¹⁸ Ahmed Hussain and Matar Hishaq, "British Sikhs' identification with the armed forces," *Defense and Security Analysis* 18, no. 2 (2002): 171-183.

¹⁹ The French Overseas Departments and Territories consist broadly of French-administered territories outside of the European continent. These territories have varying legal status and different levels of autonomy, although all have representation in the Parliament of France (except those with no permanent inhabitants), and consequently the right to vote in elections to the European Parliament. The DOM-TOM includes island territories in the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans, French Guiana on the South American coast, and several periantarctic islands as well as a claim in Antarctica. 2,685,705 people lived in these Departments and Territories in January 2011.
http://www.insee.fr/fr/themes/document.asp?ref_id=ip1332#inter1 (accessed January 27, 2012).

²⁰ The French Foreign Legion, <http://www.legion-recrute.com/fr/faq.php#f4> (accessed January 27, 2012).

²¹ Catherine Wihtol De Wenden and Christophe Bertossi, "Les militaires français issus de l'immigration," *Les Documents du Centre d'Etudes en Sciences Sociales de la Défense*, no. 78 (2006): 43-72. This study is a qualitative sociological study that was led between March and July 2004 with a sample of military personnel from immigrant origin in all services of French Armed Forces. The interviews concentrated on how military personnel were able to reconcile their multiple identities with their citizenship.

²² Stephen Castles, "Globalization and the Ambiguities of National Citizenship", in *Blurred Boundaries: Migration, Ethnicity, Citizenship*, ed. R. Bauböck and J. Rundell (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), 224.

²³ Catherine Wihtol De Wenden and Christophe Bertossi, *Les Couleurs du Drapeau: les Armées Françaises Face aux Discriminations* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2007), 43 -72.

²⁴ Stefano Ales and Pietro Crociani, *Uniformi, Cultura e Società - Storia dell'Esercito Italiano attraverso l'evoluzione del costume nazionale* (Roma: Editrice Irradiazioni, 2007), 108-115.

²⁵ Alessandro Volterra, *Sudditi Coloniali – Ascari Eritrei 1935-1941*, Collana Temi di Storia (Roma: Franco Angela Editore, 2005), 186.

²⁶ Renzo Catellani, Giancarlo Stella, *Soldati d'Africa. Storia del colonialismo italiano e delle uniformi per le truppe d'Africa del Regio Esercito Italiano 1885/1939* (Parma: Editrice Albertelli, 2008), 212.

²⁷ Italo Balbo (Ferrara, June 6, 1896 – Tobruk, June 28, 1940) was an Italian Black shirt (*Camicie Nere*) leader who served as Italy's Marshal (*Maresciallo dell'Aria*), Governor-General of Libya, Commander-in-Chief of Italian North Africa (*Africa Settentrionale Italiana*, or ASI), and the "heir apparent" to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini.
<http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/italo-balbo/> (accessed January 28, 2012).

²⁸ The stars with five points on the collar of the uniform of the Italian Army were provided for the first time for officers of infantry in 1871. Shortly thereafter in the same year, the use of stars was extended to the Officers of the Staff, the Bersaglieri (Sharpshooters), the Artillery and the Engineers. On 2 September 1871, a Royal Decree provided for the wearing of little stars on the uniform by the Officers of Cavalry; a requirement that the frieze on the cap was made of a star,

which would contain the number of the regiment; and the whole was to be surmounted by the crown real, introduced so the stars with five points were on the lapel. In October 1871 the stars were to lie on the golden collars of the jackets of generals. The stars were extended to all military personnel with Italian Royal Decree No. 571 of December 13, 1871, signed by the Minister Cesare Ricotti-Magnani. Article 1 established: "All persons subject to military jurisdiction, in mind Article 323 of the Code of Military Justice for the Army, and art. 362 of that for the Royal Navy will, as a hallmark of military uniforms, the Army and the common weapon, the stars with five points on the lapel of their uniform apparel." From that moment the stars became the hallmark of the Italian military in active service, of whatever degree, weapon and body. Taken from: Stefano Ales and Pietro Crociani, *Uniformi, Cultura e Societa` - Storia dell'Esercito Italiano attraverso l'evoluzione del costume nazionale*, 42.

²⁹ Ales and Crociani, *Uniformi, Cultura e Societa`*, 122.

³⁰ Amedeo Guillet (February 7, 1909 – June 16, 2010) was an officer of the Italian Army. He was born in Piacenza. Descended from a noble family from Piedmont and Capua, he graduated from the Academy of Infantry and Cavalry of Modena in 1930 and began his career in the Italian Army. Dying at the age of 101, he was one of the last men to have commanded cavalry in war. In the build up to World War II, Amedeo Duke of Aosta gave Guillet command of the 2,500 strong Gruppo Bande Amhara, made up of recruits from throughout Italian East Africa. The core was cavalry, but the force also included camel corps and mainly Yemeni infantry. For Guillet to be given command of such a force while still only a lieutenant was a singular honor. In 1940, he was tasked to form a "Gruppo Bande a Cavallo". The "Bande a Cavallo" were native units that were recruited from Italian officers who commanded these units. Amedeo Guillet succeeded in recruiting thousands of Eritreans. His "Band", already named in the history books as "Gruppo Bande Guillet" or " Gruppo Bande a Cavallo", were distinguished for their absolute "fair play" with the local populations. Amedeo Guillet could boast at never being betrayed, and 5,000 Eritreans knew perfectly well who he was and where he lived. It was during this time in the Horn of Africa that the legend of a group of Eritreans with excellent fighting qualities, commanded by a notorious "Devil Commander" was born. <http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/ricerca/Amedeo-Guillet/> (accessed January 28, 2012).

³¹ Ales and Crociani, *Uniformi, Cultura e Societa`*, 130.

³² Italian Demographic Indicators:

- Foreign resident population in Italy (4,859,000) accounts for 8% of the total Italian population. Compared to 1 January 2011 this was an increase of 289,000. The population of Italian citizenship fell below 56 million residents, as a result of a decline of 65,000.
 - The live birth rate drops from 9.3 per thousand to 9.1 over 2010-2011, while the death rate remains constant at 9.7 per thousand, just as in 2010.
 - On 1 January 2012, the average age of the population was 43.7 years. The population distribution by category of age: 14% up to 14 years of age; 65.3% from 15 to 64 years; 20.6% above 65 years of age. In addition, individuals over 80 years old represent 6.1% of the total.
 - The total fertility rate (TFR) is estimated to be 1.42. For a third consecutive year, therefore, there are no significant changes in the national fertility level, which significantly continues to be supported by the contributions of foreign women (2.07 children against Italian of 1.33).
- Taken from internet portal of ISTAT - Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, Statistics on demographic structure and dynamics, Italian Demographic Indicators Year 2012, <http://www.istat.it/en/archive/51649> (accessed January 29, 2012).

³³ Navy Adm. Mike Mullen, former Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the Air Force Diversity Senior Leader Working Group at the Doubletree Hotel in Crystal City, Va. on Oct. 17, 2010. "Mullen: U.S. Military Needs More Diversity," October 17, 2010, *Defense.gov*. <http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=61315%2010/19/2010> (accessed January 29, 2012).

